Looking back at Barcelona

Expectations certainly met

In the June 2002 issue of ecpn matters the Scientific Programme Committee focused on some highlights on certain aspects of the 15th ECNP Congress. Were those expectations met?

David J. Nott, chair SPC 15th ECNP Congress

Track system

By common consensus the new track systems would seem to be a great success. Participants were guided through the extensive programme by classifying the presentations into one of the following:
- treatment track
- clinical research track
- preclinical track
- educational track.

I received a number of unsolicited positive comments about the logical structure, the value of such a thematic organization of presentations, and the clear and explicit way in which the tracks can be followed in the programme. I am sure that we will be using a similar format in future meetings.

Hot topic session

A new development to stimulate (the attendance of) preclinical symposia is the hot topic session in which young promising preclinical neuroscientists give short presentations. There was a very impressive turnout to this new session, with many more delegates than the individual presenters could have expected to reach in an ordinary setting.

The quality of the presentations (after some slight teething problems with the audiovisual system) was uniformly high and the quality of the discussions confirmed that this quality was well appreciated. I got the impression that the young hot topic presenters really enjoyed the privilege of being at the ECNP Congress and some of them certainly were very active at the congress party!

Scientific cafés

Another initiative designed to promote the preclinical sessions was the bonus of a scientific café, giving delegates the opportunity to meet the speakers in an informal setting. This activity did seem to get off to a good start, prompted by the fact that the pleasant weather and the ability to congregate in the gardens outside the conference centre and talk through some of the issues raised in the particular sessions. We are waiting for formal feedback of the sessions but I am fairly sure that the idea of the scientific café was received well and that we will continue with them in the future.

Scientific programme

In my preview of the 15th ECNP Congress I promised delegates an outstanding scientific event. Looking back I think that overall the quality of presentations was uniformly high, announcing a lot of new cutting edge data. The presentations on the whole were extraordinarily well attended - right through to the very last morning and the general ordinance was an enthusiastic sharing of scientific ideas and facts.

When you started out as a scientist, was there a specific disorder you wanted to help cure?

“Nothing, that has happened to me has been a coincidence. Even getting into neuropsychopharmacology in the first place. When I started to study medicine in 1941, I more or less had made up my mind to become a scientist. My first course was in anatomy, after my exams I was offered a position as an amanuensis. So I started out in anatomy until the professor of pharmacology came along. He asked me to be his amanuensis and it wounded me more than anatomy. So that is why I became a pharmacologist. The professor gave me a topic related to the central nervous system (CNS) as it dealt with drugs capable of awakening people who had taken an overdose of a hypnotic. These central analeptics are not much used now. My colleague Folke Sern, who is still a very good friend, and I published a paper in 1950 on our discovery that the effect of the drug depended on the time of day. The drugs hit the rodents the lastest at night when they were the most active. The funny thing was that many decades later a research paper by the American Space Programme credited our study to be the first of this kind.

I then, temporarily abandoned CNS for something entirely different. Again, it was my professor who talked me into doing research on calcium tablets, using radioactive tracers that had just become available. This study ended up as my doctoral thesis that dealt with calcium metabolism, using radioactive calcium to find out how the formation of bone takes place.”

It must be very exciting to take part in the discovery of something major as you experienced later on in your career?

“It is indeed very exciting. What happened a few years after defending my doctoral thesis was that I applied for a professorship but ended as number 2. Actually my friend Folke Sern got the position, which is quite right as he is my senior by five years. The reason, however, that I was turned down was that they were not impressed with my research and advised me to leave the focus of calcium metabolism if I wanted to remain a pharmacologist. So I did and inorganic chemistry in which he reached great success. He was one of the pioneers in biochemical pharmacology, especially in the area of drug metabolism. This was the fifties, the time of discovering antipsychotic agents. Brodie had just experienced a tremendous breakthrough by using a new instrument, the spectrophotometer. This instrument made it possible for the first time to measure very low levels of drugs, metabolites and endogenous compounds such as serotonin that had been discovered in the brain shortly before. So they had measured serotonin after administering reserpine and the level of serotonin was down to almost zero. It was very dramatic to find that an endogenous, physiologically active compound disappears after a drug has been given. I proposed to Brodie to look at the effect of reserpine on some closely related compounds, the catecholamines such as adrenaline. He did not see anything in this. But I was very fortunate to be given this opportunity. So I went home and was lucky again by finding Professor Nils-Åke Hillarp at the University of Lund. Together we did indeed discover that the effect of reserpine on the catecholamines was the same as the effect on serotonin, it led to the depletion of catecholamines! When we continued this investigation we found that after administering reserpine stimulation of the sympathetic nervous system did not lead to the usual blood pressure response, apparently because the neurotransmitter noradrenaline had gone.

