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International Group Issues Recommendations for Focused Cardiac Ultrasound Use

Morrisville, NC – The *Journal of the American Society of Echocardiography* (JASE) is pleased to announce the publication of a new consensus statement on the use of focused cardiac ultrasound (FoCUS) in its July 2014 issue. This special article, entitled “International Evidence-Based Recommendations for Focused Cardiac Ultrasound,” was spearheaded by the World Interactive Network Focused on Critical UltraSound (WINFOCUS, <http://www.winfocus.org>), and presents the results of the first International Conference on FoCUS, which aimed to comprehensively address this branch of point-of-care ultrasound, providing a framework for FoCUS to standardize its application in different clinical settings around the world.

The practice of cardiac ultrasound, also known as echocardiography, has changed dramatically since its introduction in 1954. The accuracy, efficiency and safety of cardiac ultrasound have made it the diagnostic choice for many clinicians when evaluating patients who present with signs or symptoms of cardiovascular disease. The recent improvements in portability of cardiovascular ultrasound equipment are now also having a significant impact on the expansion of its use in medical practice.

The lead author of the paper, Gabriele Via, MD, noted, “These recommendations represent a turning point for the medical community, especially, but not exclusively, in the field of emergency and critical care. For the first time, under the auspices of WINFOCUS, multiple authoritative scientific societies representing different specialties and continents (including the world’s major echocardiographic societies) collaborated to set the standards for the practice of and the education to Focused Cardiac Ultrasound (FoCUS).” Dr. Via is an Intensivist and Anesthesiologist at the Fondazione IRCCS Policlinico San Matteo, in Pavia, Italy, as well as Director of the WINFOCUS Critical Care Echocardiography Training Program and of the WINFOCUS Basic Echo (WBE) curriculum.

In his recent inaugural address in Portland, Oregon, the new President of the American Society of Echocardiography (ASE), Neil Weissman, MD, FASE, spoke at length about the growth of cardiovascular ultrasound, especially among non-cardiologists, and his vision for ASE and the medical field to embrace these new users to improve patient care in a growing number of clinical settings. In his first President’s Message in this same issue of JASE, Dr. Weissman noted that “the future of ultrasound will also be a more focused, basic exam to address one particular aspect of health or simply as an extension of the physical exam. Cardiovascular ultrasound will likely have a broader role in healthcare and be used by more healthcare workers.”



The publication of this document in JASE represents the first of many collaborations between WINFOCUS and ASE, and will make the paper available to a wide audience worldwide, improving recognition of the potential of focused ultrasound to improve patient care through wider access to higher-quality cardiovascular ultrasound. Dr. Via further commented, “As envisioned by WINFOCUS a decade ago, FoCUS will now be increasingly taught and practiced as a first-line diagnostic test in a wide range of medical scenarios: from cardiac arrest, to shock, heart failure, trauma, sepsis and respiratory failure. And, potentially, everywhere a patient is: from pre-hospital care and scarce resource settings to the most complex intra-hospital contexts.”

ASE has several resources available to the medical profession for advancing the use of Focused US, including an educational DVD, available on [ASEMarketplace](#), and a live course, [Echo Florida](#), in Orlando in October, 2014.

The full WINFOCUS document is available on the *Journal of American Society of Echocardiography* (JASE) website (www.onlinejase.com).

As the largest global organization for cardiovascular ultrasound imaging, the American Society of Echocardiography (ASE) is the leader and advocate, setting practice standards and guidelines. Comprised of over 16,000 physicians, sonographers, nurses, and scientists, ASE is a strong voice providing guidance, expertise, and education to its members with a commitment to improving the practice of ultrasound and imaging of the heart and cardiovascular system for better patient outcomes. For more information about ASE, visit www.asecho.org or ASE’s public information site, www.SeeMyHeart.org.

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