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Micrograph images taken at 200x original magnification reveal perivascular inflammation.

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Editor's Memo

In Search of Elusive 'Roadmap to a Cure,' PH Community Finds Another Touchstone at Scientific Sessions



"Roadmap to a cure" sounds like a great theme for a medical conference but clinicians involved with pulmonary hypertension (PH) may view the title with more than a little skepticism because we all know how much work lies ahead before a cure can truly be achieved. The roadmap is actually elusive and the path has many pitfalls. Nevertheless, if the organizers of this year's Seventh International Pulmonary Hypertension Conference and Scientific Sessions reached a bit too far with their title for what is actually not yet within our grasp, they also created Scientific Sessions filled with so much promise and hope that perhaps all attendees came away sensing that, indeed, we are not far from creating the roadmap to a cure. At least the sessions gave us another touchstone, a reference point and glimpse of signs guiding us in this direction.

There were so many signs at this meeting—one of the few scientific meetings with a patient and physician component attended by hundreds of caregivers and patients alike—that the program has evolved into a major medical meeting for cardiologists and pulmonologists who want to keep pace with research and state-of-the-art practice in this field. It is the only conference devoted exclusively to pulmonary hypertension.

Perhaps the best description of the roadmap theme came from Greg Elliott, MD, Chair of the Scientific Sessions Committee, whom we congratulate for helping to design an excellent program. He noted: "The roadmap developed by the efforts of so many in our community leads us toward our ultimate goal: finding a cure for this devastating condition. Coming together every two years at the International Conferences provides the perfect opportunity to survey our progress and to plan future work." As Dr Elliott added, the conference is another benchmark, and he expressed the hope that "the ideas shared at this conference will spark the beginning of some spectacular advances in understanding PH that we will be able to share and speak about two years from now."

The focus of the scientific sessions concentrated on three areas—vascular inflammation, the genetics of PH, and new imaging techniques that may lead us to new and more effective therapies. With each advance in the coming years toward developing a cure, we can recall the 2006 PHA meeting, not only as another touchstone toward finding more effective ways to manage the disease but as a special event that strengthened the bonds between patients and caregivers to build an even stronger PH community.

Vallerie V. McLaughlin, MD
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