



## 5th European Congress of Endocrinology: Scientific programme update

Torino, 9-13 June 2001

**F**ollowing the January 2001 deadline for submission of abstracts to the 5th European Congress of Endocrinology, the Program Organizing Committee, with the additional help of experts from the affiliated EFES societies, screened the abstracts for originality, design, significance and presentation. The POC then met at the end of February in Torino and finalized the programme.

Of the 1108 submitted abstracts 1035 were accepted for presentation (rejection rate 6%). Twelve of these abstracts were selected for oral presentation in two Hot Topics Symposia, 128 abstracts were selected for oral communication in sixteen Oral Sessions and 895 abstracts will be exhibited as posters for the entire

duration of the Congress. The scientific program, encompassing nine plenary lectures, fifteen 'Meet the expert sessions' and twenty-eight symposia (each with four speakers), will finish with the *European Journal of Endocrinology* Prize Lecture, the Harris Prize for Neuroendocrinology Lecture and the Transoceanic Lecture.

EFES and the organizers were very pleased with the high number and quality of the submitted abstracts and are confident that the 5th ECE will be an outstanding congress. Further details can be obtained from the congress web site:

<http://www.ibow.com/efes2001>.

EBO NIESCHLAG, CHAIRMAN OF THE PROGRAMME ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

## EFES Website

### Hormones in the air – the new EFES web site

The new EFES web site was launched in January at [www.euro-endo.org](http://www.euro-endo.org). Take a look! The first phase contains up to date information on EFES members and activities. Don't forget to bookmark it so that you can easily keep up to date with EFES events.

### The current sections are:

*About EFES* – this has details of EFES's aims and structure and from here you can access details of all the committee members. There is also a short history of EFES.

*Conferences* – this section contains details of current and future conferences, as well as a list of past meetings. This obviously features the European Congresses of Endocrinology, with quick links through to the current conference web site and shortcuts to the sections for abstract submission, registration and programme details. In addition it contains details of meetings and sessions held in collaboration with member national societies. Lastly, it also has details of information for submitting bids to host EFES meetings.

*Postgraduate courses* – this contains details of all EFES courses, whether clinical, molecular and cellular or regional. These courses are very popular and are often oversubscribed, so check this page regularly to make sure you get the details as early as possible.

*EJE online* – this links to the *European Journal of Endocrinology* site, which has full text of the journal plus many additional features, as described in the last issue of *EFES News*.

*News* – this currently contains all issues of *EFES News* in PDF format. If you have not used PDF before, the software to use it is free and this page gives details of how to download it.

*Members* – this section will be very useful in fostering a sense of community among European endocrinologists. It contains details of all Full and Affiliated societies. You can link to their web sites where available and you can also email the President or Secretary in most cases. Of course, full addresses and telephone/fax details are also given.

## Editorial

**T**he next European Congress of Endocrinology is shortly to be held in Torino, Piedmont's beautiful capital city. The site and surrounding area are so nice that one might get distracted from science and I hope that many of you will extend your visit by adding some sight-seeing before or after the meeting.

Turin dates back to Roman times, yet it was not until 1559 that the city came to prominence as the newly created Savoy kingdom's capital city. During the following centuries the city was enriched by many remarkable buildings and most of them are still well preserved. They make strolling in the ancient city and the surrounding hills a memorable experience.

The city gained national importance in the nineteenth century, during the Rinascimento, as it was from here that Camillo Benso, count of Cavour, built the unified modern Italy. Turin hosted the first parliament and Italy's kings were descendants of the house of Piedmont. With Milan, Turin became a leading industrial city of the north and the ECE will be held within the walls of the former Fiat factory (the 'Lingotto'), built during WWI, and now transformed into a congress center. All these marks of history will make the meeting in Turin truly remarkable and we hope to see many of you in this fascinating city.

ALBERT BURGER, EDITOR

EFES Website  
(continued)



#### But this is just the start

There are many ideas for additional features and the EFES Executive Committee has just given the go-ahead for the following:

*Jobs and grants* – there will be three parts of this section: jobs wanted, jobs offered and grants available. People and organisations will be able to register jobs and grants via web forms and endocrinologists will be able to browse these lists to search for jobs or grants.

*Discussion list* – this will be an email discussion list that anyone can sign up to. Please use it as a forum for scientific and medical discussion. The list will be moderated so that spurious messages – which are so annoying – do not get through.

*Links to other sites* – this will be a really useful section – well worth bookmarking separately – as it will link you to the locations of major societies, journals and other resources of interest to endocrinologists.