The rabbits treated with reserpine were deeply sedated and cataleptic. Catalepsy is a state of immobility predicting what in humans is known as Parkinson’s disease. You could say the rabbits were ‘Parkinsonistic’, which we did not realize at the time of the experiment. We intravenously injected these animals a precursor of noradrenaline which is called dopa and after about ten minutes the rabbits were up and running again. It was amazing. Of course we very quickly published these results but later on when we analyzed the brains, we discovered that the expectation that the noradrenaline was back proved false. It was still zero, which was very disappointing… However we kept at it and continued on next page
decided to focus on dopamine, an inter- 

mediate between dopa and nondopera-

line - a state time considered to be 

absolutely uninteresting in terms of 

physiological activity on itself. First, we 

had to develop a method to measure 

dopamine because there was none avail-

able at that time. We then discovered 

that dopamine normally occurs in fairly 

large amounts in the brain, that it disap-

peared after reserpine treatment and that 

the response to dopa could be related to 

the reappearance of dopamine in the 

brain. Perhaps that was one of the most 

exciting experiments I have done. A few 

years after the publication of our first 

results Hillard and his fellow researchers 

succeeded in developing a method by 

means of which it became possible for 

us to visualize dopamine, monoamino 

acid in the brain tissue. We succeeded in 

developing a method by which we could 

visualize dopamine, noradrenaline and 

serotonin in neurons of brain and 

peripheral tissues in the fluorescence 

microscope."

Do you work together with patients’ organizations at all?

“When I started the work on the effect of 

reserpine the focus was entirely on men- 

tal functions. It just so happened that we 

stumbled on dopamine and then we had 

the whole story about Parkinson’s dis-

ease. In 1967 George Cotzias (United 

States) demonstrated how to use lev-

odopa (L-DOPA) to bring about the dama-

tic improvements. Around that time I 

attended a meeting in Canada where his 

documentary was shown. I rushed back to 

Sweden and understood that there was 

nothing new to start working on this as well, 

which they did the same year. I still remember 

the patients in their wheelchairs and 

thinking to myself: I do not think this is 

quite right. But I. After they had 

had their L-DOPA, they got up and actu-

ally started to walk. It was exactly like 

Oliver Sacks’ description a few years 

later in Awakenings. It was very dramatic 

and also meant my first contact with 

people suffering from Parkinson’s dis-

ease. As my field of research is predicat-

ible. The media make such a fuss about 

the empress of Japan at the banquet. 

Nobel Prize and I also got to sit next to 

Einstein’s chair thought he 

should do with it as the new generation clearly 

mer. This is not so unusual; it took Albert 

Einstein 20 years to be presented with 

the Nobel Prize as the chair thought he 

merely a precursor of noradrenaline. We 
gost to recognize that dopamine is not 

merely a precursor of noradrenaline. We 

have a lot of resistance to deal with. 

Secondly, maybe the generation shift in 

the Nobel Committee had something to 

do with it as the new generation clearly 

has a different perspective than the for-

mer. This is not so unusual; it took Albert 

Einstein 20 years to be presented with 

the Nobel Prize as the chair thought he 

was ‘merely writing formulas’. As 

soon as the chair stepped down, the 

prize went to Einstein. A third aspect 

might be that many in the 2000 Nobel 

Prize Committee knew me and have 

worked with me at the Karolinska 

Institute in Stockholm. I received 

the prize together with Paul Greengard, who 

I have known for many years, and with 

Eric Kandel. Both are from the United 

States. Although I somewhat expected 
to receive the prize, I was certainly not 

ready for the awe surrounding it. I have 

been presented with so many prizes 

before and one of them, the Japan Prize, 

was more than the award money of the 

Nobel Prize and I also got to sit next to 

the empress of Japan at the banquet. 

