

37th World Congress of Internal Medicine

October 30–November 2, 2024

Prague, Czech Republic

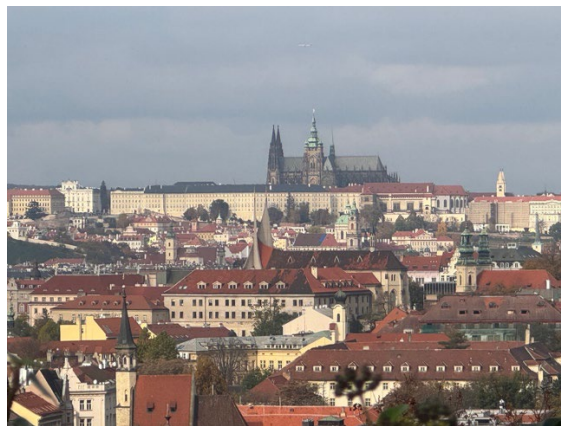
Global Ambassador reflections by: Isaac Opole, MBChB, PhD, MACP

I had the pleasure of attending the World Congress of Internal Medicine (WCIM) meeting in Prague, Czech Republic, from October 30 to November 2, 2024, for the American College of Physicians (ACP). Dr. Rebecca Opole (Governor of the ACP Kansas Chapter) and I attended the meeting as registrants and representatives of ACP. The meeting brought together more than 3,000 internal medicine physicians from about 87 countries and focused on challenges and advances in internal medicine. Prof. Richard Ceska led the program for the host country, in collaboration with the WCIM Executive Committee.



Our hosts were very generous throughout our entire stay. We stayed at the Holiday Inn Prague, adjacent to the conference venue at the Prague Congress Centre, which was quite convenient. It was also close to a subway station from which you could get downtown in just minutes instead of a full half hour through traffic. We arrived in time to settle in, get some rest, and take a walk around the neighborhood, eventually ending up for dinner at the Vysehradsky Restaurant Kandelabr for our first taste of an authentic Czech meal. I had the cream sauce with a slice of beef, a Czech staple that I was told “every Czech Mom knows how to cook,” and Beck had the duck confit, another Czech classic. What a delicious way to start our stay!

Day 1: On our first full day, after registering for the conference, we took the subway to downtown Prague for a little sightseeing, including Wenceslas Square, St. Henry's Tower, and the Astronomical Clock. Prague is a beautiful, old, and very well-preserved city that is easily walkable, with a very efficient public transportation system.



In the afternoon, we attended some of the early conference sessions prior to the opening ceremony. There was a very good session on updates in diabetes care and a more basic session on GI bleed. The sessions were geared to a variety of learners at all levels, with select basic sessions for students and residents. We got together with our host, Prof. Richard Ceska, and other International Society of Internal Medicine (ISIM) colleagues including Drs. Virginia Hood, John Kolbe, and Hans-Peter Kohler. We also met with the Taiwan delegation, many of whom we had met at ACP Internal Medicine Meeting 2024, where they invited us to WCIM in 2026 to be hosted in Taipei, Taiwan.



Dr. Isaac Opole with the Taiwan Society of Internal Medicine delegation



Dr. Rebecca Opole with Dr. Virginia Hood



Prof. Richard Ceska

Day 2: After some early morning sightseeing, we met with Dr. Virginia Hood, ISIM President-elect, who gave me great insight into the work of the Executive Committee, ISIM programs around the world, and ISIM efforts to promote and assist internal medicine physicians and programs in countries with limited resources, particularly in Africa and South America. She described a successful engagement with physicians in Botswana and regional countries as well as a recent program in Guatemala.

That evening, Prof. Ceska hosted us for dinner and cocktails at the Parliament building of the Czech Republic. At the dinner, I met with Drs. Claudia Arias and Lorenzo Diaz Salazar, both on the ISIM council. I also met Profs. Piotr Gajewski and Roman Jaeschke, both with affiliations in Poland and the McMaster Institute.



