

Dear 19th IABS Congress Participants:

We sincerely hope this email finds each of you healthy and in good spirits.

With the development of COVID-19 into a global pandemic, international travel has become extremely problematic. The situation here in Korea is currently stabilizing, thanks to the concerted and integrated efforts of the government, health care professionals, and civil society. Other parts of the world are not faring as well now, and the situation may soon spiral out of control in regions with less robust public health systems. Cross-border travel restrictions are being imposed in many places. Given all these developments, plus the uncertainty as to how this novel virus will behave in different environments and seasons, it is now virtually impossible to predict what conditions will be like in mid-August of this year.

It is for this reason that we, the organizing committee of the 19th IABS Congress have decided it would be best to postpone the Congress. We propose that it be held exactly one year later, August 16-20, 2021.

We will send out another Circular, the Fourth Circular, on September 1, 2020 which will include the updated program information. Here are some matters that participants would want to know now:

1. Program

Those who have been chosen to present at the Congress are assured of a spot on the new program. We understand that there may be some individuals who were selected to present at this year's Congress but would not be able to attend the event if held next year. We would ask that those who want to cancel their participation next year convey this to us by email (iabs2020@snu.ac.kr) by April 30. Those presenters from whom we have not heard by that date we will assume do intend to participate; their spots on the program of the postponed event are assured. Later requests for cancellation will of course be considered; however, we need to have at least a rough idea of how many individuals chosen for the current program are likely to not attend next year, so that we can begin developing the program for 2021. We wish to be as flexible as possible in adjustments, consistent with the overall coherence of the program.

2. Payment

We would like to reserve the fees of those who have already registered and can now commit to coming to the postponed meeting. Those who have paid the registration fee but will not be coming to the rescheduled event will have their fees refunded, but with the transaction fee deducted. In accordance with PayPal rules, you will have 180 days from the date on which you made your payment to request a refund, so you have some time to reach a decision.

We will resume receiving registrations of those who want to participate in IABS 2021 on January 15, 2021.

3. Hotel Reservations

Our team have cancelled all the reservations made at the two official hotels – Novotel and Ibis. Those who booked in either of these hotels do not need to do anything. Reservations made at Hoam Faculty House, the hotel on campus, will be transferred, at the same price, to the equivalent dates next year, unless informed otherwise by you. We have secured a block of 82 rooms for now. Our Accommodations team will start receiving reservation requests from January 15, 2021 by email at iabs.hoam@gmail.com.

Much work has gone into preparations for the 2020 event, and it is with considerable sadness that we decide on its postponement. But it seems clear to us that this is the only prudent course to take at present. We are all sincerely hopeful that the health crisis will be mitigated by August 2021 and we can finally hold a successful Congress.

Sincerely,

Eun-su Cho
Chair, 19th IABS Congress Planning Committee