

5th Conference of the Mediterranean Neuroscience Society (MNS)
Pula (CA), Sardinia, Italy, 12-15 June 2015



After four previous successful editions (Montpellier 1997; Marrakech 2006; Alexandria 2009; Istanbul 2012), the 5th Edition of the Meeting of the Mediterranean Neuroscience Society (MNS) took place in Santa Margherita di Pula (CA), Sardinia, Italy, on June 12-25, 2015. The 2015 MNS Meeting gathered 398 participants from 34 different Countries, including Canada, USA and Australia, and offered a rich scientific program with 6 Plenary Lecturers, 40 symposia, 1 *Hot Topic* Communications Session, 3 Oral Free Communication Sessions and 2 Poster Sessions. Social events included a welcome cocktail (June 12, afternoon), Wine & Cheese Poster Session (June 13 and 14, afternoon) and the Gala Dinner (June 14, evening) with folk music and dancing.

As detailed reported in the scientific program here attached, in this meeting we had the pleasure of welcoming an exceptional lineup of Lecturers from Spain (Carlos Belmonte), Italy (Gaetano Di Chiara), Sweden (Abdeljabbar El Manira), UK (Barry J Everitt) and USA (René Hen from Columbia University, and John Bruno from The Ohio State University). The topics of the Lectures witnessed the interdisciplinary nature of the meeting by encompassing TRP channels, Dopamine and Reward, Neural circuits for motor behavior, Compulsive drug seeking habits in addiction, Hippocampal neurogenesis and Schizophrenia. The six Plenary Lecturers were partially sponsored by prestigious and Scientific Societies such as the European Brain Behaviour Society (EBBS), the Italian Society of Drug Addiction (SITD), the Spanish Society of Neuroscience (SENC) as well as by the Frontiers open-access Journals, the University of Cagliari (UNICA) and the local no-profit Organization NeuroSardynia. For the first time in MNS Meeting history, we had 2 Joint Symposia with COST Actions, the COST Action CM1103 and the COST Action FA1301– CephInAction, along with a ISIS – NEUREN Joint Meeting.

In line with the scientific interests of symposia organizers and invited speakers, many symposia were focused on the pharmacological modulation of emotional states and behaviour as well as on the neurobiology of neuropsychiatric disorders. Drug and food addiction, pain, mood disorders (mostly anxiety and depression), motor impairment, animal models of

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neurological and psychiatric diseases, social and play behavior, memory, learning and cognition are only few examples. Indeed, speakers illustrated new advances on the nervous system functioning from molecular and cellular to behavioral level, including pathogenesis of neurodegenerative disorders, and discussed the development of and novel therapeutic approaches to mental diseases, signaling mechanisms of lipid molecules like endocannabinoids, structural features and physiological roles of K⁺ channels, epigenetic mechanisms in pathological addictions, molecular regulation of the GABA-B receptor and much more. Particular attention has been given to gender differences in mental health and disease, to translational potentials of latest findings in basic research, to personal genomics in psychiatric disorders, and to the circadian clock as an interface between the physiological processes and the environment. State-of-the art technology has been illustrated in dedicated symposia, along with newest discoveries on the role of brain neurotransmitters in regulating reward, memory, learning, cognition, sleep, motor functions, pain, eating behavior, stress and emotions.

Besides the symposia, four separate sessions of Oral Communications have been dedicated to the latest innovative findings (*Hot Topic Session*) and to youngest researchers (PhD and post-doc students) that have been selected based on the quality of the abstracts of their work (*Free Oral Communications*). During the two Wine & Cheese Poster Sessions, Poster Presenters (mostly PhD and post doc Students) had the opportunity to present their own work and to discuss data with senior neuroscientists coming from different disciplines and Mediterranean countries. The meetings have proved to be highly beneficial, not only for the scientific exchanges, but also in terms of training opportunities for students and young researchers. Thanks to financial support from the International Society of Neurochemistry (ISN) and the The Pan European Regional Committee for the International Brain Research Organization (IBRO-PERC), we have been able to provide 21 Travel Grants (500 euro each) to Young Researchers presenting a posters or giving a talk at the 2015 MNS Meeting. Selection has been made based on the scientific impact of the Abstract, the CV and the country of origin, with priority given to youngest researchers coming from Countries with limited resources. Below is the list of the 14 recipients of the Young ISN Neurochemistry Awards (see also