These additional sections should be live by the time of the Turin meeting. Visit the EFES stand there and give us your feedback.

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# Endocrinology of Yesteryear

Geoffrey 'Hypothalamus' Harris

*'...few will recall the struggle to convince the scientific world that the brain is ....a classical endocrine organ capable of the highly controlled secretion of an array of peptides.'*

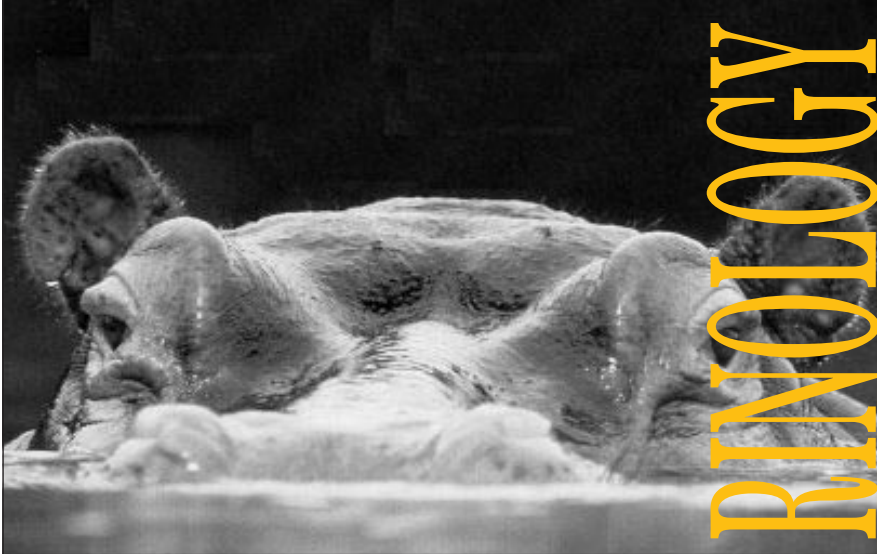
**G**eoffrey W Harris' hard-won discovery of the hypothalamic control of endocrine function is now considered commonplace and few will recall the struggle to convince the scientific world that the brain is not only an organ of neuronal connections but also a classical endocrine organ capable of the highly controlled secretion of an array of peptides. It was Geoffrey Harris who recognised the brain's ability to control endocrine gland adaptation to environmental input by fully integrating cognitive functions and the response of the endocrine system.

Early in his career he was markedly influenced by his mentor, the Cambridge University Professor Francis Marshall, who was working on the physiology of reproduction, notably, the challenge to understand the complex natural control mechanisms governing the seasonal breeding patterns of most animals, both vertebrate and invertebrate. In 1937, still as a student, Harris succeeded in inducing ovulation in rabbits by electrical stimulation of the hypothalamus. He immediately postulated that TSH, GH, lactogenic and parathyrotropic hormones would be controlled similarly and this was to become the basis of his life's work.

At that time, the posterior pituitary was known to be innervated because it responded to electrical stimulation by releasing vasopressin and oxytocin, whilst the anterior pituitary, known to be crucial in the response to environmental, seasonal, and mating stimuli, was not. The Rumanian anatomist, Professor Gregory T Popa, provided a clue as to how the anterior pituitary functioned by demonstrating the existence of a very elaborate

capillary system, now well known as the portal system. Following a series of experiments, Harris proved that the blood in this system flowed from the hypothalamus to the pituitary. Meanwhile, the nonapeptide structures of the posterior pituitary hormones were elucidated and, in 1955, Du Vigneaud received the Nobel Prize for the identification of vasopressin. Impressed by this work, Harris immediately postulated that similar peptides could play a transmission role between the higher centres and the anterior pituitary. The function of the portal system was vital to the development of his theories.

In the following years his group demonstrated the crucial role of the hypothalamus and the portal system in controlling gonadal function. Harris used his outstanding skill for electrical hypothalamic stimulation and permanent stalk section where small plates of wax papers were used to avoid vascular regeneration. He was convinced that a chemical signal could be captured in the portal system and, thanks to a collaboration with George Fink from Monash University in Australia, a method for portal cannulation was developed. For the first time, it permitted the demonstration of a LHRH peak in the preovulatory phase and this finding successfully confirmed Harris' theory. Another remarkable event was the first successful treatment of a Kallmann's syndrome patient with purified LHRH supplied by Harris' laboratory. The model of reproduction was initially the most studied area by Harris, but he also pursued research on the hypothalamic control of the adrenals and thyroid. In particular, his views on the central control of ACTH release helped clarify



.....Rinology as a scientific branch is underdeveloped. However, our general knowledge of the molecular and cellular aspects of endocrinology is growing and thus it is essential to continuously update your personal knowledge of regulatory mechanisms in endocrinology. An excellent opportunity is the 5th EFES Postgraduate Course in Molecular and Cellular Endocrinology, designed for clinicians and basic scientists who want to learn the molecular approach to the pathogenesis of endocrine diseases. The 4-day course for 120 participants will take place from 29 September to 2 October 2001 in Doorn, in the centre of The Netherlands. The total fee (lodging and food included) will be 375 Euro. Many travel and course awards will be available. See our website: <http://www.eur.nl/fgg/endov/efescourse> for more information.