And yet... when I was presented with 

the Nobel Prize it was so much more visi-

ble. The media make such a fuss about 

the fact that this is the first time in the 

country..."
ECNP Consensus Meeting 2002: Long-term treatment in psychiatric and neurological diseases

Experts, researchers, clinicians and regulators from various European countries got together in Nice last spring to discuss neuroprotection in neurological diseases, and long-term treatment in depressive and anxiety disorders.

Tamar Wohlfarth, clinical assessor
Medicines Evaluation Board of the Netherlands

Neuroprotection, to be differentiated from symptomatic treatment, is aimed at slowing down the underlying process of diseases such as Parkinson’s disease, Alzheimer’s disease, and Multiple Sclerosis (MS). The focus of the discussion was on study designs that would enable demonstration of neuroprotection and would distinguish neuroprotection from symptomatic improvement. It was suggested that the effect of neuroprotective treatment can be expected to remain even after treatment is withdrawn while the effect of symptomatic treatment is expected to diminish as soon as treatment is withdrawn.

A problem in studying neuroprotective compounds is the identification of the appropriate patient population to be included in studies, and in the early phases of the disease are preferred but are difficult to identify based on clinical symptoms alone. In addition, if patients in early phases of the disease are recruited, studies of long duration might be necessary. Defining the outcome measure for studies is another issue. Determination or time to deterioration are some possibilities. Determination in terms of biological markers, rather than clinical symptoms, is to be preferred, but not enough knowledge has accumulated to validate define such markers as efficacy measures.

EcNP pays for all costs, within a certain budget. The ECNP Office also takes care of inviting the experts and keeping all parties informed. For this reason the meeting was attended by Jocelyn Koole-Krusemeijer, general manager and Kirsten Bett, educational writer, from the ECNP-Office. ecpn matters will report on the meeting of the Educational Team Bulgaria in the next issue.

For members only...
ECNP is setting up a separate section for members on the general website www.ecnp.nl. Already members can log in by putting their name and password (first 6 figures of membership number). Having entered, members have access to, among others, the directory of members and the journal European Neuropsychopharmacology. If you have any suggestions for other items for us to put on the members’ site, please send them in an e-mail to secretariat@ecnp.nl.

4th ECNP Workshop, Nice - France
Neuropsychopharmacology of addiction

Addiction is one of the major challenges to health and society. Although addiction is a multifactorial syndrome the unifying theme is the fact that drugs are chemical substances that affect brain neurotransmitter function. In addition the basic pharmacology of most drugs of abuse is becoming understood at the molecular level. This offers a better understanding of drug abuse from animal studies as well as leads to interesting theories that could help define genetic vulnerability to addiction.

David J. Nutt, chair SPC

The 4th Nice ECNP Workshop targets addiction by bringing together leading addiction scientists in the clinical and preclinical arena to explore cutting edge issues in addiction: from the molecular and genetic basis of self-administration in animals through studies of neural circuits and new approaches to treatment, and into the clinical domain with the latest ideas about practical therapy.

Successful innovations from earlier workshops are retained. These include the interactive poster sessions and the mentoring session where a young researcher’s topic for investigation is discussed in detail by one of the many experts in the group.

To increase access to the Workshop we have dropped the requirement that delegates should be recommended by ECNP members. Anyone with a research interest in addiction is free to apply so do so soon!

Educational Team Turkey

I. Hakkı Ayağan and Ahmet Göğüs met in Barcelona with Joseph Zohar, chair Educational Committee, to discuss the initiative of an ECNP Educational Team to visit Turkey in 2003. The meeting was very fruitful; even tentative dates were set at April 25 – 27, 2003. Topics are still being listed as the whole idea of the educational team is that ECNP initiative of an ECNP Educational Team to visit Turkey in 2003. The meeting was very fruitful; even tentative dates were set at April 25 – 27, 2003. Topics are still being listed as the whole idea of the educational team is that ECNP

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Theatrical big heads accompanied the 2001 ECNP-Lilly Neuroscience Award winners and the 2001 and 2002 Fellowship Award winners to the stage. One by one they crossed the walkway over the swimming pool to the stage where Julien Mendlewicz, chair of the Award Committee, and I presented the awards. (Also see the articles on the awards.)

