Winter 2014

Letter from the Chairman

On behalf of the ENETS Executive Committee, as well as our Advisory Board, I’m pleased to present this latest edition of the ENETS Newsletter. Inside, you’ll find an overview of our most current events, specifically the annual meeting of the Advisory Board, which was held in Amsterdam in November.

The conference was significant in part because of exciting plans to expand ENETS so that the up-and-coming generation of clinicians and researchers can have more chances to increase their knowledge and professional experience in diagnosing and treating neuroendocrine tumor disease. On the back page of the Newsletter, you can read about our intentions to create more fellowships and grants, and as well, to organize more training seminars. We expect these to be in place by mid-2014.

We’re now looking ahead to the 2014 Annual Conference which will be held again in Barcelona. The ENETS website has been updated to make it more user-friendly, and all information about the conference can be found there. If you haven’t yet registered, I encourage you to do so. The conference program can be viewed via the ENETS website and includes the popular postgraduate course again, Meet the Professor sessions, more abstract presentations than in previous years, two tumor boards, sessions on carcinoid patient management, genomic sequencing, a pro-con debate on liver metastases and industry symposia. We will also have, for the first time in Europe, a young investigator abstract session sponsored in cooperation with NANETS.

ENETS members, as well, are encouraged to visit the Centers of Excellence pages of the ENETS website. Program training will be held in Barcelona during the conference and you may be interested in having your Center apply for certification.

Again, I thank you for your support and interest in ENETS, and in making it a viable and worthwhile medical society. I welcome all members to let us know how we can improve ENETS, and we look forward to your further engagement in the Society and in neuroendocrine tumor research.

Kjell Öberg, Uppsala, Sweden
ENETS has a large Advisory Board which meets at intervals, usually around once a year, to explore various areas which we believe impact the diagnosis and/or therapy of NETs, and which may be of use to our members. On this occasion we met in Amsterdam on November 1st 2013 under the Chairmanship of Kjell Öberg to look at bronchial carcinoids, the formulation of an ENETS data-registry, the assessment of response parameters, ENETS Centers of Excellence, and finally our progress on awarding grants and prizes.

Martyn Caplin, Chairman-Elect of ENETS, summarized the deliberations of his working group on bronchial carcinoids. There was much discussion of nomenclature and pathology, especially as there was still a lack of updating of the term ‘carcinoids’ in tumors of broncho-pulmonary origin. It was decided to use the portmanteau term ‘broncho-pulmonary carcinoids’ for the moment as the most widely accepted and useful terminology, but clearly this area will develop in the future. The rest of the document summarizing the current ideas, diagnostic modalities and therapies of these relatively rare tumors was also discussed, and it was generally agreed to be a very useful and forward-looking document which will be of great use to all those involved in the care of NETs. It is hoped it will be published in full in the near future.

In a rather less encouraging vein, it was revealed that serious problems had arisen in developing the ENETS supra-national data registry, and that essentially the project had been forced to come to a premature closure. This was clearly very disappointing after all the time and effort that had been put into it by large numbers of enthusiastic members; however, it seems to have suffered the fate of many other large-scale IT projects, in which so often the ambitions of the clinicians and end-users have not been matched by the technology. For the foreseeable future it is suggested that each national group or Center of Excellence forms its own data-registry, at least until we have been able to reformulate a supra-national register.
Martyn Caplin, as President-Elect, put forward his reformulation of the Advisory Board, where the Board would consist of a number of specialist units concentrating on imaging, pathology, surgery etc. with some 5–6 members and a chair; the method of choosing these delegates to the Board, and indeed of elections to the Executive Committee itself, is yet to be finalized.

Further progress was also made with regard to the formulations of specific parameters to be used to gauge disease progression, and in particular the response to various and particularly novel therapies. While appropriate composite measures, including cross-sectional imaging, scintigraphy, biochemical and even clinical parameters, are under consideration, this work is hampered by lack of a ‘gold standard’, but will nevertheless be piloted using data-sets already available.

In terms of ENETS Centers of Excellence, Dermot O’Toole emphasized the continuing expansion of current Centers and the on-going revalidation of previous Centers; we are also considering the inclusion of other associated Centers from outside Europe.

Finally, Bertram Wiedenmann was able, due to our strong financial situation, to initiate a new series of grants and fellowships to help our growing membership, particularly the younger members.

In a short period of time, the Board, your Board, was able to progress on many topics, and we hope to continue the process at our future meetings.

Ashley Grossman
Chairman
ENETS Advisory Board

Guido Rindi, Advisory Board member and former ENETS chairman

ENETS Chairman Elect, Martyn Caplin, lectured on bronchial NETs.
**Advancing NET Education: ENETS Young Investigator Grants and Fellowships**

Since its foundation in 2004, one of the most significant platforms of ENETS has been to encourage and train the NET specialists for the coming decades. Until now, the Society has offered, with the support of Ipsen, an annual fellowship for transitional research. Fellowship recipients have used the fellowship funds to examine the role of T-Type calcium channels in the control of secretion and proliferation in GEP-NETs, and to study the role of microRNAs in small intestine neuroendocrine tumors.

The fellowships last one year and, as well, ENETS provides travel grants to young researchers wishing to attend the Society’s annual conference. The Society also awards annual best abstract prizes in both clinical and basic research.

But now, plans are underway to broaden these opportunities. At the 2013 annual conference of the ENETS Advisory Board, held in Amsterdam on 1 November, Board members considered and reviewed the Society’s options for increasing grants and, thereby too, improving patient care, as well as ENETS’ international recognition.

The concept would be to award researchers who are within a maximum of five years of completing their doctoral degree, and the emphasis would be on innovative projects. Extending the year of research would be possible. The Board members also considered training fellowships, which would be carried out at designated ENETS Centers of Excellence. These grants would cover up to six months of work.

ENETS is also looking to develop an Excellence Academy. Up to 40 participants at the Academy would be ENETS Centers of Excellence representatives, and the annual meeting would last two days. Similarly, summer (or autumn) schools, lasting up to two days and allowing for 20 participants, would include case presentations, discussions and mock tumor boards.

Stay tuned for more details on these programs. Young investigators should also visit the ENETS website to find out more about the now existing grant and fellowship opportunities preceding the ENETS 2014 Annual Conference.