

Nuclear Medicine Professionals Meet in Beijing

Nuclear medicine professionals from the United States and China met in Beijing on February 25 and 26 to attend the First Sino-American Conference on Nuclear Medicine. In his opening address, Jiahe Tian, MD, president of the Chinese Society of Nuclear Medicine (CSNM), emphasized the importance of the conference for enhancing scientific exchange and cooperation between the 2 countries and for strengthening interactions between CSNM and SNM.

In China, as Tian reported, nearly 8,000 nuclear medicine professionals—including about 2,700 physicians, 2,500 technicians, and 1,100 nurses—currently provide clinical nuclear medicine services. In 2009, radionuclide services in China included nearly 1.29 million planar and SPECT and 155,000 PET/CT imaging studies, as well as nearly 340,000 thyroid uptake studies and 372,000 radionuclide treatments. Unlike in the United States, more than 400 million in vitro assays are performed by nuclear medicine personnel in China each year.

The nuclear medicine infrastructure continues to grow in China, which currently has 133 PET/CT and PET systems and 72 cyclotrons. Delegates of SNM (including Dominique Delbeke, MD, PhD, president; George Segall, MD, president-elect; and Michael Graham, MD, PhD, immediate past-president) then reviewed for their Chinese colleagues aspects of training, education, and maintenance of certification in nuclear medicine in the United States. Together with their Chinese colleagues, they continued with formal educational lectures and case presentations.

An exciting and stimulating part of the conference took place on the second day of the conference, when 25 young professionals from both countries competed in a tournament for the best scientific presentation, with many offerings of high scientific quality and considerable novelty. Judges from both countries awarded the 4



Young professionals at the First Sino-American Conference on Nuclear Medicine.

top presentations, 2 to Chinese and 2 to U.S. young professionals. The event was reported on the Beijing TV news, underscoring the importance of the event.

In his parting words, Segall thanked the CSNM for the warm welcome and for the enthusiasm of their Chinese colleagues. He acknowledged that the meeting had achieved the goals of strengthening friendship and communications and, thus, had laid a strong foundation for future cooperation. Segall noted that the young professionals of CNSM and SNM have become ambassadors for the 2 countries and hoped that professional collaboration and personal relationships will flourish as a result of this meeting.

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MOLECULAR IMAGING UPDATE

A Training Program for Molecular Imaging Scientists

In 2007 the Center for Molecular Imaging Innovation and Translation created a task force that was charged with defining the molecular imaging field and providing guidance in molecular imaging education. It has been advocating for the expansion of the nuclear medicine residency curriculum and has submitted comments to the SNM Nuclear Medicine Residency Review Committee, worked with the Academic Council and Nuclear Medicine Program Directors, developed an “Advanced Practice” list of topics for interested programs, and is launching a new online molecular imaging course in September. It has also sought to establish a molecular imaging curriculum for scientists based on the core competencies and integrative nature of the field, with the view that existing training programs must extend beyond what are currently offered in biomedical engineering. A sub-working group is now developing a curriculum for a translational molecular imaging researcher.

Our new consensus paper, featured in last month’s *JNM*, described the process and recommended content for training molecular imaging scientists. The publication can be used to assist academic institutions in the development of programs and curricula that prepare students for the dynamic changes in this emerging field. It is envisioned that the publication of these recommendations will lead

to discussions with other stakeholders and national organizations involved with molecular imaging in order to obtain feedback from their members. The publication of this information should be regarded as the beginning of a dialogue. It is expected that there will be additional refinements of the curriculum and education guidelines proposed, with more specific implementation plans in the future. The long-term goals are to develop and implement education and training for careers in molecular imaging and to provide a process for improving and standardizing the curriculum.

It is hoped that this effort will assist with recruitment of new scientists into the field; foster innovation of novel, cost-effective molecular imaging probes, equipment, and methods; and ultimately enhance patient care. Please visit www.snm.org/scientists_curriculum and use the tools provided to provide comments and feedback.



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