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Cover Image
Beach at Dana Point, California, USA, site of the 4th World Symposium on Pulmonary Hypertension, 2008. Photo credit: Lynn C. Kelly

Guest Editor's Memo

4th World Symposium Makes History

The 4th World Symposium on Pulmonary Hypertension at Dana Point was a historical event. Composed of 11 working groups in areas of basic science, clinical science, and future perspectives, this 3-day event brought experts in pulmonary vascular disease from all over the world to review the past and current literature, update guidelines and recommendations, and discuss and debate issues regarding the controversies and the future directions in pulmonary arterial hypertension (PAH). What was singularly the most remarkable memory for me was witnessing the collective dedication of the group to reach that elusive, yet definite, goal —finding the cure for PAH, a disease that was recently considered "uniformly fatal." Indeed, one only had to step into the room to feel the incredible energy and excitement of all the participants–we all felt the past, present, and future of PH converging in that moment.

This meeting marked the 35th anniversary of the 1st World Health Organization Meeting on Pulmonary Hypertension held in Geneva in 1973, a meeting prompted by the outbreak of aminorex-induced PH. It is a testimony to the unflagging dedication of all involved that we now have 8 FDA-approved therapies with more treatments targeting novel pathways currently being developed.

In putting this issue together, I have had the privilege of working closely with several key members of the working groups. In addition to bringing you a synopsis of several sections, our goals in this issue were to give you an insider's view on the process of shaping the drafts, personal perspectives on some key controversial issues, and a taste of what we can and should expect at the next World Symposium in 2013. Furthermore, we present a lively roundtable discussion from Drs Robyn Barst, Marc Humbert, Ivan Robbins, and Lewis Rubin, in which they share their experiences and thoughts from the Dana Point meeting and place this symposium in context with the past ones. I hope you enjoy the journey from an insider's look at the 4th World Symposium from Dana Point.

Myung H. Park, MD
Guest Editor

Editor's Memo

As a participant in the 4th World Symposium on Pulmonary Hypertension, held February 2008 in Dana Point, California, I was struck by several things—first was the beautiful setting. Although Southern California is no Venice, Italy (site of the 3rd World Symposium), the Pacific Ocean certainly holds its own as far as aesthetics are concerned.

Secondly, I was amazed at how much new knowledge has been garnered since the 3rd World Symposium. Dedicated investigators have continued to help unravel the pathogenesis of pulmonary arterial hypertension (PAH) at the cellular and molecular levels. What happens inside the pulmonary vascular cells that drives the disease process is becoming increasingly clear. Although the complexities of this process are daunting, new "targets" for therapy are being identified in a classic demonstration of "bench-to-bedside" research. On the classification front, increased understanding of specific disease entities and drug exposures and their association with PAH have led to important changes in the classification system. On diagnosis, newer modalities such as biomarkers and advanced imaging (MRI) are gaining a foothold in the evaluation and follow-up of the pulmonary hypertension (PH) patient. Great advances have been made with treatment: at the 3rd World Symposium, 3 drugs were FDA-approved for PAH; at the time of the Dana Point meeting, 6 approved therapies were available. These new options lead to an expanded, evidence-based treatment algorithm.

Perhaps most importantly, I was struck by the sheer number and diversity of

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Program Description

The mission of *Advances in Pulmonary Hypertension* is to serve as the premiere forum for state of the art information regarding diagnosis, pathophysiology, and treatment of pulmonary hypertension. The 2003 Venice revision of the World Health Organization Classification serves as a guide to categories of pulmonary hypertension addressed by the Journal. While focusing on WHO Group I PAH, the other categories (Group II, Left heart disease; Group III, Associated with lung disease and/or hypoxemia; Group IV, Thrombotic and/or Embolic Disease; Group V, Miscellaneous) are also addressed. This mission is achieved by a combination of invited review articles, Roundtable discussions with panels consisting of international experts in PH, and original contributions. In addition, a special section in selected issues entitled "Profiles in Pulmonary Hypertension" recognizes major contributors to the field and serves as an inspiring reminder of the rich and collegial history of dedication to advancing the field.

Objectives

- Provide up-to-date information regarding diagnosis, pathophysiology, and treatment of pulmonary hypertension.
- Serve as a forum for presentation and discussion of important issues in the field, including new paradigms of disease understanding and investigational trial design.
- Recognize and preserve the rich history of individuals who have made major contributions to the field via dedication to patient care, innovative research, and furthering the mission of the PH community to cure pulmonary hypertension.

The Mission of the Scientific Leadership Council is to provide medical and scientific guidance and support to the PHA by:

- Developing and disseminating knowledge for diagnosing and treating pulmonary hypertension
- Advocating for patients with pulmonary hypertension
- Increasing involvement of basic and clinical researchers and practitioners

More information on PHA's Scientific Leadership Council and associated committees can be found at: www.PHAssociation.org/SLC/