Positive reinforcement
Giant figures, about three metres tall, were carried round the swimming pool by a group of Catalan entertainers. They towered masterful over approximately 1,500 people present in the different garden areas of the congress centre. While these entertainers kept on playing traditional Catalan wind music, a human tower took over. All stood in awe of this amazing performance. Refreshments were brought round, people got (re-)acquainted: the perfect beginning of an inspiring and lively congress!

“This meeting had quite a mixed audience although I think on the whole mainly psychiatrists attended. I am a neurosurgeon and I normally attend congresses aimed more specifically at my profession. This symposium was even more unique to me because it had five different professionals discussing Parkinson’s disease: a neurophysiologist, a neurosurgeon (myself), a neurologist, a psychiatrist and a psychologist. The result was a cross-fertilization of ideas and approaches to managing patients with Parkinson’s disease.

As functional neurosurgeons we tend to focus on the motor aspects of the disease. However, it has recently become apparent that although with surgery one can achieve quite remarkable changes in motor function, a large proportion of patients suffer worsening anxiety and depression. Of course the motor benefits are then outweighed in terms of quality of life for the patients. Therefore this sort of forum is extremely useful to discuss these problems and generate new ideas.

2002 ECNP Travel Award winners

Getting more young scientists to the meetings is one of ECNP’s priorities. Another step in achieving this was taken in Barcelona. For the first time the ECNP Travel Award was presented to about 40 young European scientists who had their papers accepted for publication and for presentation. This award consists of a grant of € 500 and a certificate. Winners who applied for a reduced rate will also have their registration fee waived. The winners can be viewed on the website www.ecnp.nl (clicking on congresses and Barcelona).

2002 ECNP Travel Award winners

Steve Gill

Clinical research track

Psychiatric aspects of Parkinson’s disease

Steve Gill

In my presentation I reported on a pilot study that we have carried out in patients with advanced Parkinson’s disease. In this study we infused a growth factor (glial derived neurotrophic factor) directly into the basal ganglia in order to resuscitate the failing dopaminergic system. This treatment proved to be both safe and efficacious. Patients showed significant improvements in their motor activity, activities of daily living and quality of life.

For the first time a chronic degenerative disease of the brain was treated with growth factors in order to both protect and resuscitate failing neurones. It opens up the way for treating other disorders such as Alzheimer’s disease, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis and Huntington’s disease, where various neurotrophic factors have also been shown to have beneficial effects on animal models.

Perhaps in the future when we better understand the mechanisms involved in psychiatric conditions such as schizophrenia, similar forms of treatment may be applicable.”

Welcome to Barcelona!

“It was with great regret that we had to cancel last year’s ECNP Congress in Istanbul. I would especially like to thank the people in Turkey who worked so hard and never were able to see the results... I am grateful that we all are able to meet again at the 13th ECNP Congress in Barcelona and am especially pleased that so many of the over 5,000 delegates are participating at this welcome reception.” With these words I officially opened the Congress at the Catalonia Palace of Congresses (CPC) on Saturday October 5.

Yves Lecrubier, president
ECNP Fellowship Award

18 applications of the ECNP Fellowship Award were submitted for 2001 and 12 for 2002. In Barcelona eight 2001 nominees and another eight 2002 nominees were presented with the award as recognition of their work. The winners are committed to either basic research, clinical or teaching activities in the field of neuropsychopharmacology and closely related disciplines. The award consists of a commemorative certificate and a grant of EURO 1,500 covering part of the expenses to attend the congress.

Julien Mendlewicz, chair Award Committee

The 2002 ECNP Fellowship Award went to (in alphabetical order):
- Sergei V. Fedorovich, Belarus
- Nasser Haddjeri, France
- Igor N. Iezhitsa, Russia
- Falk Kiefer, Germany
- Alexander Ternianov, Bulgaria
- Bart N.M. van Berckel, the Netherlands
- L’ubomíra Vojteková, Slovakia
- Aysegül Yldiz, Turkey

The 2001 ECNP Fellowship Award went to (in alphabetical order):
- Anna Capasso, Italy
- Holger Jahn, Germany
- Michael Kellner, Germany
- Matthias Liechti, Switzerland
- Zoltan Nemes, Hungary
- William Pitchot, Belgium
- Raël Strauss, Israel
- Lucia Trabace, Italy

Also see the January 2002 issue for more on the 2001 award winners or visit the website www.ecnp.nl and ‘jump to ecnp matters’ to look at these articles.

