

17th Meeting of the European Neurological Society

16-20 June 2007; Rhodes, Greece

The 17th annual meeting of the European Neurological Society took place over five days and was attended by around 2800 delegates from over 71 countries. The setting of Rhodes was lovely for both the conference and some relaxation as the conference venue was big and well organised, with Greek bars, restaurants and the beach within easy reach for the evenings.

Throughout the event, 23 teaching courses covered a wide spectrum of mainstream topics such as "Dementia" or "Parkinson's Disease", and were usually run by national experts in their field. The ENS thus provides a chance to attend a multitude of courses in an international setting within a short period of time. As the speakers often originated from several different countries, cohesion between individual presentations was sometimes lacking, and the short course duration of half a day dictated that topics could not be covered exhaustively. However, they ran in a friendly environment and the audience was actively encouraged to participate. A particular highlight was the newly-introduced course "How to write a scientific paper and grant application", in which Professor Brandt, co-chief editor of the *Journal of Neurology*, gave practical and humorous insights into his editing work. In addition to providing many helpful tips on improving one's chances of acceptance, he illustrated them by discussing the rationale for acceptance or rejection of past submissions.

Several symposia were interspersed among the teaching courses, covering issues as diverse as axonal protection in chronic inflammatory demyelinating disease and stroke prevention. The symposium on mitochondrial disorders was particularly well attended and provided complimentary lectures with direct relevance to the practising clinician.

Almost 600 posters were presented. Due to the acceptance rate of 80%, overall standards were high. As an interesting novelty, posters were published on a USB stick.

One of the excellent elements of the



conference was the Young Neurologist in Training programme, which offered grants to 300 European trainee neurologists. These cover accommodation, conference registration and attendance at three teaching courses. This is a superb way to support trainees in attending such a conference, particularly in the current climate where when one of the authors (GPW) has had all study leave funding withdrawn. Sadly, only 13 UK trainees made use of this opportunity in 2007.

Overall, the large size of the conference and number of sessions offered meant that there was something for everyone regardless of their interests. Despite the size, the organisation was good, although occasionally marred by technical issues with the voting system and multiple speakers being flummoxed by the audiovisual equipment. Delegates came from a wide range of different backgrounds, including a significant younger contingent supported by the Young Neurologist grants, enabling networking. The great diversity of the sessions and the delegates, coupled with the setting in Rhodes, made for a very enjoyable and rewarding conference.

Next year's conference marks the 20th anniversary of the ENS. Like the inaugural meeting, it will be held in Nice, France, and hopefully the size of the UK contingent will start to reflect this country's leading role in neurology.

*Stephan Jaiser, Newcastle General Hospital, Newcastle upon Tyne.
Gavin Winston, National Hospital for Neurology & Neurosurgery, London.*

Data Presented at the ENS

The topics covered at the ENS were numerous. This selection gives some insight into the data presented:

Multiple Sclerosis: Experts emphasised that too much time is lost from the manifestation of the first symptom to the determination of diagnosis. Studies performed in patients after the first attack of the disease suggest that beta interferons display greater efficacy when used in the early phase of disease. Other immunomodulating substances should also be administered as early as possible.

Stroke: Stroke disease is the third most common cause of death and the most common cause of severe disability for adults in industrialised countries. Studies reported at the meeting indicated that aspirin reduces the risk of myocardial infarction in men, but not stroke; the opposite is true in women. In addition, surgical procedures to prevent stroke pose a greater risk to women. Early diagnosis and efficient treatment of depression can achieve better results in rehabilitation. Using transcranial Direct Current Stimulation (tDCS) and also Transcranial Magnet Stimulation (TMS) to influence regions of the brain responsible for language could help to improve aphasia in stroke patients.

Frontotemporal Dementia (FTD): 10-20% of all dementia cases are caused by FTD. Researchers reported that since dementia is often only associated with forgetfulness people affected by this disorder suffer for a long time before correct diagnosis is made. Patients frequently lose their ability to adapt to social situations first.

Heavy Intake of Alcohol: Constant alcohol consumption results not only in cognitive disorders but can elicit symptoms of frank dementia in people as young as in their forties, as presented by neurologists from the University of Medicine in Gdansk, Poland. The individuals examined had an alcohol dependency averaging 20 years. Of the total, 25.9 percent definitely suffered from anxiety disorders and another 18.5 percent probably did, while 7.4 percent definitely suffered from depression and a further 7.4 percent probably did, regardless of the individuals' age and duration of addiction. The test results indicated that a further 14.8 percent had test scores below the limit at which cognitive disorders can be excluded. Their memory, use of language and/or orientation all showed deficits. Experts demanded more public education about the consequences and dangers of alcohol abuse.

ENS Administrative Secretariat.

8th International Stereotactic Radiosurgery Congress

San Francisco, US, 23-27 June, 2007.

The Palace Hotel, located in the centre of downtown San Francisco provided a superb venue for the 8th ISRS Conference. The congress provides a multi-disciplinary forum for all those working in the Stereotactic Radiosurgery field. Not surprisingly the largest groups of delegates were neurosurgeons, oncologists and medical physicists. The local organising committee should be congratulated for orchestrating a well-balanced programme covering all aspects of Stereotactic Radiosurgery. Breakfast sessions were well attended and plenary lectures were delivered to a packed auditorium.

Stereotactic Radiosurgery is not empowered with large multi-centred randomised controlled trials. However Aoyama et al. presented results from the Japanese trial assigning patients with metastatic brain tumours to receive whole brain radiotherapy plus SRS or SRS alone. He reported that there was no difference in survival between the two groups, but that intracranial relapse was more common in the SRS group alone.