If you are interested, please email us ([efescourse@endov.fgg.eur.nl](mailto:efescourse@endov.fgg.eur.nl)) or, if absolutely necessary, write to: Dept. of Endocrinology & Reproduction, Erasmus University Rotterdam, PO Box 1738, 3000 DR Rotterdam, The Netherlands (Fax: +31-10-4089461).

*Greetings from:*

*Axel Themmen, Aart Bootsma, Hans van Leeuwen, Focko Rommerts*

unfolded postcard from the European Federation of Endocrine Societies



DEAR  
ENDOCRINOLOGIST

the confusing and contradictory data available at the time.

In 1952, he moved to the University of London as Professor of the newly created Fitzmary Chair of Physiology where he headed up a new experimental neuroendocrinology laboratory. By 1955, he was able to draw a tentative map of hypothalamic nuclei and this led to publication of one of his most important monographs. However, his theories were still far from being accepted, a well-known neurophysiologist of his time quoting his work as "an edifice of speculation that has been erected because of an urge to explain the incomprehensible". Fortunately, this opinion was not shared by the avant-garde of the scientific community who became fascinated by progress in this field. Two US groups, led by Guillermin and Schally respectively, entered the race for the isolation and chemical analysis of the postulated releasing factors. Inadequate funds prevented Harris from keeping up with their progress and, after several years, Guillermin and Schally and their collaborators identified the first hypothalamic-releasing hormones, LHRH and TRH. In 1977,

6 years after Harris' death they received the Nobel Prize.

Another major contribution of Harris and his collaborators was in the field of sexual differentiation. Following the work of Pfeiffer in 1936, he conclusively demonstrated that sexual differentiation lies in the CNS and showed that the basal development of the male or female brain was female, allowing cycling in the presence of ovaries. He demonstrated that transplantation of ovaries to a male castrated at birth would cause the brain to start to cycle whilst neonatal impregnation with testosterone permanently changed the imprinting to a male and non-cycling brain. He also showed that the pituitary only plays a secondary role in sexual differentiation by acting as the link between the CNS and the periphery.

Unfortunately, in 1971, Geoffrey Harris, then Professor and Chairman of Oxford University's Anatomy Department, died at the young age of 58. The importance of his legacy to the discovery of the miracles of animal and human physiology cannot be underestimated.

A BURGER, EDITOR

#### Bibliography

Sawin CT 1998 Geoffrey W Harris and the brain's control of the pituitary gland. *The Endocrinologist* **8** 117-121.

Raisman G 1997 An urge to explain the incomprehensible: Geoffrey Harris and the discovery of the neural control of the pituitary gland. *Annual Reviews in Neurosciences* **20** 533-566.

## Announcement from The Pituitary Society

The Pituitary Society is an international organization for researchers and clinicians with interests in the advancement of neuroendocrinology. This organization serves as a community for scientific discussion, research collaboration, clinical education, and a site for advertisement of ongoing studies. Membership includes a subscription to the journal *Pituitary* and our newsletter. Please email us for more information including a membership application at [pituitary.society@med.nyu.edu](mailto:pituitary.society@med.nyu.edu).

# 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>).

### 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 & Reproduction, Erasmus Univ. Med. Fac., PO Box 1738, 3000 DR Rotterdam, The Netherlands (Fax: +31-10-4089461; Email: efescourse@endov.fgg.eur.nl).

### EFES Regional Course in Clinical Endocrinology

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

### 8th EFES Postgraduate Course in Clinical Endocrinology

Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium, 19-22 October 2001  
 Contact: Professeur A Beckers, Service d'Endocrinologie, CHU de Liège Domaine Universitaire du Sart-Tilman, 4000 Liège, Belgium (Tel: +32 4 366 70 83/84; Fax: +32 4 366 72 61; Email: albert.beckers@chu.ulg.ac.be).

