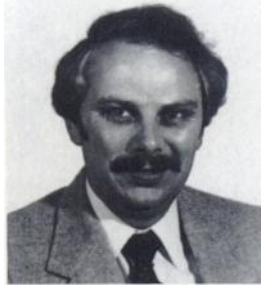


## COMMENTARY

## ASSEMBLING THE SNM SCIENTIFIC PROGRAM

The scientific and educational portion of the 34th Annual Meeting of The Society of Nuclear Medicine (SNM) is assembled, and you'll be able to sample the end product next month in Toronto, Canada. Over 5,000 registrants are expected in four days of intense communication on the latest theories, tests, experimental observations, and products in nuclear medicine. In determining the content of the SNM meeting, we followed a philosophy established several years ago: the program is designed to include something of



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interest for every member of the SNM.

We have made a conscious attempt to strike a balance between research presentations and continuing medical and basic science education. The research component comprises oral presentations in 74 topical sessions as well as posters. More than 20 continuing medical education sessions will be offered, and scientific exhibits will remain on display throughout the week. In addition, four categorical seminars, sponsored by SNM councils, will precede the Annual Meeting. Finally, an extensive variety of technical exhibits, representing all of the major industries important to the continued development of nuclear medicine, will be displayed throughout the meeting—June 2–5, 1987.

A scientific meeting of this magnitude requires the voluntary efforts of a large number of individuals. The SNM Scientific Program Committee, working under a chairperson with a two-year appointment, consists of two associate chairpersons (one for continuing education and one for scientific exhibits) and six vice chairpersons (each of whom are responsible for several topical areas). Each of the 21 topical areas is managed by a subchairperson who recommends the abstract reviewers. The selection of subchairpersons and reviewers is based upon their active participation and reputation in the topical area for which they are responsible. In this way, we attempt to recruit some of the most knowledgeable individuals of our Society to provide the most high-quality reviews possible.

The abstract review process is designed to elicit fair, accurate, and objective reviews. Not surprisingly, the results do not always meet with the authors' expectations. With approximately 60% of the submissions accepted for either

oral or poster presentation, the remaining 40% must be rejected. Undoubtedly, some rejected abstracts should have been accepted; by and large, though, the review process separates abstracts that effectively transmit the authors' messages from those that present ideas less clearly and succinctly. Each submitted abstract is judged by at least three reviewers who are recognized experts in that topical area.

Reviewers are instructed to grade the abstracts on a pre-defined scale with specific directions to judge originality, scientific merit, and audience interest. Submission of abstracts describing new and innovative ideas is encouraged, and reviewers are instructed to grade these abstracts high. Supporting data accompanying the abstracts help to document that conclusions are based upon completed work. Granted, there is only so much information that authors can transmit in the very limited space on an abstract form. The effectiveness in condensing that information, therefore, is key to acceptance of an abstract. Instructions to authors are included with all abstract forms, and close adherence to those guidelines increases the probability of a high grade.

Last year's meeting in Washington, DC, was the largest ever for the SNM. Abstract submissions increased by over 20% from previous years with a corresponding expansion of the program. The Toronto meeting promises to be about the same size as last year's: 1,265 abstracts were submitted, with 36% accepted for oral presentations and 24% for posters. In total, we will offer 738 scientific presentations.

One quite noticeable change this year is the publication of the program and abstracts as a supplement to the April 1987 issue of *The Journal of Nuclear Medicine*. With the growth of the scientific program, the traditional "pocket-sized" program and the journal containing abstracts both became so unwieldy that a new format was necessary. A decision was made by the Scientific Program Committee, the Publications Committee, and Thomas P. Haynie, MD, editor of *The Journal of Nuclear Medicine*, to print the abstracts as a supplement, and to publish them earlier. The separate program is designed to be thin enough for folding and carrying in a pocket, if desired. Extra copies of the abstract book will be available at the meeting for \$5.00.

Toronto is but a month away. My wish is for an educational experience that will benefit our professional endeavors and stimulate thoughts for new investigational areas. I hope to see you in Canada.

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Chairman, SNM Scientific Program Committee