

Annual Meeting Preview: SNM Returns to Toronto

"An international meeting in an international city" is the theme of the Society of Nuclear Medicine's (SNM's) 45th Annual Meeting, to be held June 7-11 in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Toronto was the site of SNM's successful 1993 meeting, which had a record number of attendees.

Renowned as a multicultural mecca, Toronto features a new convention centre that can accommodate an increased number of scientific and technical exhibits, a fact that the meeting's organizers feel will only enhance the meeting's comprehensive and dynamic scientific and educational program. "Toronto is an excellent site for the Annual Meeting," said Paul H. Murphy, PhD, general program chair. "The city has outstanding attributes—the new convention facility, easy access for domestic and international travelers and numerous cultural opportunities—for a wonderful meeting." The Toronto location also has allowed SNM to actively collaborate with the Society of Nuclear Medicine Canada (SNMC), said Lauren Kramer-Whelan, CMP, SNM's director of meeting services.

The scientific program committee received over 2200 abstracts for presentation at the Annual Meeting, of which approximately 1200 were accepted for the scientific and poster sessions. According to William C. Eckelman, PhD, scientific program chair, "we had to schedule four poster sessions this year instead of two because of the large number of outstanding poster presentations." The scientific papers address a wide range of research topics, but the categories with the largest number of accepted papers were clinical cardiology, diagnostic oncology using fluorodeoxyglucose (FDG) and nuclear neurology. Additionally, the SNM Technologist Section (SNM-TS) also has organized a strong scientific program featuring 75 abstracts and a technologist student session with 15 papers.

Technology Facilitates Meeting Registration

To make it easier for attendees to preregister for the meeting, SNM expanded its use of the Internet and other electronic services. This year, attendees can register for the meeting through SNM's web site (www.snm.org) and could obtain abstract acceptance information. Attendees can also register for the meeting using fax on demand (1-888-398-7662). "The electronic aspects of providing meeting information and materials have been working quite well, and we have had a wonderful response," said Kramer-Whelan.

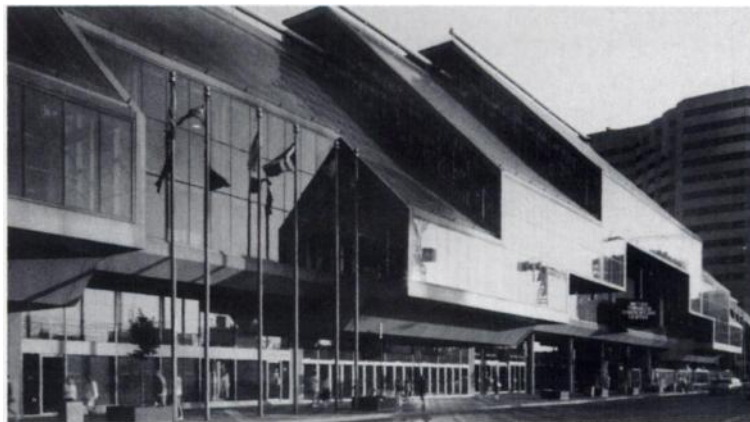


Photo courtesy of Metro Toronto Convention and Visitors Association.

The expanded use of technology is just one of many tools used by SNM staff to make the Annual Meeting an enjoyable and educational experience for attendees. According to Kramer-Whelan, "we paid careful attention to comments from attendees at previous meetings about the meeting facilities, and some of the concerns we have successfully addressed this year include ensuring competitive rates at all official SNM hotels and that the hotels are within close proximity to the convention centre."

Educational Opportunities

"The goal of the Annual Meeting," said Eckelman, "is to provide nuclear medicine practitioners with the latest scientific research and a comprehensive 3-day educational program that combines expert reviews of traditional aspects of nuclear medicine as well as burgeoning areas of interest, including comparisons with other imaging modalities." This year's continuing education courses address a wide range of topics, including cardiology, oncology, neurology, pediatrics, infection imaging and new developments in radiopharmaceuticals. The popular "Read with the Experts" interactive sessions have been expanded to 11. The categorical seminars, 1-day intensive reviews of various nuclear medicine applications, also focus on a vast array of topics. SNM will again publish the handout materials from the continuing education sessions and categorical seminars. And, in response to comments from attendees at previous meetings, attempts will be made to secure handouts from *all* educational course speakers, noted Kramer-Whelan.

Exhibits

Attendees will have the opportunity to meet with
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The Metro Toronto Convention Centre, Canada's largest convention facility, and site of SNM's 45th Annual Meeting.

weapons program. Essentially, these methods are complementary rather than competitive. The DOE's national laboratories offer unique isotope production facilities, specifically the calutrons, accelerators and reactors.

