

## **Meeting report 1997**

The twenty-sixth meeting of the European Histamine Research Society was held at the Melia Lebreros Hotel Seville in May 1997 at the kind invitation of Dr Felix Lopez Elorza. One hundred and fourteen presentations were listed, although sadly not all authors managed to come and present their data. In addition to delegates from Europe, we also had representatives from Argentina, Canada, Hong Kong, Japan and North America. We were welcomed by many enthusiastic speeches in the excellent conference room of the hotel before a lovely open air party by the swimming pool on Wednesday evening. Thursday was opened by a splendid GB West lecture given by Professor E Neugebauer (Cologne, Germany) and entitled "Histamine and antihistamine drugs in septic shock". His lecture started with an excellent tribute to Geoff, including some wonderful slides of previous meetings (which I heard he had only received the night before). This was particularly good as many of the delegates had not had the good fortune to know Geoff, who together with Riley discovered that mast cells contained histamine in the early 50's and who was still research active 40 y later. The lecture described the important and life-threatening problem of sepsis, which due to our ageing population is increasing. We heard about SIRS (systemic inflammatory response syndrome) and the anti-inflammatory counterpart CARS; when there is a mixed response we found CHAOS! Despite the plethora of mediators involved (probably more than 500), Eddy convinced us that histamine is still a very important molecule in septic shock. This was followed by the first of the roundtable sessions entitled "Antihistamine drugs and anaesthesia and surgery", with presentations by Lorenz, Horak, Schunack, Roberts and Rihoux. As was to be expected from the list of presenters, we had an exciting time learning about this topic. The oral presentations on "Antihistamine drugs" and "Atopy" followed, although sadly several speakers were not present. "Anaesthesia" and "Receptors" were the topics for the afternoon and early evening. During the day the partners visited the convent "Sor Angela de la Cruz", had lunch and visited an art museum. In the evening we had a reception at the university and visited the Reales Alcazares, which reminded those of us who had been at the previous Spanish meeting of the Al Hambre palace. The gardens, tiles and architecture were wonderful. Many of us then wandered around the old town and stopped to eat in one of the many Tapas bars. Friday morning seemed to start very early with the round table session on "Enteric histaminosis and food intolerance", with Sattler, Amon and Bodmer speaking. In the normal subject, ingested histamine is harmless but in the presence of certain drugs it can be absorbed and is dangerous. This topic was followed up by the oral sessions on "Histamine in the gastrointestinal tract" and "Histamine synthesis and metabolism". After lunch we heard about "Cell

growth and cancer". Our partners had an exciting day visiting Cadiz and Jerez, where we met up in the evening to drink histamine-free sherry, watch Flamenco dancing and have a superb buffet. It was interesting drinking sherry throughout the meal and certainly the histamine-free sherry did not give me a hangover! Friday's round table session was dedicated to "Advances in brain research" and the open sessions were "Histamine and the CNS" and "Histamine containing cells". In the evening our farewell dinner was held in the hotel, again with Flamenco dancing, where even the most inactive members got up and strutted their stuff! Our thanks go to Felix and his team for organising the meeting in such a beautiful place, with interesting special events. The next meeting will be held in Lodz between 20-23 May, at the kind invitation of Professor WA Fogel.

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