

Meeting Report of the European Histamine Research Society

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This year's meeting was in Lyon, France at the kind invitation of Jian-Sheng Lin. This is the second time that histaminologists have met in Lyon; the previous meeting was in 1999. This year's meeting was held in the Domaine Saint Joseph, Sainte Foy Les Lyon which is situated on the west side of the city of Lyon, just outside in the hills in a beautiful setting with horse chestnut trees and wonderful irises all in bloom. In 2008, the buildings and facilities of Domaine Saint Joseph were completely refurbished making it into an excellent conference centre - ideal for our meeting.

This year there were 87 people registered and they represented nearly 20 countries (mostly from Europe but also from North, South and Central America, Japan as well as some other Eastern countries). Some regular attendees could not attend and they were missed but a big welcome was made to all the new visitors, who we hope will return to future meetings. Most of the delegates arrived on the Wednesday. The Council met as usual late afternoon. Then there was the Welcome Reception which allowed everyone to greet old friends as well as make new ones whilst we nibbled on canapés. To improve the ambiance of the reception, a multilingual actor tried interviewing various people and everyone had a very enjoyable time.

Thursday started with the Opening Ceremony for the 43rd meeting of our society and we were welcomed by our President, Paul Chazot and our host Jian-Sheng Lin who thanked our President and the Past President, Anita for asking him to organise this meeting and for their support. He also reported that there were 74 abstracts submitted and are 8 oral sessions, 4 poster sessions and also 5 invited speakers. Then the Vice President of the Université Claude Bernard Lyon, Professor Germain Gillet told us about this university which was the largest outside of Paris and had over 40.000 students. He then wished us a very successful meeting. Everyone was pleased to see Paul Chazot well and fit after last year's illness and he explained how special this venue was to him as his father originated from this region. Then the student bursaries were given out; certificates and €500 for each of the 10 student members. The El-Sayed Assem family very kindly sponsored one student while the rest were sponsored by our society. Then Professor Helmut Haas, of Düsseldorf University and an Honorary Member of our society introduced the first plenary lecturer Professor Jean-Charles Scharwtz of Bioproject, Paris. Jean-Charles spoke eloquently about Pitolisant (Wakix), a histamine H₃ receptor inverse agonist which is currently in clinical trials for sleep disorders. We learnt about the interaction of histamine and orexin in these conditions. At the end of this, Jean-Charles was then presented with a silk tie from Lyon and his Honorary Membership of our society. He was presented with a certificate beautifully written in Latin and sporting the society's official seal. After coffee break and a group photo, there were the first two of the oral sessions and they were on 'Brain Histamine : Function and Behaviour' and 'Histamine Neurone : Regulation and Interaction'.

After lunch we were back to listen to the next plenary lecture which was introduced by Jian-Sheng Lin and delivered by Dr Antoine Adamantidis of McGill University Montréal, Canada. It was entitled 'The Melanin-Converting Hormone – Histamine Connection : A possible modulatory circuit for REM sleep?' This was followed by the third oral session which was again on the CNS aspects of histamine – 'Histamine, hippocampus and sensorial system' and we heard 3 oral presentations on this topic. After these very interesting presentations, there was coffee break before listening to the poster presentations and reading the posters which were displayed in a nearby room.

The GBWest Memorial Lecture was scheduled for first thing on Friday. Pertti Panula (Helsinki, Finland) gave the introduction to Professor Kazuhiko Yanai of Tohoku University School of Medicine, Japan. This lecture was entitled 'Neuroimaging studies in humans on the histaminergic neuron system: past, present and future.' At the end of this very interesting lecture, Professor Yanai was presented with a copy of G.B. West's autobiography and a silk tie from Lyon. The next oral presentation session (Inflammation and Allergy) was then given before the coffee break. When we commenced again, we had more communications on the 'Histamine: Receptor and Ligand.'

