



An invitation to the 5th European Congress of Endocrinology

Torino, 9-13 June 2001

The programme for the 5th ECE will cover all areas of endocrinology, and will include Plenary Lectures, Clinical and Basic Symposia and submitted Oral and Poster Presentations featuring the latest developments in basic and clinical endocrinology.

The following topics will be addressed: neuroendocrinology, growth factors, growth and puberty, male and female reproductive endocrinology, thyroid, adrenal, diabetes, obesity and metabolic disorders, mineral metabolism and bone diseases, hormone-dependent and hormone-producing cancers, endocrinology of ageing, paracrine biology, cardiovascular endocrinology including hypertension, peptide and steroid receptor biology and signalling, endocrine organogenesis and transcription factors, and genetic regulation, epidemiology and public health outcomes in endocrinology. Particular effort has been made to attract young endocrinologists by providing a specially reduced price package. In order to honour those

endocrinologists who continue their research beyond the age of 65, a poster prize for the 'Best Poster over 65' will be awarded.

The deadline for submission of abstracts is: 15 January 2001. For more information, including details for registration and abstract submission, consult <http://www.ibow.com/efes2001> or Centro Congressi Internazionale, Via Cervino 60, I - 10155 Torino (Italy), Tel: +39 011 2446921/11; Fax: +39 011 2446900.

E Nieschlag, Chairman POC, on behalf of the Scientific Organizing Committee (POC): A Aranda (Spain), P Beck-Peccoz (Italy), J P Bourguignon (Belgium), J S Christiansen (Denmark), N Dekel (Israel), A Enjalbert (France), E Ghigo (Italy), E Nieschlag (Germany), V Popovic (Yugoslavia), G Schütz (Germany), J Toppari (Finland), A Uitterlinden (The Netherlands), J A H Wass (United Kingdom) and W M Wiersinga (The Netherlands) and the Local Organizing Committee (LOC): F Camanni, E Ghigo (Chairmen), P Beck-Peccoz, G Faglia, A Pinchera, M Serio and R Vigneri.

Geoffrey Harris Prize News

Winner of the first Geoffrey Harris Prize

The first Geoffrey Harris Prize in Neuroendocrinology was won by Professor Stephen Lamberts, an outstanding endocrinologist who specializes in pituitary research.

He is currently Professor of Medicine in Rotterdam and has a strong background in the endocrine aspects of malignancy and ageing; he is also very well known for his studies on the medical treatment of acromegaly and his views on the etiology of Cushing's syndrome.

He was presented with the award at the European Workshop on Pituitary Adenomas in September this year where he gave a characteristically thought-provoking and stimulating lecture which put his work firmly into the context of other endocrinological research. His lesson to those there, and to us all, was the importance of combining the study of pure endocrinology with that of the endocrine aspects of other diseases.

The second EFES Geoffrey Harris Prize

EFES is proud to announce this prize which is generously sponsored by Ipsen again and is the most prestigious prize in neuroendocrinology that can be won by EFES members.

The prize is intended to recognize the achievements of an active senior European endocrinologist and consists of an award of 12 000 Euros to support their research. The prize will be presented at the 2001 ECE in Turin, where the winner will be asked to give one of the main lectures, in addition to two other lectures at future EFES scientific meetings.

Nominations

Any scientific organisational or administrative group may nominate candidates; self-proposal is not allowed. Seven hard copies of the files containing the letter of support and CV, list of publications and merits of the candidate should be sent to the EFES Secretary (Dr M G Forest, INSERM-U.329, Hôpital Debrousse, 29, rue Sûr Bouvier, 69322 Lyon, France) before 18 December 2000. Further information may also be obtained from Dr M G Forest (Email: forest@lyon151.inserm.fr).

Editorial

In this, the autumn 2000 issue of EFES News, we are proud to look back on a very active year, the presence of EFES having been felt in many parts of Europe. No less than five EFES-associated or EFES-organized meetings took place, covering topics from basic science for clinical endocrinologists to high level postgraduate courses. We are particularly proud of the activities of EFES in Eastern Europe and in June 2001 the 5th European Congress of Endocrinology in Torino will represent a new climax.

In this issue, our series Endocrinology of Yesteryear continues in a rather more contemporary vein and reviews the life and work of two outstanding postwar endocrinologists.

If you do not receive *EFES News* regularly and would like to do so, please email your name and postal address to editorial@endocrinology.org.

I hope you enjoy reading this issue – feedback is always welcome.

