

Highlights of the Scientific Sessions at PHA's International Conference



The Pulmonary Hypertension Association has, from its outset, placed very high value on promoting research, both clinical and basic science, with the goal to identify more effective treatments and eventually a cure for pulmonary hypertension. This has been manifest through the support of research programs that identify the most promising research and scientists and provide them resources to carry out their studies. It is also manifest in the support of the Scientific Sessions as part of the International Conference. Since the first Scientific Sessions were proposed and organized by Michael McGoon, MD, at the International Conference in Miami in 2004, these Sessions have been a highlight for the medical professionals and scientists who attend the Conference.

The goal of the Scientific Sessions is to

bring researchers interested in pulmonary hypertension together in the same room to hear from their peers about the newest and most promising research in PH accompanied by talks from prominent scientists in related fields with the hopes of increasing interaction among all and opening discussions for new directions. Each Session has been incredibly valuable and productive. This year was no exception.

Under the leadership of Ivan Robbins, MD, the 2010 Scientific Sessions were hugely successful with an overall theme of inflammation in PH. More than 300 people heard talks ranging from reports of the progress made in the PH SCCOR centers, the CMREF tissue initiative, to short presentations of abstracts from promising young investigators both at the podium and during a lively poster session. As in previous years, the state-of-the-art speakers provided up-to-the-minute reports on

areas of promising investigation in PH and related fields. Talks included discussion of HIV-associated PAH, the importance of growth factors in PH, genomic insights into PAH, and the therapeutic potential of stem cells.

In this issue of *Advances*, we highlight the Scientific Sessions with short summaries of the talks by the state-of-the-art speakers and the award-winning abstracts in both basic and clinical sciences. Also included is a brief summary of pulmonary vascular-related activities at the NIH from our lunch-time speaker, Tim Moore, MD, PhD, Director of Vascular Disease in the Lung Division of the NHLBI.

Overall, the Sessions were again a great success and again speak to the commitment of the PHA to research and finding a cure for PH.

Karen A. Fagan, MD
Guest Editor

Editor's memo



This past June I winged my way to my former home state, California, for PHA's 9th International Conference and Scientific Sessions. As I rode in from the airport, past the uniquely Southern Californian strip malls and bungalows, I reflected on how much has changed in this meeting, and this disease.

What was once a small gathering of patients and caregivers is now a fully developed, multifaceted conference with "something for everybody." Medically-led sessions, during which experts interact with patients, caregivers, and health care providers on virtually every PAH topic, provide the backbone of the Conference. Scientific Sessions, geared toward physicians, enhance the flavor of the meeting and allow presentation of new data and concepts. There is even a new CME track to Conference, geared toward physicians and nurses

with an evolving interest in pulmonary hypertension.

And then there is the networking, maybe the most valuable part of Conference. Networking is defined as "a supportive system of sharing information and services among individuals and groups having a common interest." This term perfectly describes the happenings at Conference. Networking occurs in all directions among patients, caregivers, and health-care providers. This is the only meeting I know in which dining companions can include a patient from Boise, a husband/caregiver from San Francisco, a physician from Columbus, and a nurse from Buenos Aires. Now that's what I call networking!

Not surprisingly, the evolution of Conference perfectly mirrors the growth of the PHA itself. The iconic image of 4 people sitting around a kitchen table has morphed into a major organization that provides a dizzying array of services to patients, develops and implements many

invaluable educational programs, and funds both basic and applied research. A remarkable evolution!

This issue of *Advances* is devoted to the Scientific Sessions from Conference. Just as the Conference and PHA have evolved, so too has the science of pulmonary hypertension. The Scientific Sessions focused on new players in the PH world: growth and inflammation. Karen Fagan has done an outstanding job in coordinating this issue; the authors are major contributors to this burgeoning field and I am confident that the work outlined here will, one day, lead to new therapies focused on the fundamental defects in the vasculature.

Oh, and during Conference I found my way to an In-and-Out Burger, a fine establishment I've greatly missed since leaving California. A "double-double" and a statin, the perfect meal!

Richard Channick, MD
Editor-in-Chief