

1st Aegean Epilepsy Meeting,

June 7-8, 2013

Heraklion, Crete, Greece

Meeting Report

The Department of Neurology of the University of Crete, Medical School (in Heraklion, Crete, Greece) in collaboration with the Anticonvulsant Drug Development Program, University of Utah (in Salt Lake City, Utah, USA) and the Department of Drug Design and Pharmacology, University of Copenhagen (in Copenhagen, Denmark) organized the 1st Aegean Epilepsy Meeting dedicated to the recent research advances in the field of Epilepsy. The meeting was held in Heraklion, Crete, Greece on the 7-8th of June, 2013.

Professor Andreas Plaitakis (University of Crete, Greece), Professor Steve White (University of Utah, USA) and Professor Arne Schousboe (University of Copenhagen, Denmark) acted as Co-Chairs of the Organizing Committee, whereas Dr. Ioannis Zaganas and Dr. Cleanthe Spanaki (both from the University of Crete, Greece), acted as the Co-ordinating Secretaries. The secretarial support by Ms. Irini Tzanaki was also of key importance to the success of the meeting.

The meeting was attended by about 60 participants, including young scientists and graduate students from Europe and other countries. Specifically, the country of origin of participants included Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Israel, Italy, United Kingdom and U.S.A.

Program outline: The conference was dedicated to the recent advances in the basic and clinical research in epilepsy, a key issue in neurology and neurobiology. This field has acquired increasing interest in recent years, due to advances relating to neurochemistry, neurotransmission, genetics, cellular bio-energetics, cellular signaling, metabolism, diagnostic approaches and therapeutics. Aim of this meeting was to bring together basic and clinical researchers from around the world who have a special interest in epilepsy, either at the basic science or the clinical level. This provided an opportunity for exchanging ideas in order to advance creative thinking in this field of research. This meeting, by combining the expertise of clinicians and basic researchers of different backgrounds, educated and updated participants on the most recent advances in the field of epilepsy. This, we hope, will translate to further scientific advances and better care for patients.

Meeting format: The meeting combined main lectures by established investigators with oral presentations by young investigators, while sufficient time was allowed for discussion. In total, there were 22 main presentations (of 30 minute duration) by scientists who covered several important aspects of the basic and clinical science of epilepsy, including the clinical spectrum of epilepsy syndromes, epilepsy genetics and pharmacogenomics, imaging in epilepsy, epilepsy medical and surgical treatment, epilepsy comorbidities, and glial function, GABA receptor function, hippocampal dysfunction and inflammation in epilepsy. Scientific presentations were followed by spirited discussions (about 10 minutes in duration), thus providing a unique opportunity for exchanging ideas.

Eight post-doctoral fellows and Ph.D. students made brief presentations (of 15 minutes duration) on their work related to epilepsy. These young neuroscientists presented their work on interictal hypoperfusion of affected hippocampi in mesial temporal sclerosis, on the effect of early life seizures on cortical excitability, on the cellular activation following epileptic seizures in mice with decreased inhibition, on the effect of lacosamide, topiramate and phenytoin on the peripheral nervous system of the rat, on a novel SCN1A missense mutation in a family with seizure disorder, on a case of new onset refractory status epilepticus, on narcolepsy and epilepsy in a neuronal migration disorder, and on a novel mutated SLC25 mitochondrial carrier member causing seizures in mice.

The academic merit of the participants and their significant contributions in the field made this meeting a memorable scientific and educational experience.

ISN Grant: Owing to the generous grant from the International Society for Neurochemistry, we were able to cover the travel and accommodation expenses, as well as the registration fees, of 4 young neuroscientists for their participation in the meeting. In addition, we were able to waive the registration fees for 4 additional young neuroscientists.

ISN Young Neuroscientist Grant beneficiaries (in parenthesis the amount allocated to each young neuroscientist):

- 1) Monni Rita, Genova, Italy (travel 256.90 euros, accommodation 150 euros, local transport from/to airport 70 euros, registration 300 euros)
- 2) Kirytopoulos Andreas, Thessaloniki, Greece (travel 123.90 euros, accommodation 140 euros, local transport from/to airport 52.50 euros, registration 300 euros)
- 3) Zafeiridou Georgia, Thessaloniki, Greece (travel 254.90 euros, accommodation 105 euros, local transport from/to airport 52.50 euros, registration 300 euros)
- 4) Terzenidou Maria-Irini, Athens, Greece (travel 143.64 euros, accommodation 105 euros, registration 300 euros)
- 5) Rigas Pavlos, Athens, Greece (registration 300 euros)

- 6) Dimitriou Stelios, Heraklion, Crete, Greece (registration 300 euros)
- 7) Kanatsouli Kassiani, Heraklion, Crete, Greece (registration 300 euros)
- 8) Konstantoudaki Xanthippi, Heraklion, Crete, Greece (registration 300 euros)

Thus, a total of **3,854.34** euros was allocated to the support of the Participation of Young Neuroscientists in the meeting (this corresponds to **\$4,972.10** –using an 1.29 dollar to euro rate-, or 62.15 % of the ISN Grant of **\$ 8,000**).

Note that **\$ 400** or **310.08** euros (5 % of the ISN Grant) was withheld by the University of Crete Financial Department to cover overhead expenses.

The rest of the ISN Grant (**\$ 2,627.90** or **2,037.13** euros) was allocated to expenses relating to the meeting (including meals of invited speakers **837.13** euros, fees for transfer from/to the airport **300** euros, printing of meeting brochure and program **700** euros, bus to Rethimno and back for the official dinner **200** euros).

The names of the ISN beneficiaries appear on the web page of the Meeting (www.neurologycrete.gr/epilepsy), as well as the meeting program (attached and also available for download in the meeting's site). In the first page and the sponsor page of the meeting website, there is information acknowledging the key contribution of the ISN grant for the success of this meeting.

Thank you again for your valuable contribution to the success of this meeting,

Sincerely,

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