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TRAVEL GRANT AWARDEES at <http://mnsmeeting2015.it/index.php/about-event/at-a-glance>):

1. Mano Aliczki, Budapest, Hungary (aliczki.mano@koki.mta.hu)
2. Babinska Zuzana, Brno, Czech republic (babinska@med.muni.cz)
3. Balogh Zoltan, Budapest, Hungary (balogh.zoltan@koki.mta.hu)
4. Biro Laszlo, Budapest, Hungary (biro.laszlo@koki.mta.hu)
5. Enright Kaitlyn, Montreal, Canada (kaitlyn.enright@mail.mcgill.ca)
6. Harrington Lauriane, Paris, France (lauriane.harrington@pasteur.fr)
7. Kucerova Jana, Brno, Czech Republic (jkucer@med.muni.cz)
8. Lecca Salvatore, Paris, France (salvatore.lecca@inserm.fr)
9. Manduca Antonia, Marseille, France (antonia.manduca@inserm.fr)
10. Marchant Nathan, Baltimore, USA (nathan.marchant@nih.gov)
11. Martí-Prats Lucia, Burjassot, Spain (lucia.marti@uv.es)
12. Rosen Laura, London, Ontario, Canada (lrosen3@uwo.ca)
13. Schipper Sandra, Maastricht, The Netherlands (s.schipper@maastrichtuniversity.nl)
14. Sellami Azza, Bordeaux, France (email: sellamiazza@yahoo.fr)

As MNS members, the organizers were committed to formation/education of the new generation of neuroscientists and were trying to disseminate the information about mental health and disease in general, and neuroscience in particular. This event was originally organized to allow scientific exchange activities throughout the South and North Mediterranean Neuroscience Community. Yet, the immediate interest for this Meeting shown by leading scientists working in non-Mediterranean Countries (including USA, Canada and

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Australia) confirmed the importance to extend such exchanges, not only from a scientific point of view, but also for cultural and social reasons.

We are proud to have reached our ultimate objective to advance the understanding of the brain and the nervous system by bringing together scientists of diverse backgrounds, and by encouraging translational research and the application of new scientific knowledge to improve disease treatments and cures. We are grateful to all Sponsors listed below that have supported the Meeting, and to all exhibitors that join us in Sardinia.

SPONSORS



In our view and that of all participants (see comments at: <http://mnsmeeting2015.it/index.php/about-event/your-comments>), the meeting was a complete success from several points of view, with participation of over 150 international speakers from the North and South shores of the Mediterranean sea, from the USA, Canada

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and Australia (Chile) and of 82 students and 59 post-docs. We had exciting Plenary Lecturers and successful poster sessions with excellent presentations and discussions. Students had the possibility to discuss their results with international leaders in many fields of Neuroscience, 20 of them were selected to present their data orally in dedicated Oral Free Communication Sessions, and 21 PhD/post doc students were assigned Travel Grants thanks to ISN (14) and IBRO-PERC (7) financial support, and many students established contact for possible post-doc or short-stay visits in the USA and Europe.

Below is the financial report detailing how the total amount of money granted was used:

N° 14 TRAVEL GRANTS (500 €EACH): **\$ 8617**

SUPPLY OF SERVICES (CONFERENCE HOSTESSES, SHUTTLES FOR ATTENDEES): **\$ 5133**

Sincerely yours

Cagliari, 10 July 2015

Liana Fattore

President of the 2015 MNS Meeting