

The European Neuroendocrine Tumor Society (ENETS)

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In this issue:

4th Annual ENETS Conference in Barcelona:

Nearly 800 participants representing 50 countries;

91 abstracts submitted;

Prof. Lars Grimelius of Uppsala recognized for his life achievements

Letter from the Chairman

On behalf of the ENETS Executive Committee, I hope that our annual conference, if you attended this prestigious meeting in Barcelona in March, was of benefit to you. We have received positive and very encouraging comments from many participants about the scientific program, as well as the conference location and organization. Work has already begun on next year's meeting, which will be held in Paris, 6–8 March 2008. This year's conference attracted around 800 participants, and we expect to see even more interest in Paris in 2008. Online registration is expected to begin this summer.



Wouter de Herder, MD

Inside this edition of the ENETS Newsletter, you'll find a summary on the Barcelona conference and, on the back page, a protocol of the Society's General Assembly meeting. This year's conference brought you news of the Society's work in the last year, on the revisions of the ENETS Guidelines, specifically on tumors of the stomach, pancreas and duodenum. I heard very favorable responses to this achievement, and am especially pleased that work is steadily being done on revising the sections of the Guidelines on tumors of the small intestine, appendix, colon and rectum. We are aiming for publication of these guidelines by September 2007.

The number of abstracts at this year's conference – 91 – is also something to be proud of. I would like to congratulate again all those who submitted abstracts, both as posters and as oral presentations, and also the six winners of the abstract prizes, all of them younger than 40 years old (for basic research: Drs. *Rosario Pivonello*, of Naples, 1st prize; *Alena Shyla*, of Neuherberg, Germany, 2nd prize; and *Janet Cunningham*, Uppsala, Sweden, 3rd prize; and for clinical research: Drs. *Christina Swärd*, Gothenborg, Sweden, 1st prize; *Sanjeev Bhattacharyya*, London, 2nd prize; and *Jonathan Strosberg*, Tampa, FL, USA, 3rd prize). Their work holds great promise. The research being done in the field of neuroendocrine tumor disease and the growing interest in ENETS is truly impressive, yet one of our goals now is to expand that interest even further next year in Paris. I look forward to presenting the latest advances next spring.

Finally, I would like to extend my appreciation to Prof. *Lars Grimelius*, this year's recipient of the ENETS Life Achievement Award, for attending the conference and sharing with us his valuable contributions and experiences. As Prof. *Kjell Öberg* made clear during his presentation of the award, Prof. Grimelius' development of the silver staining of argyrophil cells paved the way for everything that would follow up to today's NET research. We are indebted to him for his work and I thank him, as well as all of you, for attending the conference in Barcelona.

Wouter de Herder, MD, *Chairman ENETS*

4th Annual ENETS Conference for the Diagnosis and Treatment of Neuroendocrine Tumor Disease

Barcelona, 15–17 March 2007

By Elizabeth Zach and Ulrich-Frank Pape

Until the moments of the ENETS Barcelona conference opening on 15 March, and even until the final day of the meeting, physicians were still registering to attend, hoping to catch a glimpse of the latest NET research on display. About 800 scientists attended the conference, representing 50 countries and all relevant disciplines, and 91 abstracts were submitted, the highest yet for the Society's annual meeting.

The conference consisted of seven sessions, including two abstract sessions (one for basic science, the second for clinical), and covered consensus on the ENETS Guidelines, rare hereditary diseases, plenary case discussions, NET associations outside of Europe, surgery of NETs, and new therapies and clinical trials. The conference organizers are pleased to have received very positive feedback from many in attendance and are already at work preparing the next annual conference, to be held in Paris, 6–8 March 2008.

The first session, on 15 March, focused on the work completed over the past year and a half toward updating the ENETS Guidelines on diagnosing and treating foregut neuroendocrine tumors. Presentations were also given to showcase the current effort toward revising the Guidelines dealing with midgut and hindgut tumors.

Participants were also introduced to **Lars Grimelius**, this year's recipient of the ENETS Life Achievement Award. Presenting the award, **Kjell Öberg**, noted how his mentor and collaborator used to store his specimens underneath his bed, and how Grimelius named a favorite horse of his, 'Silver', in the United States, after the silver staining method developed by him. The dedication to Prof. Grimelius was preceded by **Burkhard Göke** of Munich remembering one of NET's finest researchers, **Werner Creutzfeldt**, recipient of the Society's 2005 Life Achievement Award and mentor to Göke, who presented the award to his teacher at the ENETS annual conference in Cracow. Prof. Creutzfeldt died 30 August 2006 at the age of 82.

The session that seemed to engage the audience the most was that composed of plenary case discussions. Presentations were introduced by a junior investigator to a senior investigator from a hospital different from his own. Then, a senior investigator from the same hospital as the junior investigator guided. The junior investigator fielded questions from the 'experts' and the audience was encouraged to ask questions about the case. At the end of the presentation, the junior investigator and his supervisor summarized what happened to the patient. The four cases were taken from hospitals in Clichy, Uppsala, Berlin, and London.