ALBERT BURGER, EDITOR

Endocrinology of Yesteryear

Rosalyn Yalow and Solomon Berson – a remarkable team

Solomon Berson and Rosalyn Yalow are two great figures in endocrinology. Behind their remarkable contributions and success is the story of a close friendship between two geniuses whose only interest was their commitment to science and the alleviation of human suffering. Their common love for mathematics and their complementary talents and education helped them to become a most efficient team.

Solomon and Rosalyn had unusual careers right from the beginning. Rosalyn Sussman, born in New York, from first and second generation Jewish East European and German immigrants, was the first of her family to be able to study. This was a remarkable achievement for a woman at that time, and even more remarkable was her decision to study physics ⁽¹⁻³⁾. Despite her brilliant training, for some time she earned a living as a stenographer rather than as a physicist. In 1941, partly due to the war, a position became available for a teaching assistant in the physics department at the University of Illinois where she met and married Aron Yalow and both obtained their PhDs in physics. She returned to New York in 1945 to Hunter College where she had trained. In 1947 nuclear physics was at its climax and Rosalyn used to say that each experiment was a potential Nobel prize winner. However, positions were sparse and young male physicists returning from war had a clear advantage over their brilliant female colleague. Thus Rosalyn, now a wife and mother, became a part-time consultant at the Bronx VA Hospital, a choice which illustrates her wisdom.

Solomon was also a pure New Yorker ^(4,5), who loved his city. He was an accomplished violinist, a passionate chess player, and was at home in visual arts, literature and history. Despite a difficult start in medicine, with rejections from twenty-one universities, his academic performance throughout his training was first class. He finished medical school at New York University in 1945 and then trained in internal medicine at the Boston City Hospital. After two years in the army, he made an unusual move for a young brilliant

doctor by joining the Bronx VA Hospital. This move testifies to Solomon's interest in practice rather than an academic career. In this non-university environment, Solomon was able to develop his natural gift as a clinical investigator and taught himself many of the tools that he would have learnt at a prestigious university. He knew his topics so well that he became an excellent teacher who continued throughout his life to share his knowledge on mathematics and statistics with great enthusiasm. His enormous drive for knowledge meant that he was recognized for the quality of his work rather than the institution behind him. The team was incredibly productive until Solomon left to take the chair at Mt Sinai, a step that Rosalyn would always consider an error, and it became very difficult for him to keep in close contact with his old laboratory. At Mt Sinai, he attempted to establish a highly academic department of medicine with a strong scientific background, but to achieve this he had to fight many influential colleagues who were more interested in public and financial success. He also invested much energy in fighting the upcoming commercialization of medicine, a concept which was completely foreign to his philosophy.

In 1950, Rosalyn and Solomon established their team in the Radioisotope Service of the Bronx VA Hospital's Radiotherapy Department, thus combining their joint expertise in physics and medicine to exploit the newest discoveries in radioisotopes. Within a short time they had applied ⁴²K and ¹³¹I to clinical investigations. Their first paper was published in *Science* ⁽⁶⁾ and studies on plasma volume appeared, followed by the first three compartment models. They also published elegant and precise thyroid clearance studies, which remain the best in this field. Solomon's interest in the pathophysiology of type 2 diabetes contributed to their major discovery, the principle of the radioimmunoassay. He postulated that type 2 diabetes might not be due to missing insulin. A method for labeling insulin with ¹³¹I was developed and its *in vivo* kinetics



yielded most exciting results. Patients who had been treated with insulin had a very slow disappearance rate of ¹³¹I-labelled insulin. This was also found in non-diabetic patients who had received foreign insulin. Rosalyn and Solomon made the unconventional proposal that these patients had developed antibodies to insulin thus contradicting the view that such small molecules could not be antigenic. Great difficulties followed when *Nature* rejected the article and the *Journal of Clinical Investigation* only accepted it under the condition that the term antibody would disappear from the title and would be replaced by insulin-binding globulin ⁽⁷⁾.

Rosalyn and Solomon went on to come up with the concept of an insulin RIA based on the human antibodies which patients had developed against foreign insulin. Other researchers realized the potential of using high affinity binding proteins for hormones as tools for specific measurements. Quantitative measurements of T4 and vitamin B12 were made by competitive displacement assays using either receptors or high affinity binding proteins (thyroxine binding globulin and intrinsic factor) and were published by Herbert ⁽⁸⁾ and Ekins ⁽⁹⁾. Yet, at that time, the majority of the scientific community was fully absorbed by the cumbersome development of bioassays and were slow to adopt the principle of competitive displacement assays. The high specificity, sensitivity and the rapid association but slow dissociation kinetics established the superiority of the RIA over other competitive displacement assays and there was an exponential increase in publications.

