



Mathew L.  
Thakur, PhD

# Eighth Congress of the International Society of Radiolabeled Blood Elements

The Eighth Congress of the International Society of Radiolabeled Blood Elements (ISORBE) was held May 24-27, 1997, in Castel Gandolfo near Rome, Italy. The symposium was attended by 138 participants from 27 countries. A total of 103 abstracts were presented, of which 14 were invited, and the remaining 89 were chosen by an international panel of reviewers from 105 abstracts submitted. Scientific program abstracts were published in *Nuclear Medicine Communications* (*Nucl Med Commun* 1997;18:457-495).

Novel clinical and experimental investigations with applications of radiolabeled platelets, separated lymphocytes and monocytes and mixed population of white blood cells continue. There is an increasing trend toward using  $^{99m}\text{Tc}$  as a tracer, although  $^{111}\text{In}$ -labeled blood cells continue to serve as the standard in both routine and experimental applications. The major thrust of research presented regarding the development of new radiopharmaceuticals was in the preparation and evaluation of receptor-specific biomolecules that will selectively label neutrophils *in vivo*. These agents include monoclonal antibodies, intact or fragments thereof, peptides and a variety of cytokines.

Quality and originality of science were judged by a panel of reviewers, who identified four outstanding presentations by young investigators for the following awards:

- Amersham Health Care Award: C. van der Laken, PhD (Nijmegen, The Netherlands), Infection imaging with interleukin-1, its receptor antagonist and a chemotactic peptide: A study of two animal models.
- DuPont Award: E. Pracaccini, MD (Rome, Italy),  $^{99m}\text{Tc}$ -IL-2 scintigraphy in patients with thyroid disease.
- Byk Gulden Italia Award: F. Jamar, MD (Brussels, Belgium), Imaging endothelial activation using  $^{99m}\text{Tc}$  anti-E selectin Fab in rheumatoid arthritis.
- Byk Gulden Italia Award: S. Gratz, MD (Gottingen, Germany), Intraindividual comparison of  $^{99m}\text{Tc}$ -labeled anti-SSEA-1 antigranulocyte antibody and  $^{99m}\text{Tc}$  white blood cells for imaging infection.

The Ninth ISORBE Congress will be held in 1999 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

—*Mathew L. Thakur, PhD, is professor of radiology, director, radiopharmaceutical research and nuclear medicine research at Thomas Jefferson University, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.*

## Government Relations

(Continued from page 28N)

forward lies with California. Garamendi claimed that the state had established numerous roadblocks throughout the process, effectively stalling the transfer. As evidence of this, the Department noted that the state of California had refused at every occasion to participate in joint testing. Ultimately, the Department claims that moving forward with this sale would be hasty, citing the need for further unbiased testing on issues that have arisen since the original Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and National Academy of Sciences (NAS) reports were completed.

California has agreed to do additional testing but claims that it is prevented from doing so by the Bureau of Land Management, which is withholding a permit allowing access to the area. At this point, Chairman Murkowski noted a memo in which the Department of the Interior asked the Bureau of Land Management to do everything it could to encourage joint testing.

The spokesperson for California said that no new, relevant information has been brought forth to merit an additional Significant Impact Statement (SIS). Further, the state sees the Department of the Interior's demand for joint testing as additional evidence of that agency's wish to control the facility. The state also pointed to oversight rules by the Department once transfer is complete and the Department's recommendation of appro-

appropriate alternate sites for consideration in future testing.

Those opposing the land transfer addressed several issues. Of primary concern were tritium levels at the facility and leaking at the Beatty site in Nevada. Additionally, many were concerned that radioactive waste at Ward Valley would be absorbed into the Colorado River, which supplies drinking water to the neighboring area. Members of area Native American tribes have raised claims that they were excluded from the original EIS and NAS reports.

Noting that the NAS report mentioned the leaking at the Beatty site but ruled it out as a significant factor, proponents claimed that Beatty is not a reliable indicator of Ward Valley's success. They also reported that tritium levels will be lower than were originally indicated in the NAS report and that absorption of radioactive waste into the Colorado River drinking water supply has been found to be highly unlikely. Representative Bilbray pointed out in his testimony that the General Accounting Office found that the Ward Valley facility would not adversely affect Native Americans' cultural sites.

The hearing ended with the spokespersons for the state of California and the Department of the Interior agreeing to meet and discuss the stalemate. Senator Murkowski encouraged this, hoping that they would come to an agreement without the assistance of Congress.