Lars Grimelius accepting the praise and honor of the Society's Life Achievement Award.



Jose Angel Diaz Perez of Madrid and Ramon Salazar of Barcelona moderate during the plenary case discussion.



Apostolos Tsolakis of Uppsala presents his case during the plenary discussion.



Martyn Caplin of London fields questions during the plenary case discussion.



Christos Toumpanakis of London presents his case during the plenary case discussion.

An interesting session on global perspectives in neuroendocrine tumor disease offered news on the organization, research and clinical work with patients in South America, namely Argentina and Brazil, by **Fabiana Marmisolle** and **Riad Younes** and, in China **Yuan-Jia Chen**. Finally, the president of the newly founded Northern American Neuroendocrine Tumor Society NANETS **Larry Kvols** introduced his society as the northern American counterpart to ENETS.



Dermot O'Toole of Angers shows there's humor, too, in scientific endeavors.



Richard Warner and Michail Shafir, both of New York, share a laugh during a session break.

The clinical abstract session covered areas like retrospective series on Merkel cell carcinoma metastatic carcinoid disease of the ovary; recent results on peptide receptor radionuclide therapy using Lu-177 DOTA-NOC or Lu-177 DOTA-TATE, as well as studies on the use of NT-proBNP as a biomarker for carcinoid heart disease and, finally an outcome analysis of hepatic arterial embolization. The basic research abstract session dealt with topics such as the relationship of tachykinin production to symptoms of diarrhea in serotonin-positive NETs; the role of mTOR as a target in NETs and NE cell lines; chromogranin A as a marker for carcinoid tumor response in xenografted nude mice; the potential role of dopamine receptor expression in medullary thyroid cancer; ghrelin expression in gastric endocrine tumors and genetic alterations in MENX; and a rat model of multiple endocrine neoplasia.



Riad Younes of Sao Paolo exudes enthusiasm as he describes NET research in Brazil.



Yuan-Jia Chen of Beijing shares with the crowd what China is doing in the NET field.



Rodney Reznek of London presenting his work on CT and MRI of NET.

Recent advances and future perspectives in clinical diagnosis and treatment of NET patients were the focus of sessions on hereditary aspects of neuroendocrine tumor disease, endoscopic, radiologic and molecular imaging, as well as overviews of surgical approaches in treating of NET. The conference ended with an inspiring session on new therapies and clinical trials, which included presentations on SOM230, everolimus, chimeric molecules, antiangiogenic concepts, small molecules and recent peptide receptor radionuclide therapy trials.

ENETS members were also invited to attend the Society's annual gathering of its General Assembly. Chairman **Wouter de Herder** of Rotterdam presented an overview of membership, which stands at nearly 400, and of the Society's activities in 2006 and planned events for the coming year. The former includes the ENETS Guidelines revisions, and the latter a conference toward establishing an ENETS tumor registry. He also discussed the Society's task forces and the continued interest among members to join.



Reza Kianmanesh of Colombes, France, discusses surgery of the liver.



Massimo Falconi of Verona presenting on surgery of pancreatic NET.



Dik Kwekkeboom of Rotterdam presenting details of his clinical trial.



Jonathan Strosberg of Tampa, FL, with a prize for his abstract on metastatic carcinoid tumor to the ovary. His colleague, Larry Kvols, also of Tampa, looks just as pleased.



Sanjeev Bhattacharyya of London with recognition of his outstanding clinical research abstract NT-proBp as a biomarker for the development of carcinoid heart disease.

The Society also awarded prizes for the best abstracts presented at the conference. Three each were given in both the basic science and clinical research categories. The basic science awards went to **Rosario Pivonello** of Naples; **Alena Shyla** of Neuherberg, Germany; and **Janet Cunningham** of Uppsala, Sweden. The clinical research abstract awards went to **Christina Swärd** of Gothenborg, Sweden; **Sanjeev Bhattacharyya** of London; **Jonathan Strosberg** of Tampa, FL.

But, finally, the conference was not all work and no play. Participants were also offered a chance to see a bit of Barcelona. Guided tours transported all interested to Gaudi's unique Sagrada Familia, as well as his other notable architecture around the city. The tour also wound through the Montjuïc, the Passeig de Gràcia, and the Mirador de Alcalde. A gala dinner at the Hilton Diagonal Mar hotel followed, accompanied by Spanish guitar music.



Christina Swärd of Uppsala, Sweden, with her clinical research abstract prize.



Alena Shyla of Neuherberg, Germany, poses with the prize for her abstract.



Barbro Eriksson of Uppsala and Monica Warner of New York during a session break.



Rosario Pivonello of Naples was awarded for his abstract on dopamine receptor expression and dopamine agonist effectiveness in medullary thyroid cancer.

