

SNM Participates in IAEA Symposium in Brazil

In January, several hundred nuclear medicine specialists from around the world came together in Porto Alegre, Brazil, for the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) International Symposium on Nuclear Oncology, for which the SNM was a cosponsor and contributor of expert resources and logistic support.

Held from January 19 through 23 in cooperation with the government of Brazil, the World Federation of Nuclear Medicine and Biology, the Asia & Oceania Federation of Nuclear Medicine and Biology, the Association of the Latin American Societies of Nuclear Medicine and Biology, the Brazilian Society of Nuclear Medicine and Biology, and the World Radiopharmaceutical Therapy Council, the symposium had its origins at an SNM meeting in 2002. Ken Maynard, SNM Associate Director of Public Affairs, met informally with Ajit K. Padhy, MD, from the IAEA Division of Human Health. "We met over coffee to talk about possible joint activities that could draw on the expertise of the international nuclear medicine community in ways that would have lasting benefits," said Maynard. "Padhy suggested this regional symposium format as one that would be ideal in bringing together a mix of developed and developing countries that share a keen interest in the benefits of nuclear medicine, particularly oncologic applications."

Within weeks of the initial meeting, plans for the symposium were already taking shape. "This was a global community effort," said Maynard. "And the SNM was very much in on the ground floor, advising on topics for sessions

and working with the IAEA staff to identify speakers." Maynard credits Padhy with much of the success of the symposium. "He recognized that this is a crucial time for world nuclear medicine, when rapid developments in our technology are dovetailing with extraordinary discoveries about the genesis and treatment of a number of cancers," said Maynard. "Padhy also worked to bring together the excellent coalition of cooperating organizations with which the SNM worked in supporting the symposium."

When the symposium opened in Porto Alegre on January 19, the program featured 4 packed days of presentations, posters, special sessions, lectures, and social events. Representing the SNM were Henry D. Royal, MD, SNM president; Alexander MacEwan, MD; Stanley J. Goldsmith, MD; and Chaitanya R. Divgi, MD. Attendees from the United States also included Michael Goris, MD, PhD; Hussein M. Abdel-Dayem, MD; Salvador Borges-Neto, MD; Suresh C. Srivastava, PhD; Abass Alavi, MD; Greg Wiseman, MD; F.F. (Russ) Knapp, Jr., PhD; and Franklin C-L Wong, MD, PhD, JD.

"This symposium represents the kind of effort that the SNM is dedicated to encouraging as one of our most important missions," said Virginia Pappas, SNM executive director. "Our attendees gave their time and expertise to an effort designed to foster an open exchange of scientific information across the broadest possible spectrum of international outreach."

Attendees at the symposium from throughout South and Central America came to hear about topics as traditional as ^{131}I therapy for thyroid cancer and as cutting edge as the latest in PET/CT technology and molecular imaging. "A great deal of interest was expressed in radionuclide therapy in general, including radioimmunotherapy regimens, palliation of bone pain, and treatment, for example, of hepatocellular cancer," said Goldsmith. He added that the symposium provided an opportunity to assess the current state of PET worldwide. "It was remarkable to learn that FDG for PET imaging is flown in daily to Estonia from Finland," he said. "At the same time, it's clear—and saddening—to learn that the cost of PET scanners prohibits many areas from participating in this technological revolution."

Several attendees who gave presentations noted the personal and professional gratification they felt in sharing expertise and knowledge. "That's not meant to infer in any way that the attendees were uninformed," cautioned Goldsmith. "What they seemed to benefit from most was a sense of reassurance about what they do. We in the more developed countries not only benefit from wealth

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Dr. C.H. Lee, MD, Department of Nuclear Medicine, Korea Institute of Radiologic and Medical Science, Seoul; Ajit K. Padhy, MD; Stanley J. Goldsmith, MD; Myung-Chul Lee, MD, Chair of the Department of Nuclear Medicine, Seoul National University Hospital and president of the World Federation of Nuclear Medicine and Biology.

Mena Honored in Auvergne

In a ceremony on January 15 in Clermont-Ferrand, France, Ismael Mena, MD, Emeritus Professor of Radiological Sciences at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) School of Medicine, was awarded the title of Doctor Honoris Causa by the Université d'Auvergne. Jean Maublant, MD, vice-president in charge of public relations policies for the university, presented the title and delivered the presentation address. In addition to reviewing the honoree's life work, he noted the influence Mena has had both on training French physicians in nuclear medicine and on the development of the specialty in France. Maublant himself worked with Mena at UCLA in the 1980s and recalled both the high quality of his mentorship and the warm welcome he extended to visiting scholars and their families. According to sources at the Université d'Auvergne, the January ceremony marked the first time that a French university had bestowed an honorary doctorate on a nuclear medicine physician.

Mena told Newsline, "This doctorate is for me a crowning achievement after many years of teaching a large number of French nuclear physicians at the UCLA School of Medicine, a number of whom now occupy leading positions in important French universities and medical centers. This honor is a sign of their loyalty and



At the ceremony honoring Mena: Guy Darcourt, MD, Professor of Psychiatry, Université de Nice; Gaston Meyniel, MD, former dean of the Université d'Auvergne School of Medicine; Ismael Mena, MD; and Professor Alain Bouvier, Chancellor of the Université d'Auvergne. Reproduced with permission from the editor-in-chief, *ALASBIMN Journal*.

friendship, which I treasure." Mena lives in Santiago, Chile, and remains active in nuclear medicine and in international organizations. He serves as the editor-in-chief of the *ALASBIMN Journal: Revista de Medicina Nuclear*, published by the Latin American Association of Societies of Nuclear Medicine and Biology, of which Mena was a founding member. ✿

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and resources, but we're privileged to have excellent communication with each other through meetings, publications, and other venues—all of which are more difficult for people from developing countries to come by. Whether as teachers or students, we are constantly reinforced, whereas they are more isolated. Hopefully, many contacts established at the symposium will be maintained and the ties strengthened."

Maynard agreed that the benefits of the symposium are likely to live on well into the future. "By being in at the beginning of planning for this meeting, we were true participants. We soon had companies coming to us asking what they could do to help," he said, citing the support of MDS Nordion and Amersham as important elements in the SNM delegation's participation. As ties among both individuals and international nuclear medicine organizations are strengthened, support from industry, academia, and government groups will be galvanized to expand the focus and range of similar meetings in the future.

"One of the delightful elements of the meeting was a true sense of fraternity—the world of nuclear medicine coming together to share expertise, experience, and problems—independent of political and other differences among governments," said Goldsmith. "In fact, in one stirring experience, international attendees were asked to bring CDs with music from their homelands to be played at one of the evening dinners. Each person first explained the background of the music and either sang along or demonstrated the steps of a dance. Then, on replay, everyone joined in." Goldsmith also noted a memorable moment on the last evening when a band played John Lennon's "Imagine," and attendees sang as one about "No need for greed or hunger. . . a brotherhood of man."

Publication of the proceedings of the International Symposium on Nuclear Oncology are planned for later this year. A full copy of the program can be accessed through the IAEA site at www-pub.iaea.org/MTCD/Meetings/PDFplus/2004/cn117prog.pdf. ✿