Dr. Virginia Hood and Dr. Isaac Opole



Dr. Lorenzo Diaz Salazar, Dr. Isaac Opole, and Dr. Claudia Arias



Prof. Roman Jaeschke; Drs. Rebecca Opole, Isaac Opole, Virginia Hood; Prof. Piotr Gajewski; Dr. John Kolbe

Day 3: There were a lot of ongoing programs at WCIM, and we attended morning sessions, including "Updates in Diabetes" and "Hypertension." This was also the day of our panel/plenary session with Dr. Kolbe and Dr. Reinold Gans, discussing internal medicine training and specialization around the world. Dr. Kolbe led with "Internal Medicine: The Global View"; I followed up, discussing "Internal Medicine in the

United States," and Dr. Gans discussed "The Future of Education in Internal Medicine." After the plenary session, we held an hour-long session with a group of students interested in pursuing internal medicine residencies in the United States. The students expressed frustration in lacking opportunities to do electives via the VSLO® program, but it was a great meeting, and we in turn were able to alert them to ACP resources for students and IMGs.



Dr. Isaac Opole, Dr. John Kolbe, and Dr. Reinold Gans

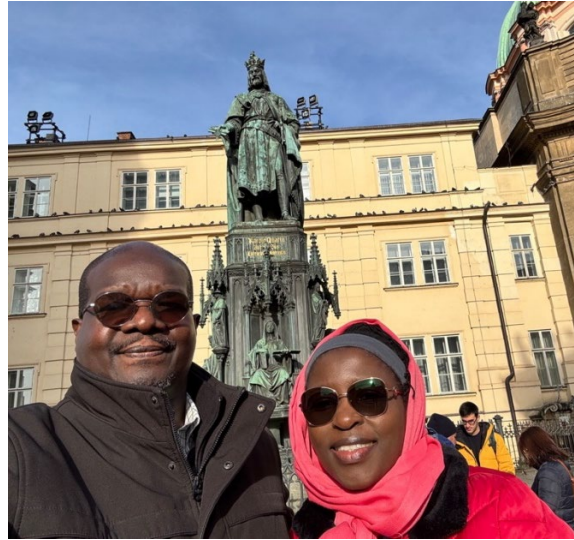
The afternoon consisted of the ISIM Executive Committee meeting, where officers and committee members transitioned. Dr. Virginia Hood assumed her role as President, ISIM. Prof. Frederik Bester and I were elected to the ISIM Executive Committee. Upon adjournment, Steering Committee members later reconvened for dinner in downtown Prague, which was another lovely experience!



Day 4: This was a short session, which included the closing ceremony for the Congress. Nonetheless, there were several superb sessions, particularly the short oral presentation sessions, where (mostly) early career physicians and trainees showcased their work in 6-minute presentations. There was also an excellent session on “Choosing Wisely,” that is, the relative value of screening and when to consider not screening, as well as an update in endocrinology. The closing ceremony was brief but poignant with Dr. Ceska recognized for his service and for hosting the meeting.



Day 5: Not having any more conference duties, we took some time to enjoy the beauty of Prague. We had a delicious brunch at an Indian restaurant near the Bazilika svatého Petra a Pavla (Basilica of St. Peter and St. Paul) and then took a guided tour of Prague Castle starting from Charles Bridge. In the evening, we watched the changing of the guard at the main entrance to the Prime Minister’s office, under the famous Wrestling Titans statues.



Regretfully, our trip had to end, but I believe that it was a very fruitful engagement for me personally and also for ACP. Seeing so many young, industrious, and enthusiastic internal medicine physicians from across the globe was refreshing and eye-opening, and I must give full credit to Prof. Ceska and the organizing team for a job extremely well done. For the College, this was a major achievement in maintaining a strong link and commitment to a global organization encompassing more than 60 medical societies, a bond that has been further enhanced by having a seat on the ISIM Executive Committee. The College looks forward to the continued collaborations at the future WCIM meetings planned for Taiwan, the Philippines, and Colombia, and I look forward to our continued engagement with our friends and global community.