

Ambition 2015 – 21st April, Olympia, London

Ambition 2015 was a very small part of the Counter Terror Expo, which also featured the Forensics Europe Expo. I visited on 21st April to evaluate its suitability for Viamed to exhibit at.

The whole event hosted around 300 exhibitors and the breakdown was approximately:

- 70% Counter Terror
- 20% Forensics
- 10% Ambition

The exhibition as a whole was overwhelmingly geared towards counter-terrorism, security, cyber-security etc., with the Ambition section appearing to be a minor sideline to the main focus and was also overshadowed by the Forensics section.

Ambition is primarily targeted at people and organisations involved in emergency preparedness, resilience and response (EPRR) and the focus was most definitely towards security, disaster planning, inter-agency co-operation as opposed to a straightforward medical exhibition.

Other than one company supplying AEDs, there was very little of what Viamed would consider as our field of medical equipment on display in the Ambition section. There were related medical products such as chemical hazard suits, medical equipment bags (not with equipment), emergency thermal blankets, spine boards, pop-up shelters, snow chains for emergency vehicles, wound management etc.

The only straightforward monitoring company scheduled to attend was Masimo but they didn't show up, leaving an empty 3m x 2m corner stand.

Other medical related exhibitors included charities, publishers, training companies, consultancy companies, but no direct representation by NHS Trusts.

I chatted with a number of exhibitors and swapped details with a couple of companies but did not come away with any noteworthy leads.

I did meet one customer of ours: Spadeadam Test Facility (on Opera as GL Industrial Services) who purchases R-22AV sensors for use during gas dispersion and explosion tests. They are happy with them and will purchase them as and when a test comes up that requires them. They had a minor issue with temperature compensation: when cold gas was introduced to them, the temperature compensation couldn't keep up but they solved this themselves with complementary temperature compensation of their own design. I advised that we could look at solving any problems such as this with different sensors but he said that they have things working fine.

There were 5 separate congress / conferences going on. They took the form of open presentations in seating areas in the main exhibition hall.

- World Counter Terror Congress 2015
- Critical National Infrastructure 2015
- Cyber Threat Intelligence 2015
- Transport Security Live 2015
- Ambition - Emergency Preparedness, Resilience and Response 2015

The first 4 offered nothing even slightly related to Viamed's area but I did listen in on a few of the Ambition presentations in the hope of picking up something useful.

I watched a half-hour presentation concerning the Ambulance Trusts' specialist HART teams but this was solely focussed on compliance with the government's requirement for all emergency services to work towards inter-organisational co-operation, particularly in relation to a major terror attack.

One interesting fact that came out during this was a declaration by a spokesperson for NARU (The National Ambulance Resilience Unit) that the number of 999 calls that UK Ambulance Trusts have responded to has risen around 30% in the last 10 years and, if it continues to do so without considerable investment, the Ambulance Service is heading for meltdown in just a few years time.

In summary, as the visitor base seemed overwhelmingly unrelated to medical equipment, and the real size of Ambition was no more than 20+ stands in an area not much bigger than Viamed's main stock room, it felt to me to be an afterthought to the Counter-Terror exhibition and not big enough to stand on its own. As such, I don't think it is suitable for us in its present form and at the moment we should look at exhibitions that are more focussed towards medical.