### 9th EFES Postgraduate Course in Clinical Endocrinology

Moscow, Russia 2002  
 Contact: To be announced

### 6th European Congress of Endocrinology

Lyon, France, 9-13 June 2003  
 Contact: To be announced

## Other meetings

### ENDO 2001: 83rd Annual Meeting

Denver, CO, 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; Email: bglover@endo-society.org; Web: <http://www.endo-society.org>).

### European Thyroid Association 27th Annual Meeting

25-29 August 2001, Warsaw, Poland  
 Contact: Professor Janusz Nauman, Department of Endocrinology, Medical Research Center, Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw, Poland

### 37th Annual Meeting of the European Association for the Study of Diabetes

9-13 September 2001, Glasgow, UK  
 Contact: Concorde Services Ltd (EASD), 4B, 50 Speirs Wharf, Port Dundas, Glasgow G4 9TB, UK (Tel: +44(0)141-331 0123; Fax: +44(0)141-331 0234; Email: easd@concorde-uk.com; Web: <http://www.concorde-uk.com/easd2001>).

### 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).

### 6th International Congress of Endocrine Disorders

Tehran, Iran, 5-9 October 2001  
 Contact: Fereidoun Azizi, PO Box 19395-4763, Tehran, Iran (Tel: +98-21-2416282; Fax: +98-21-2416264; Email: iced@erc-iran.com; Web: <http://www.erc-iran.com/iced>).

### 192nd Meeting of the Society for Endocrinology

London, UK, 3-4 December 2001  
 Contact: Society for Endocrinology, 17/18 The Courtyard, Woodlands, Bradley Stoke, Bristol BS32 4NQ, UK (Tel: +44-1454-642200; Fax: +44-1454-642222; Email: info@endocrinology.org; Web: <http://www.endocrinology.org>).

### 21st Joint Meeting of the British Endocrine Societies

Harrogate, UK, 8-11 April 2002  
 Contact: British Endocrine Societies, 17/18 The Courtyard, Woodlands, Bradley Stoke, Bristol BS32 4NQ, UK (Tel: +44-1454-642210; Fax: +44-1454-642222; Email: info@endocrinology.org; Web: <http://www.endocrinology.org>).

*The address lists used to mail this issue of EFES News were supplied by the member societies of EFES and are stored on BioScientifica's computer for future use. If you do not wish to receive further mailings, please advise [editorial@endocrinology.org](mailto:editorial@endocrinology.org)*

### 29th European Symposium on Calcified Tissues

Zagreb, Croatia, 25-29 May 2002  
 (Tel: +44-1453-549929; Fax: +44-1453-548919; Email: [admin@ectsoc.org](mailto:admin@ectsoc.org); Web: <http://www.ectsoc.org>).

### ENDO 2002: 84th Annual Meeting

San Francisco, CA, USA, 19-22 June 2002  
 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; Email: [bglover@endo-society.org](mailto:bglover@endo-society.org); Web: <http://www.endo-society.org>).

### 21st Conference of European Comparative Endocrinologists

Bonn, Germany, 26-31 August 2002  
 Contact: CECE2002, University of Bonn, Institute of Zoophysiology, Endenicher Allee 11-13, D-53115 Bonn, Germany (Fax: +49-228-732496; Email: [esce2002@uni-bonn.de](mailto:esce2002@uni-bonn.de); Web: <http://www.esce2002.uni-bonn.de>).

### 5th International Congress of Neuroendocrinology

Bristol, UK, 31 August-4 September 2002  
 Contact: BioScientifica Ltd, 17/18 The Courtyard, Woodlands, Bradley Stoke, Bristol BS32 4NQ, UK (Tel: +44(0)1454-642240; Fax: +44(0)1454-642222; Email: [icn2002@endocrinology.org](mailto:icn2002@endocrinology.org); Web: <http://www.bioscientifica.com/icn2002.htm>).

### 10th Meeting of the European Neuroendocrinology Association

Munich, Germany, 12-14 September 2002  
 Contact: Johanna Pickel, M.D., Max-Planck-Institute of Psychiatry, Dept. of Endocrinology, Kraepelinstr. 10, D-80804 Munich, Germany (Tel: +49 (0) 89 30622-454; Fax: +49 (0) 89 30622-454; E-mail: [ENEAM@mpipsykl.mpg.de](mailto:ENEAM@mpipsykl.mpg.de)).

### International Society of Endocrinology Congress 2004

Lisbon, Portugal, 1-4 September 2004  
 Contact: ISE, Department of Chemical Endocrinology, 51-53 Bartholomew Close, London EC1A 7BE, UK (Tel: +44-20-76064012; Fax: +44-20-77964676).

## EFES News



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