Solomon was a physiologist at heart and elegantly applied this major breakthrough for the measurement of recently discovered hormones. When Rosalyn received the Nobel Prize in Medicine in 1977, she mentioned the

Endocrinology of Yesteryear *(continued)*

possibility that RIA could find applications outside endocrinology such as the measurement of the Australian antigen and applications in infectious diseases. Rosalyn was fortunate enough to see formidable advancements in this field which rapidly expanded into every domain of biological sciences. His untimely death in 1974 prevented Solomon from further contributing to and enjoying the immense progress in medicine which their discovery had enabled, but Rosalyn kept up the memory of this great man by naming their laboratory "SA Berson Research Laboratory".

Unfortunately Rosalyn is presently ill. We hope that these few lines of appreciation will bring relief and warmth to her heart.

A BURGER, EDITOR

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Forthcoming Meetings and Courses

EFES Meetings and Courses

5th European Congress of Endocrinology

Turin, Italy, 9-13 June 2001
Contact: CCI Centro Congressi Internazionale - Via Cervino, 60-10155 Torino, Italy (Tel: +39-011-2446921; Fax: +39-011-2446900; Email: efes2001@ibow.com; Web: <http://www.ibow.com/efes2001>).

5th EFES Postgraduate Course in Molecular and Cellular Endocrinology

Doorn near Utrecht, The Netherlands, 29 September-2 October 2001
Contact: Dr Axel Themmen, Dept of Endocrinology and Reproduction, Erasmus Univ. Med. Fac., PO Box 1738, 3000 DR Rotterdam, The Netherlands (Fax: +31-10-408 9461; Email: efescourse@endov.fgg.eur.nl)

EFES Regional Course in Clinical Endocrinology

Kaunas, Lithuania, 26-28 April 2001
Contact: Prof. A Norkus (Email: endoinst@kma.lt)

EFES Regional Course in Clinical Endocrinology

Bucharest, Rumania, 3-6 October 2001
Contact: Prof C Dumitrache, Institute of Endocrinology, Aviatorilor Blvd, 79660 Bucharest, Romania (Fax: +40-1-230 7430; Email: endo.parhon@softnet.ro)

8th EFES Postgraduate Course in Clinical Endocrinology

Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium, 25-29 October 2001.
Contact: Prof A Beckers, CHU Liège, Domain Universitaire du Sart-Tilman, 4000 Liège, Belgium (Fax: +32-4-3667261; Email: albert.beckers@chu.ilg.ac.be).

EFES Regional Course in Clinical Endocrinology

Minsk, Belarus, 2002
Contact: To be announced

9th EFES Postgraduate Course in Clinical Endocrinology

Moscow, Russia, 2002
Contact: To be announced

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6th European Congress of Endocrinology

Lyon, France, 11-15 May 2003.
Contact: To be announced

Other meetings

BES2001 – 20th Joint Meeting of the British Endocrine Societies

Belfast, UK, 26-29 March 2001
Contact: British Endocrine Societies, 17/18 The Courtyard, Woodlands, Bradley Stoke, Bristol BS32 4NQ, UK (Tel: +44-1454-619347; Fax: +44-1454-616071; Email: info@endocrinology.org; Web: <http://www.endocrinology.org>).

12th International Workshop on the Development and Function of the Reproductive Organs

Jerusalem, Israel, 30 April-3 May 2001
Contact: Secretariat, Dan Knassim Ltd, PO Box 1931, Ramat Gan 52118, Israel (Tel: +972-3-6133340 ext 208; Fax: +972-3-6133341; Email: team2@congress.co.il).

ENDO 2001: 83rd Annual Meeting

Colorado, USA, 20-23 June 2001
Contact: Beverly Glover, Administrative Assistant, Meetings, The Endocrine Society, 4350 East West Highway, Suite 500, Bethesda, MD 20814-4410, USA (Tel: +1-301-9410220; Fax: +1-301-9410259).

Thyroid and Graves Ophthalmopathy

Graz, Austria, 21-22 of September 2001
Contact: S.Ramschak-Schwarzer (Tel: +43-316-385-2383; Fax: +43-316-385-3428; Email: sigrid.ramschak-schwarzer@klinikum-graz.at).

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