The electromagnetic calutrons at Oak Ridge National Laboratory produce enriched stable isotopes. Many of these isotopes, such as ^{88}Sr , ^{201}Tl and ^{68}Zn , are required to produce other isotopes used to help diagnose cancer and heart disease and provide cancer therapy. Russia is the only other nation that has a similar large-scale electromagnetic separation facility.

Accelerator production of radioisotopes is accomplished by the DOE at two sites. The Los Alamos Neutron Science Center provides a proton beam or neutrons for radioisotope production at Los Alamos National Laboratory, and the Brookhaven Linear Isotope Producer provides similar capability at Brookhaven National Laboratory. The DOE intends to maintain these facilities for isotope production. Upgrades to the hot cell facilities for the Brookhaven Linear Isotope Producer have recently been completed, and a new radioisotope production facility at the Los Alamos Neutron Science Center is scheduled to be completed by 2000.

Two major DOE reactors, the High Flux Isotope Reactor at Oak Ridge National Laboratory and the Advanced Test Reactor at Idaho National Engineering Laboratory (Idaho Falls, ID), currently produce radioisotope products and services that cannot be produced elsewhere in the country. The DOE anticipates continuing to operate these reactors for the foreseeable future. By fiscal year 1999, a third reactor, the Annular Core Research Reactor at the Sandia National Laboratories in Albuquerque, NM, will have been modified to begin producing the short half-life radioisotope ^{99}Mo . This reactor will be dedicated to radioisotope production.

In addition, the DOE is reviewing other facilities that can produce radioisotopes as a secondary mission. For example, the DOE is currently evaluating methods for tritium produc-

tion to support the U.S.'s weapons stockpile. Part of this evaluation includes review of the economic and technical feasibility of using the Fast Flux Test Facility in Richland, WA, or the proposed Accelerator Production of Tritium Facility to produce medical radioisotopes as a secondary mission to tritium production. With the appropriate infrastructure in place, it is believed that either of these facilities could produce a wide range of radioisotopes for medical research and therapeutic and diagnostic procedures.

Future Role

The use of radioisotopes for diagnostics, therapy and other medical research holds great promise. The basis of this promise is a reliable, steady supply of isotopes at reasonable prices. The DOE sees a great future for nuclear medicine and wants to work with the nuclear medicine community in a positive way to enable progress in all aspects of this vital discipline. The DOE will continue to operate its unique facilities to maintain an appropriate inventory of isotopes and will continue to support nuclear medicine research as a logical extension of the current scope of its activities.

However, how this role will be defined in the future depends a great deal on the ability of isotope customers and stakeholders—such as the nuclear medicine community—to educate the public, local elected officials and Congress on the benefits of nuclear medicine. The nuclear medicine community needs to unify itself behind a coherent program to expand its contribution to the health, well-being and quality of life of humankind. The DOE stands ready to work with the nuclear medicine community to ensure that the promise of nuclear medicine is fulfilled.

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representatives from over 100 major manufacturers and suppliers of nuclear medicine equipment, products and services. On the exhibit floor and during user meetings, these companies will display and demonstrate the latest advances in computers, imaging cameras, dose calibrators, radiation safety products, publications and radiopharmaceuticals.

Plenary Session and Other Activities

The Annual Meeting will open with the Plenary Session, at which the second annual Henry N. Wagner, Jr., Scientific Lecture will be given by Frans H.M. Corstens, MD, FRCP, University Hospital, Nijmegen, the Netherlands, who will discuss new clinical nuclear medicine procedures. SNM's de Hevesy Award will be presented to Nagara Tamaki, MD, and Heinrich R. Schelbert, MD, PhD. The Aebersold Award will be presented to Gerd Muehllehner, PhD, UGM Medical Systems,

Philadelphia, PA. The ERF's prestigious Cassen Prize will be awarded to Henry N. Wagner, Jr., professor of medicine, radiology and environmental sciences, The Johns Hopkins Medical Institution, Baltimore, MD. Also, for the first time, a preview of the week's continuing education courses will be presented during the Plenary Session by SNM president H. William Strauss, MD.

A variety of social and recreational opportunities are available to attendees wanting a respite from the educational and scientific programs. In addition to the welcome reception and the SNM-TS party, attendees can explore Toronto's numerous restaurants, galleries and museums, theatrical offerings and other cultural opportunities.

As in past years, the Annual Meeting will conclude with Henry N. Wagner, Jr., MD's, 21st overview and highlights of the scientific research presentations.

—Eleanore Tapscott