

# Circulation

JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION

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## European Perspectives

*Circulation* 2007;116:F49-F54

DOI: 10.1161/CIRCULATIONAHA.107.186262

Circulation is published by the American Heart Association, 7272 Greenville Avenue, Dallas, TX 75214  
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1524-4539

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**Figure 6.** Dr Grüntzig gained a taste for fast living, and learnt to fly his own aircraft, an achievement that was to lead to his premature death in a plane crash in 1985.

has had from him. The picture of him will remain incomplete until we hear what she has to say.

There is a second omission. In a book full of heart experts giving their views on the state of Dr Grüntzig's mind, the one person who, at this distance from the pain of events, has the professional qualifications to look over his life and to speculate on the way he engaged with the individuals whom he befriended and supported and with the groups he taught, was his wife. She was not reinterviewed about this quote:

"You know, I am a psychologist," Michaela offered. "I have reached a certain time of life when I am returning to think about things from the past. My view is that he always tended to put himself in the middle and to gather people around him in order to liven things up somehow. But I now think this must have been a way of handling the life that he developed. As a child he gave life to his mother and enjoyed the attention. But he didn't really let people get that close to him... There weren't many close friends."

So, 2 or 3 years before the publication of the book, his first wife Michaela approached the threshold of articulating a coherent insight into Dr Grüntzig, based on her knowledge of his relationship with his mother and the part he played in

providing her with moral support, perhaps in East Germany, in this fatherless family. Dr Grüntzig might well have transferred his boyhood strategies for "giving life" to his mother and gaining her attention to his adult engagements with individuals and groups. Michaela has, in fact, communicated with *Circulation: European Perspectives in Cardiology* after reviewing this article; she comments, "These strategies may well also have been an attempt on the part of my former husband to compensate his mother for all the losses and hardships and frustrated expectations of her own life."

Until we have the full story, the search for Dr Andreas Roland Grüntzig will go on.

*Robert Short is a medical journalist*

The assistance of Michaela Grüntzig and Maria Schlumpf in checking the accuracy of the facts of this article and adding previously unpublished comments and information is gratefully acknowledged. All the photographs, except the portrait of Dr Grüntzig on page f41, were provided by Maria Schlumpf.

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#### A Special Meeting

September 16, 2007, will mark the 30th anniversary of Dr Andreas Grüntzig's successful completion of the first angioplasty. A special anniversary meeting, "Thirty Years of Angioplasty," will take place in Zurich, Switzerland, on September 15 to 16, at the University Hospital, Zurich. Many of the people involved in Dr Grüntzig's life will contribute to the meeting, including some mentioned in this article. The meeting is organised by the International Andreas Grüntzig Society. For full details of the programme, visit [www.scai.org/pdf/IAGS\\_30yr2007.pdf](http://www.scai.org/pdf/IAGS_30yr2007.pdf), or contact Ruth Amstein, PhD, at [ruth.amstein@active.ch](mailto:ruth.amstein@active.ch), or Esther Willi at [esther.willi@usz.ch](mailto:esther.willi@usz.ch).

## Meeting Report: The Sixth Interventional Workshop

### A European Workshop on Interventional Paediatric Cardiology Was Held Recently in San Donato Milanese, Milan, Italy

**Gianfranco Butera, MD, PhD, FCSAI, a paediatric interventional cardiologist, reports on the sixth instalment of the oldest international workshop on interventional paediatric and congenital cardiology.**



The most recent International Workshop on Interventional Paediatric Cardiology took place on March 28 to 31, 2007, in San Donato Milanese, Milan, Italy. It drew more than 550 participants, from more than 30 countries worldwide, with participants from Europe, the United

States, South America, Australia, Asia, and Africa. The workshop attracted not only paediatric and adult cardiologists from all over the world, but also junior doctors, fellows, nurses, and technicians. The cardiac surgeons, anaesthesiologists, paediatricians, neonatologists, and neurologists

who also attended the event gave the workshop an enthusiastic, interdisciplinary character.

More than 50 lectures went on during the workshop, by a faculty of 45 leaders in the field from Europe, Canada, and the United States. During the first day, doctors, nurses, and x-ray technicians attended 3 separate workshops: a workshop for physicians, a workshop for nurses, and a workshop for x-ray technicians, each aimed at offering a selection of topics discussed from the point of view of the participants' special area of expertise.

Consistent with the didactic style of the first day, an interventional procedure–simulator system, the *AGA Sim-Suite*, represented a major technical attraction, introduced for the first time in Europe by the workshop. Installed just outside the main auditorium, it allowed attendees to practice the most common interventional procedures. All attending fellows had to spend at least half an hour practicing throughout the 4 days, assisted by proctors and a professional staff.

On the second day, the workshop began its core activity, with live cases and scientific sessions. Scientific sessions (Figure 1) mainly focused on fetal and neonatal interventions, hybrid procedures, stents, and ventricular septal defect closure, and a number of world-renowned interventionalists made speeches and live case demonstrations. During the third day, attendees had the opportunity to learn about news, tips, and useful tricks for the closure of atrial septal defects, patent foramen ovale, and ductus arteriosus, with the help of a group of opinion leaders in these fields.

On the last day of the workshop, the sessions covered the exciting field of transcatheter treatment of pulmonary, mitral, and aortic valve diseases, again with leading specialists addressing the delegates.

The presentation of live cases (Figure 2) represents a special feature of this workshop. Attendees generally agreed that they had found the 22 live cases performed throughout the meeting extremely interesting, because of the pathologies, procedures, and devices used, and because of the operators' technical performance and abilities at demonstration. Many Italian and European centres participated. The San Donato Hospital presented 14 cases, with additional live cases transmitted from Naples and Genoa,



**Figure 1.** Faculty members at a scientific session: a number of world-renowned interventionalists made presentations.



**Figure 2.** Dr John Carminati and Dr Butera presenting a live case, 1 of 22 performed at the meeting.

Italy (2 cases each centre), Budapest, Hungary (2 cases), and Berlin, Germany (2 cases).

Apart from the clinical aspects of the meeting, the attendees also enjoyed a gala dinner; 5 buses took more than 550 delegates from the congress venue in San Donato to the wonderful historic Villa San Carlo Borromeo, located in Senago, not far from the centre of Milan. First built more than 7 centuries ago by the Visconti family, it has hosted many famous people over the centuries, including Leonardo da Vinci, Pope St Charles Borromeo, Ippolito Pindemonte, Denis Diderot, Stendhal, Alessandro Manzoni, Benedetto Croce, Giovanni Verga, Luigi Pirandello, and, more recently, Eugène Ionesco and Jorge Luis Borges.

All lectures and some selected live cases performed during the workshop will soon appear, free of charge and in their entirety, online at the workshop's Web Site, [www.workshopIPC.com](http://www.workshopIPC.com). By looking at these pages, trainees, those interested in the field, nurses, and even experienced paediatric and adult cardiologists will have the opportunity to see up-to-date, state-of-the-art demonstrations of the interventional techniques used in congenital heart disease, from the fetus to the adult survivor.

The first and second workshops on interventional paediatric cardiology took place in 1996 and 1998 in Massa, near Florence, Italy, but in 2001 the meeting moved to San Donato Milanese, where it has occurred every 2 years since. The next workshop will take place from March 25 to 28, 2009.

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