

RESEARCH AND CLINICAL TRENDS AT THE SNM ANNUAL MEETING

MORE INVESTIGATORS than ever before have submitted research papers for presentation at the Annual Meeting of the Society of Nuclear Medicine. The international gathering, in its 40th year, takes place at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre in Ontario, Canada from June 8-11.

The Scientific Program Committee received about 1900 abstracts this year compared to almost 1700 last year, an increase of more than 11%. Submissions by technologists rose in equal proportion.

Within the overall increase, specific fields of research generated more submissions than others.

Cardiology, neurology, and oncology are the areas drawing the most investigators, judging from the number of abstracts submitted and percent increases over previous years.

With nearly 400 abstracts submitted, clinical and basic cardiovascular research tops the list, but growth since last year was only 7%. In contrast, the 280 or so basic and clinical neurology and psychiatry submissions amounted to an increase of almost 30%. (Psychiatry is a new category this year.)

Cancer papers rose by more than 30% to reach a total of 163, not counting research using antibodies for therapy and diagnosis. The program committee designated an "oncology-antibody" group to supplant immunology, which along with magnetic resonance was dropped as a category this year. Although the comparison is indirect, antibody papers are fewer in number than last year's immunology papers.

But papers on radiation dosimetry nearly doubled to some 50 submissions, many of them dealing with the pharmacokinetics of radiolabeled antibodies.

The trend reflects the growing importance of cancer therapy in nuclear medicine using injectable antibodies, peptides, and bone seeking agents linked to radioisotopes.

The Scientific Program Committee this year instituted a new review process to winnow the growing multitude of submissions. Some 560 oral presentations, 470 posters, and 40 exhibits gained acceptance. Four reviewers instead of three graded each submission on a five point scale. If the scores of any two reviewers differed by more than two points, a fifth reviewer weighed in with another grade that was averaged into the overall score. "We've tried to be fairer than we've ever been," says the scientific program chairman, Edward Silberstein, MD, a professor of radiology and medicine at the University of Cincinnati Medical Center and director of the nuclear medicine service at the Jewish Hospital of Cincinnati, Ohio.

The committee managed to squeeze in an extra session of oral presentations on the last day of the meeting to accommodate the growing number of scientific abstracts. Dr. Silberstein says that all posters this year will remain on display for the duration of the meeting, but meet-the-author sessions will be split in two.

Continuing a venerable 16-year tradition, Henry N. Wagner, Jr., MD of Johns Hopkins University will conclude the meeting with his view of the highlights of the research presentations.

Education Program

With twelve categorical seminars and 33 continuing education sessions, the education program at the meeting has also grown, in both size and scope.

The categorical courses are intensive reviews of important areas of clinical nu-

clear medicine, including tumor imaging, heart imaging, radiation dosimetry, and professional practice management. A categorical session devoted to pediatric nuclear medicine is back in the program this year after a two-year hiatus.

Over 200 hours of continuing medical education credit are available through CME courses at the June meeting. Courses run the full gamut of nuclear medicine, from diagnosis to therapy. Building on the success of last year's SPECT brain imaging workshops, the Brain Imaging Council has expanded the workshops to six separate sessions. These practica include lectures and individualized hands-on sessions giving clinicians the chance to hone and test image interpretation skills.

A special session on the biological effects of radiation is part educational, part research presentation, and part news report. Tore Straume, a biophysicist at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, will outline new estimates of radiation doses received by the victims of the atom bomb dropped on Hiroshima suggesting that current models overestimate radiation risks. Straume and colleagues' recent work used accelerator mass spectrometry measurements of isotope ratios in samples of concrete to measure neutron doses inflicted by the atomic bomb. Thyroidologist David Becker, MD will discuss the recent results of his and others' research on the health consequences of the Chernobyl nuclear power disaster. Bertrand Brill, MD, PhD, organizer of the session, will discuss the likelihood of revised risk estimates for exposure to radon.

For further information contact the Department of Meetings Services, The Society of Nuclear Medicine, 136 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016, tel. 212-889-0717.