Ian McDonald Memorial Lecture

The MS Society has named the Keynote Speaker session of the MS Frontiers Conference 'The Ian McDonald Memorial Lecture.' The Ian McDonald Memorial Lecture pays tribute to the lifetime achievements of Ian McDonald who died in December last year. Ian made a unique and unparalleled contribution to the understanding of MS and was a leader in the research field, making important contributions in the areas of genetics, physiology and most recently imaging.

With the support of the MS Society, he pioneered the use of magnetic resonance imaging in improving the diagnosis and understanding of MS and importantly, the way in which imaging can be used to improve and speed up clinical trials.

This year the Keynote speaker was Lawrence Steinman, Professor of Neurology at Stanford University who presented work on future therapies for MS. He spoke about two negative regulators, aB Crystallin and PPAR-á, and a positive regulator of autoimmunity, osteopontin which play key roles in MS.

Lawrence Steinman receiving a presentation for his talk.

Biogen Idec young investigators travel grants

Biogen Idec, through The European Charcot Foundation, has provided an unrestricted educational grant to sponsor 20 young investigators with a travel grant of €1000 to attend the University Classes in Multiple Sclerosis IV.

Applicants must be active in MS research, and be under 35 years of age. Applications have to be backed up by the Head of Department with a letter of recommendation. Grants will be allocated in order of application. A cheque of €1000 will be handed to the Young Investigators at the end of the University Classes in Multiple Sclerosis IV.

Deadline for applications is October 15th, 2007. Email applications to M Friedrichs, m.friedrichs@charcot-ms.eu

European Federation of Neurological Societies fellowship awards to young neurologists 2007

In 2007, the EFNS offered up to eight fellowships to support young European neurologists to carry out research projects in clinical neurology. The objective is to support young and active neurologists wishing to expand their knowledge in neurology by working on scientific projects, and most of all, to study the practice of neurology in different countries, and thereby also creating new and international connections. Accordingly, the research work must be carried out at a European academic neurological department outside the country of residence.

The duration of the project should ideally be 12 months. The award consists of the net salary in accordance with the salary scale of the host institution up to a max. of €1,600 per month plus travel expenses. Eligible are candidates from European countries up to 35 years of age who are affiliated to a European academic neurological department.

Information on the EFNS Fellowship 2008 will be available on the website soon at www.efns.org

The following persons were awarded the EFNS Fellowship 2007:

- Dr Irene Martinez Torres Valencia, Spain
- Dr Anna-Elisabetta Vaudano, Rome, Italy
- Lavinia Dinia, Genova, Italy
- Juan Nuno Parracho Guerra da Costa, Lisbon, Portugal
- Dr Zoltan Horvath, Szeged, Hungary
- Luigi Romito, Milano, Italy
- Oliver Summ, Münster, Germany

Clearly better light on fluorescence microscopy

A high performance LED light source providing up to ten precise excitation wavelengths ideal for fluorescence microscopy has been launched by Carl Zeiss. Called Colibri, the computer-controllable unit will switch wavelengths in microseconds yet produces no heat or vibration, resulting in high contrast images rich in fine detail. The Colibri is ideally suited to replace metal halide light sources in all fluorescence microscopy applications, particularly in live cell imaging and other work with sensitive living specimens.

The intensity of the narrow-band LEDs (light emitting diodes) can be rapidly and accurately set for any wavelength, either from Zeiss' AxioVision software or directly from the manual controller. This allows users to balance the intensity of multiple excitation wavelengths and capture the result in a single image rather than taking multiple colour images and then attempting to balance the comparative intensities in software. The fine control of intensity also offers maximum protection for specimens and the narrow emission band produces a high signal-to-noise ratio, which is particularly significant for the detection of weak signals and fine details. The reproducibility of the illumination conditions is particularly important in medical diagnostics where documentation is made in accordance with GxP guidelines.

Rather than switching between wavelengths using filters, the different LEDs in Colibri are opto-electronically switched at extremely high speed – an important asset in multi-wavelength and kinetic studies. Also, because no movement is involved, vibration is eliminated leading to accurate and highly resolved image capture.

LEDs convert electricity very efficiently into light and, unlike traditional light sources, the Colibri does not generate radiant heat. Therefore, microscope incubators can be used immediately without waiting for thermal conditions to stabilise and the minimisation of heat build-up results in more stable conditions during prolonged experiments. The full potential of Colibri is displayed in the Cell Observer HS high speed live cell imaging system.

For more information E. micro@zeiss.co.uk

Baroness Susan Greenfield CBE to speak at Headway Conference

Baroness Susan Greenfield, CBE, will be joined by other leading professionals in the field of brain injury on Monday 22 October 2007 to speak at Headway's high profile conference in Stratford-upon-Avon. The conference is sponsored by Charles Stanley Stockbrokers. Early bird delegate places are available now and booking could not be easier.

For further information please see www.headway.org.uk or E. eventsandconferences@headway.org.uk