Numerous large series of patients with AVM's, acoustic neuromas, skull-based meningiomas and metastases were presented from well established units. Refinements in techniques such as tractography and intensity mod-



ulated radiosurgery aiming to minimise collateral damage and maximise the success of treatments was discussed. The use of fractionation was also considered as a strategy to try and reduce side effects. The quality of discussion was of a very high standard without exception.

The broadening of Stereotactic Radiosurgery to patients harbouring other lesions, such as cavernomas and gliomas was also reviewed. The preliminary data on glioma management is very interesting and almost certainly warrants a revisit of an SRS approach to the treatment of these cases.

The best poster award was presented to Mitsuya Koichi from Japan for his perfusion MR imaging techniques to help distinguish

tumour recurrence from radiation necrosis. Stereotactic Body Radiation Therapy is an emerging technique. This was recognised by the presentation of the Young Investigator Award to Vanessa Panettieri from Spain for her modelling studies on the delivery of radiation to lung tumours in collaboration with the Karolinska University Hospital Unit.

Douglas Kondziolka, a dynamic and talented neurosurgeon from Pittsburgh was awarded the Fabrikant Medal. He delivered a brilliant lecture providing an overview of 8,000 SRS patients treated in his unit. He covered the technological advances in

radiosurgery, the principles of treatment and the principles of management of patients with a large variety of intra-cranial conditions. This talk was undoubtedly the highlight of the academic programme.

This well organised conference was attended by specialists from all over the world and encouraged the dissemination of emerging technologies in a convivial atmosphere. The 8th ISRS Congress is due to be held in Seoul. I do hope that the organisers use the academic blueprint from the San Francisco meeting to help organise an equally successful meeting.

Peter Whitfield, South West Stereotactic Radiosurgery Centre.

PREVIEW: International Conference on the Dietary Treatments for Epilepsy

West Sussex, UK, 15-16 November, 2007.

'KetoPAG' (Ketogenic Professional Advisory Group) are a group of professionals working with the ketogenic diet. They aim to promote good practice, education and support in promotion of the use of the ketogenic diet in the treatment of epilepsy.

On 15th and 16th November 2007, at the Copthorne Effingham Park Hotel, Nr Gatwick, West Sussex, KetoPAG present an International Conference on the Dietary Treatments for Epilepsy.

The conference aims to bring together multi-disciplinary professionals involved in the use of the ketogenic diet, with an international faculty updating on the latest evidence for use; Helen Cross, Professor and Honorary Consultant in Paediatric Neurology, with a special interest in complex epilepsy at Institute of Child Health & Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children will update on their recently completed randomised con-

trolled trial evaluating the efficacy of the ketogenic diet.

Mechanisms of action, multicultural use and different diets that could be used, as well as specific roles for the diet outside epilepsy, are among the topics covered by a distinguished faculty, who include; Dr Eric Kossoff, Associate Professor of Paediatrics & Neurology, Johns Hopkins, Baltimore, USA; Dr Jong Rho, Director of Paediatric Epilepsy



Research, The Barrow Neurological Institute, Phoenix, Arizona, USA; Dr Jorg Klepper, Paediatric Neurologist Ascaffenburg, Germany; Dr Janek Nathan, Paediatric Neurologist Mumbai, India and Dr Ruth Williams, Paediatric Neurologist, Evelina Children's Hospital, London UK.

There will also be practical-based workshops for education and sharing of experiences. KetoPAG are pleased to be working with Matthew's Friends, the UK charity for the ketogenic diet, who are hosting this conference on their behalf. Emma Williams, Founder and Chief Executive of Matthew's Friends and also the Parent Representative on KetoPAG, along with her team, will be pleased to accept bookings via www.matthewsfriends.org and also poster submissions. All enquiries in the first instance to enq@matthewsfriends.org.

PREVIEW: MS Society Professional Network Conference

The MS Society is hosting its Professional Network Conference, entitled 'Self care, self management and MS' at the British Library in London on Friday 21st September.

This year's MS Society Professional Network conference tackles the theme of self care and self management – an issue very much in the news right now and one that looks set to shape the future of health and social care.

Key speakers will set out the principles and policy and leading practitioners together with self-management volunteers will discuss the practical implementation.

The conference includes ample opportunity to network with other professionals. There is no charge for this event but you do need to book your place. Programmes with booking forms are available on the MS website at www.mssociety.org.uk



Join the Professional Network

The MS Professional Network is a multi-disciplinary network to promote good practice in MS care.

Over 2,000 health and social care professionals have already joined. If you are interested in improving services for people with MS then join now. It costs nothing and you can join by going to www.mssociety.org.uk/profs

PREVIEW: Clinical Update: Epilepsy in Adults and Adolescents

This meeting of the The Royal Society of Medicine takes place on Friday 9 November from 9.15am – 5.10 pm, in London.

The meeting aims to provide an update on some important issues of diagnosis and treatment for people with epilepsy. Some of the social and employment consequences of epilepsy will also be considered. The focus of the conference is to take a practical approach, and the programme is intended particularly for all those working in epilepsy clinics, general physicians and general practitioners, and also for general neurologists and trainees.



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For more information and to register on-line please visit <http://www.rsm.ac.uk/academ/e10-2-epilepsy.php> or contact Tori Bennett T. 020 7290 3856, F. 020 7290 2989, E. tori.bennett@rsm.ac.uk



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to celebrate the ABN's 75th Anniversary Year

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