

**25th Graz conference  
(European conference on veterinary and medical education, ECVME)  
organized by the University of Veterinary Medicine, Budapest**

**History**

The constant development of medical and veterinary education was always crucial, but in the last decades it has moved more in focus. Numerous highly ranked journals and conferences specialize on this topic. One of them is an international educational conference, the Graz Conference (GraCo). This event took place first in 1995 in Graz, Austria and the name of conference comes from this as well ([www.grazconference.at](http://www.grazconference.at)). The idea of the conference was initiated by three medical doctors (Herbert Plass, Karl Kremser and Matthäus Grasl), who realized the importance of the improvement and modernisation of the medical teaching. In the first 10 years (with 2 years left out) the conference was organized in Graz, later it was rotated between Vienna, Innsbruck and Salzburg. In 2012 the organizers decided to choose a foreign city for the event, Timisoara (Romania), and the official language of the conference became English with a half-day German program.

The University of Veterinary Medicine, Budapest (UVMB) participated first in 2016, in Vienna. As part of the EU project WatchMe ([www.watchme.eu](http://www.watchme.eu)) we presented the results of the consortium on a poster and won the „Poster Prize” (Figure 1.).



Figure 1.: Chantal Duijn (the Netherlands) and Míra Mándoki standing next to the award winner poster on the Graz Conference in Vienna, in 2016

Next year (2017) the conference was organized by the Medical Faculty in University of Szeged (Hungary) and from our university, Tibor Bartha and Míra Mándoki were invited to the organizing committee. From that year besides medical education there were sessions for veterinary education as well. From 2016 the UVMB participated on each Graz conference with lectures, workshops, posters and with moderation of sessions or as expert in round table discussions (Figure 2.).

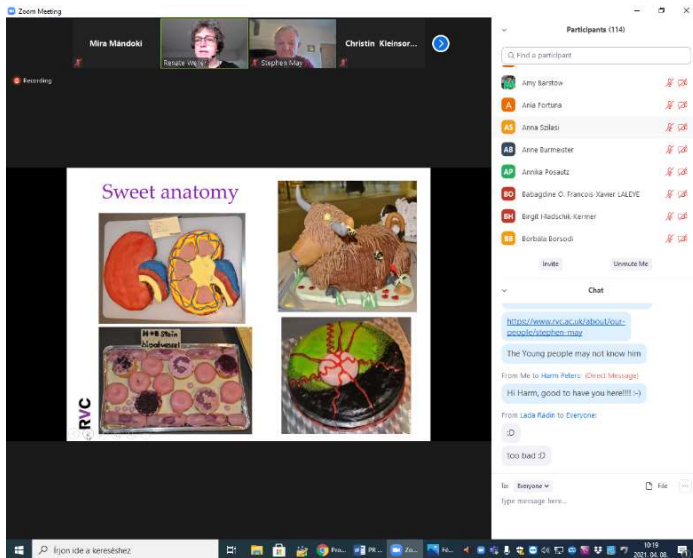


Figure 2.: Tibor Bartha at the Graz conference on the Round table discussion „Where to is Medical Education Going” in Maribor, in 2018

The organization rights for 2020 were given to the UVMB by the three founders. Unfortunately, due to the corona virus pandemic the event which was planned for April 2020, was cancelled. We were hoping to organize it in a later date but it was not possible in 2020. In 2021 the GraCo was put in an online space on Zoom platform because of the travel restrictions and lockdown regulations in all countries.

## Last year's event

The GraCo has a main theme every year and in 2021 it was “Teaching life skills in medical education”. Besides lectures about the life skills topic other interesting lectures were also included in the program. The lectures were given by well-known international experts of the fields. In the morning Prof. Tibor Bartha (Hungary) opened the event, greeted the participants and then Karl Kremser (Austria) highlighted the history of GraCo on behalf of the Austrian Society for Higher Education (Österreichische Gesellschaft für Hochschuldidaktik, ÖGHD). Lada Radin (Croatia) introduced the SoftVets project and its recent results. After this intro session the professional presentations started.



Sarah Baillie and Philip Duffus (UK) talked about the rapid expansions of Clinical Skills Labs (CSLs) in veterinary establishments. Renate Weller (Germany) and Stephen May (UK) emphasized the engagement of students in their own learning through student-led educational projects in the lecture “Students as Creators” (Figure 3.).

