

ESPE Caucasus & Central Asia School

ESPE C&CA 2021 was planned to be held in Tbilisi, but unfortunately the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted all the plans and we had to cancel the face to face school. Since the school is popular and more than 50 applications had been received, the steering committee members were highly motivated to keep the school alive and to hold two online webinars inviting all the applicants to participate.

The decision was to proceed, and ESPE Council and the ESPE Education and Training Committee were very supportive of the C&CA School faculty in this initiative and an events manager was provided to aid the faculty.

The teaching faculty (Prof Jan Lebl, Prof Francesco Chiarelli, Prof Rasa Verkauskiene, Prof Malcolm Donaldson, Dr Malika Alimussina, Dr Gunduz Ahmadov, Dr Elena Lundberg, Dr Alina German) re-structured the scientific program to optimize the online interaction. We were ably and expertly assisted by the events manager (Kate Chick) and technical support (Luke Bennett). In preparation for the school, rehearsals were arranged for students and teachers to familiarize their use of the web platform. On Wednesday 6th October the webinar focused on the main paediatric diabetes topics and on Friday 8th October the paediatric endocrinology webinar focused on growth and puberty disorders and congenital hypothyroidism diagnosis and treatment issues. The participants were happy to discover and learn about the opportunities of using the ESPE e-learning portal translated into Russian.



The faculty met prior to the first webinar to discuss any logistical issues. During the school, small group teachers' cases discussions were undertaken using online breakout rooms, participants were active in asking questions and cameras were kept on at all times!

The special challenge was to manage bi-lingual school in online format, where most of the students are Russian speaking only and some of the teachers are English speaking only and the event managers Kate and Luke were English speaking also. To deal with the challenge all teachers' slides were in Russian and all teachers used subtitles during the discussions.

To close our last webinar, the most musical teacher, Malcolm Donaldson, performed a popular Russian song which he played on his guitar, and all the school participants joined in and sang!

The evaluation forms filled in by our students were very positive, suggesting its feasibility and successful outcome.

Although really promising, we are really looking forward to organizing the next C&CA School in Tbilisi in April 2022 with a "face to face approach" improving the future schools with new insights reached during this experience.

You can take a look at the impressive group picture of the school teachers and the participants and also the event managers Kate and Luke.

Dr Alina German

Lead ESPE C&CA School,

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