We then went by coach to the 'Basilica of Notre-Dame de Fourvière' in Lyon which was situated high up above the left bank of the River Saône. Whilst admiring the panoramic views of Lyon city, we ate our packed lunches before dividing into 3 groups; each with a Lyonnais guide. We were taken around the Basilica and admired the extensive mosaic work; both on the floors and walls. The guides told us the history of Lyon and pointed out various landmarks such as the Place Bellecour and, of course, we were able to admire the Rivers Saône and Rhône see where they converge in the south of the city. Also we could see the large plain which extends to the east of Lyon where most of modern Lyon is situated. Then as we walked down to the original medieval city (Vieux Lyon) we stopped to admire the Greek-Roman Amphitheatres which have been wonderfully restored and now are used for music and drama productions. The way down to the old town was steep but we were able to enjoy the wonderful spring flowers and trees in bloom. We then explored parts of the old town and were taken through the passageways (Traboules) linking one street with another. Before alighting on the coaches again, some of the society members managed to buy some souvenirs or ice-creams! Then we were taken to the 'Maison des Canuts' (Museum of the Lyon Silk Industry). The history of silk manufacture, especially in Lyon, was explained to us and we saw the machines used to spin and weave the silk. Finally we were able to purchase silk goods. Then the coaches took us out of Lyon up into the hills again and we were taken to the vineyard and cellar of 'Clos Sainte Marc.' Here we were given nibbles to eat and wine to taste whilst we listened to some country music. Here we had a traditional French dinner amongst the wine vaults and some of the more energetic members of the society danced until we had to return home.

Before the meeting commenced on Saturday we heard that one of the members had been taken to hospital with gastrointestinal problems during the night and so we all wished him a speedy recovery. Thankfully intravenous antibiotic treatment resulted in him being discharged later in the day. The meeting started with a plenary lecture given by Professor Olga Sergeeva of Düsseldorf University, Germany entitled 'Histamine-Dopamine interactions in Health and Disease' and she was introduced by Patrizio Blandina (Florence, Italy) She spoke the importance of histamine in maintaining waking, cortical arousal and consciousness and its connections with dopamine in various debilitating disorders. After this very interesting lecture, Olga was presented with a beautiful silk scarf. This was followed by a session entitled 'Histamine, Cellular signalling and *In Vivo* regulation' and then another session on 'Histamine H₃ and H₄ receptors.' After lunch, there was the final plenary lecture given by Professor Yrjö Kontinen of Helsinki, Finland on 'Non-professional histamine producing cells and H₄ receptors in immune reactions in general and in the pathogenesis of Sjögren's Syndrome in particular;' He was introduced by our president, Paul Chazot. At the end of his lecture, he was thanked and presented with a souvenir of Lyon.

Throughout the meeting the poster committee, under the overall chairmanship of Madeleine Ennis, had been working very hard and as usual had a difficult task in identifying winning posters for the poster competition. Eventually first prize was given to Guillermo Aquino-Miranda *et al.*, from Mexico with the poster entitled 'Effect of histamine H₃ receptor activation on rat nucleus accumbens dopaminergic transmission', second to Przemyslaw Rzedkiewicz *et al.*, from Warsaw, Poland with the poster entitled 'Influence of cyclooxygenase inhibitors on antihyperalgesic action of JNJ7777120 in adjuvant induced arthritis' and third prize went to Marek Grosicki *et al.*, from Cracow, Poland with his poster entitled 'Eosinophils adhesion to endothelium cells: innovative model in estimating role of histamine in process of inflammation'. The authors of the five other posters short listed were given Highly Commended Certificates.

The final oral session of our meeting was to listen to our younger members (PhD students or not more than 3 year's post-doctoral research) give their presentations for the EHRS Young Investigator Award (YIA). Regrettably one student had withdrawn at the last minute. It was another difficult task for the

judges in differentiating between these four excellent presentations. The winner was Jenni Vanhanen (Helsinki, Finland) with Saska Nijmeijer (Amsterdam, The Netherlands) being awarded second place while Maria Sanna of Florence, Italy and Sylwia Smolinska of Wroclaw, Poland were Highly Commended. Then we held our General Assembly. This was followed by a traditional French Farewell Dinner under Jazz music ambiance. Then we had our Award Ceremony with certificates and prizes being given out. All YIA finalists and poster prize winners received a souvenir from the organising committee. Then as usual we had our singing session, beginning with “Anita’s Thank You Song” (sung to the tune of ‘My Bonnie’) as a big thank you to Jian-Sheng and his team for the excellent meeting and he, in turn, thanked his French colleagues for all their help in making this a very memorable meeting. Then we sang our EHRS Anthem, before saying ‘au revoir’ to our many ‘histaminergic’ friends.

Our thanks are given to all of the French histaminologists for the excellent meeting. The next meeting will be held in Malaga, Spain (6-10 May, 2015) at the kind invitation of Francisca Sánchez Jiménez.



Participants of the 2014 meeting of the EHRS.

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