Figure 3.: „Sweet anatomy” – students presenting their anatomical knowledge on pastries

After the coffee break, Nicole Mastebroek (the Netherlands) veterinarian-psychologist gave insights and guidelines how to preserve mental health and prevent burn-out in veterinary profession. Vlatko Ilijeski (North-Macedonia) put an accent on the ethical education of students using ethical matrix framework. Following the lunchbreak, the only medical doctor presenter of that year, Harm Peters (Germany) talked about the importance of improving entrepreneurial skills of medical students using innovative methods. Birgit Hladtschik-Kermer (Austria) shared her experiences about “What and How to teach communication skills in veterinary medicine”. She explained the positive effect of involving actors in simulation plays for teaching communication. The last lecturer was Natalia Strokowska (Poland) on the topic “Online communication in vets” who enlightened why and how could we make it better.

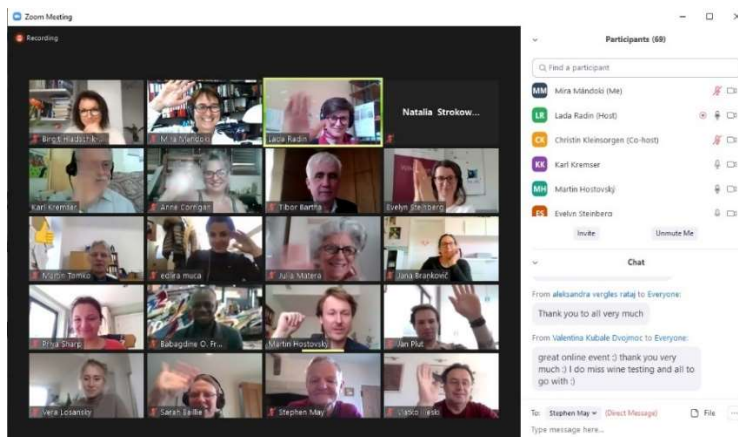


Figure 4.: Participants of the online 24th Graz conference waving “good bye” to each other

During the online registration process 250 people registered from different (medical, veterinary, educational, etc.) fields. High number of students also registered which means they are interested in new ways of teaching and their own education. Around 180 participants showed up finally during the conference either for shorter duration (e.g., focusing on one lecture) or following the whole conference.

The number of active participants was between 100-110 for the whole program. Besides Europe we had participants from Australia, Asia, USA, South America and Canada increasing the value of this international event.

The 30-minute-long lectures were followed by “Questions&Answers” session where the participants asked many questions and gave useful remarks either in the chat or using their microphones. All session had a moderator who introduced the presenters and coordinated the discussions.

The chirrupy conference ended way after the planned time as after the closing remarks of Tibor Bartha and Karl Kremser, the participants continued chatting with each other (Figure 4.).

We had a successful conference! The Covid pandemic hindered us from gathering together in real life having small talks over coffee, enjoying the indelible poster party or the usual Gala dinner and the important networking.

### **“New era in veterinary and medical education!”**

The UVMB offered the organization of the GraCo in 2022 to be able to show our fantastic campus and hospitality.

The topic of this year’s conference is:

**the use of artificial intelligence, digital technologies, and virtual reality**  
in our education.

We invited as lecturer Prof. Pierre Lekeux, the director of European System of Evaluation of Veterinary Training (ESEVT), Dr. Andrew Maccabe, Chief Executive Officer at Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges (AAVMC), Prof. Sarah Baillie Emeritus Professor from Bristol Veterinary School and other Hungarian and international experts on the field.

ARworks company ([www.arworks.com](http://www.arworks.com)) will provide onsite live demo with the virtual/augmented reality (VR/AR).

More info about program, registration and registration fee will come soon.

Let’s meet in April 2022 hopefully face-to-face!

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If you want to get some insight of the conferences, please check our Picture galleries:

- [http://www.vetphysiol.hu/tibor/2016/graz\\_conference/](http://www.vetphysiol.hu/tibor/2016/graz_conference/)
- <http://www.vetphysiol.hu/tibor/2018/maribor/>