Protocol of the General Assembly of the European Neuroendocrine Tumor Society (ENETS)

Held in Barcelona, Spain, on 15 March 2007, 6:00–7:00 p.m.

The annual General Assembly of ENETS was held during the 4th Annual ENETS Conference In Barcelona. The invitation was sent out to all ENETS members on 22 February, 2007, along with the meeting agenda. For the General Assembly session, 111 ENETS members were present, including all members of the Extended Executive Committee (Wouter de Herder, Guido Rindi, Bertram Wiedenmann, Ursula Plöckinger, Martyn Caplin, Barbro Eriksson and Philippe Ruszniewski).

The members were welcomed by the ENETS chairman, Wouter de Herder, who presented a summary of the year's events and other items listed on the agenda. He demonstrated that while membership in the Society has grown, it has also been hampered by a number of members not paying their dues. While membership increased from 270 members in 2005 to 378 in 2006, the Society also had to disband 74 members in that time period for failure to pay their 2005 annual dues. Despite this, however, by March 2007, the Society could claim 393 members, with a total number of 112 new members joining in 2006 and, 25 since 1 January 2007.

Ursula Plöckinger then presented the treasury report, showing both received and planned incomes and expenditures. She outlined the grants ENETS received in 2006 for the planning of the annual meeting in 2006 in Prague, as well as for the second ENETS Guidelines conference in November 2006 in Frascati, Italy. With grant funding, too, the Society had the assistance of two part-time workers and a student assistant, and also was able to cover office and Internet (website maintenance) costs, as well as the preliminary work on an ENETS tumor registry, i.e. a brainstorming meeting held in Berlin in mid-December 2006.

In looking at 2007, the Society will need to continue to fund the above-mentioned items, and will also need to cover the further establishment of an ENETS tumor registry. Other plans include an epidemiology conference and prepayments for the next annual meeting, to be held 6–8 March 2008 in Paris.

Upon completion of the financial report, ENETS member Eric Krenning of Rotterdam applauded the Society's fiscal responsibility. Both Drs. Plöckinger and de Herder responded that the financial stability of the Society is thanks to the help of the ENETS accountant, Małgorzata Szott-Emus.

Dr. Plöckinger also showed the Society's accounting and bank statements for 2005 and 2006, and demonstrated that they accurately reflect each other. She also discussed plans to have an audit of the Society carried out, and following that, verification by an accountant.

Dr. de Herder discussed the Society's work of the past year. This included the revision of the ENETS Guidelines for treating and diagnosing foregut NETs. These revisions were published in the February 2007 issue of *Neuroendocrinology* and reflect an international effort of 62 authors from 20 countries. Additionally, the Society saw publication of TNM staging published in *Virchows Archiv* in September 2006.

He also said that at the Society's previous annual conference, in 2006, 706 scientists from 39 countries were in attendance and 80 abstracts were submitted. The Barcelona conference registered 772 scientists from 50 countries, and there were 91 abstracts submitted. Moreover, the Frascati consensus conference (II), held in November 2006, was an international effort of 57 scientists from 18 countries, and participants are currently working on revising the ENETS Guidelines on diagnosing and treating tumors of the small intestine, colon and rectum. Ongoing work, he said, includes establishing an ENETS tumor registry.

Finally, Dr. de Herder discussed briefly the next annual conference and requests he has received from several members that this meeting have a fixed date every year so as not to collide with other scientific meetings. ENETS member Nick Reed, in the audience, reiterated this request. And member Christos Toumpanakis suggested that if the Society has yet to select a city for the 2009 meeting, that he would be ready to suggest one. Dr. de Herder responded that paramount in choosing a city is expenses and also access.

Dr. Plöckinger then resumed the stage to present a plan to establish ENETS Centers of Excellence. She discussed the need for this project so as to give NET patients better care, to improve communication and to establish standards of diagnosis. ENETS Centers of Excellence would ensure and promote quality management, she said, and she further discussed plans for a NET registry, tissue bank, student exchange and summer school.

Member Nick Reed commented on the benefits and rewards of these plans and that all require great commitment – a commodity at a time when every one is so busy. He cautioned against the cost of these plans. Member Dermot O'Toole also commented that with such plans, while commendable, the Society could lose a great deal very quickly. He questioned whether there were plans to target sponsors other than Novartis and Ipsen, and he suggested European funding, i.e. non-industrial, independent support.

Dr. de Herder responded that European Community framework programs may support funding of projects involved in orphan diseases and he agreed to investigate this avenue, but he also said he is pleased with the current financial support ENETS receives. Vice chairman Bertram Wiedenmann commented that costs will remain an issue with all ENETS activities, and that what the Society needs is focus, possibly certified centers, and that ENETS should seek matched funding for its projects.

The General Assembly was adjourned at 7:00 p.m.
Barcelona, March 15, 2007

Wouter de Herder, MD
Chairman
Rotterdam, The Netherlands

Bertram Wiedenmann, MD
Vice Chairman
Berlin, Germany