More information on the posters of both the 2002 and the 2001 ECNP Fellowship Award can also be found on the website. Just click on congresses, Barcelona, and abstracts and programme (on the Excerpta Medica site).

Interface track

Neurodevelopmental issues in schizophrenia

Mirjam Gerrits

“This symposium was innovative because it was a mix of clinical and preclinical studies of schizophrenia. Another presenter of this symposium for example, Hildeke Hulshoff Pol, does clinical research while I am a basic scientist - I never even see any patients. So for me it is interesting to know how clinical researchers work, which hypotheses they use and why. It is especially intriguing to look at one psychiatric disorder from several angles: schizophrenia in this case.

My presentation was about animal models on schizophrenia as a neurodevelopmental disorder. Modelling a human psychiatric disorder like schizophrenia in animals is difficult since the psychopathology of schizophrenia is still unknown. Simulating human communication and language is also a very complicated issue. Still, animal models have been provided and I talked about the latest results we have gained with them.

The audience was very interested. Afterwards a lot of people came over with questions and two delegates from different mental hospitals invited me to give a presentation at their institute! To be honest looking back, it was a good idea. I was too busy chairing and thinking about my own presentation to engage myself fully into the other presentations. Moreover I actually took so much time for my own presentation that other speakers did not have enough time for their presentation… A few clocks around the congress centre would have been appreciated.”

For more information, please visit www.ecnp.nl (click on congresses and Barcelona 2002) or see the abstract book European Neuropsychopharmacology, volume 12, supplement 3, October 2002, S77-S458

Mirjam Gerrits: Animal models on schizophrenia as a neurodevelopmental disorder.

Jin-Sook Cheon

“On Sunday I attended the symposium on ‘New targets in Alzheimer’s disease treatment’ (clinical research track). On the whole the scientific quality of the congress is very good, although sometimes I thought the presentation skills needed some improving. In the symposium I saw, I especially appreciated the presentation of Hilkka Soininen (Finland): ‘Can we predict the development of Alzheimer’s disease through mild cognitive impairment?’

Even though the congress venue is rather small and there are not enough facilities, the quality of the presentations is good enough for me. I am both a professor at a medical school and a geriatric psychiatrist in South Korea. Next on my list is the symposium on Parkinson’s disease. I like broad topics and as I have seen quite a few Asian participants walking around, I would also be happy to see more Asian speakers at future ECNP congresses. My final remark would be that I do find the registration fee to be somewhat high…”
Martien: “This was the first time that such a session was held. Overall I found that all the presentations of the chosen hot topics, however diverse, were very interesting and that they combined well together.”

Kathy: “I do think it could have been better attended, though, and that more questions could have been asked, but I agree that the quality of the presentations was high and I also found them very interesting. The feedback we received was good as well.”

Martien: “Actually there were 80 to 100 people attending. According to co-chair Jan van Bee this is quite reasonable for a preclinical session.”

Kathy: “I still think it could have been better; even if it was the first time such a hot topic session was held. Furthermore, it would have been nice to have seen more clinical researchers in the audience. Maybe a tip for next year would be for the chair to ask the people with questions for the presenters to state their background. I got the impression from this year’s questions that this session was mainly attended by preclinical researchers. That would be consistent with the track system that gives clinician and scientist the opportunity to attend a clinical session at the same time the preclinical symposium is held… Martien: “I believe that the term preclinical is introduced to bring clinical and basic neuroscience researchers closer together. To further increase the integration it could be an idea to have presentations by clinical and basic researchers during the same session topics of common interest, like in the interface track at this meeting. All feedback aside, I feel this session was successful in two ways: the preclinical presentations got special attention as being hot topics and young scientists were asked to give a presentation. Normally only the more established scientists get this kind of opportunity.”

Kathy: “I too would like to thank ECNP for the opportunity and to say that we were well informed about everything and the session was very well organized.”

For more information, please visit www.ecnp.nl (click on congresses and Barcelona 2002) or see the abstract book European Neurpsychopharmacology, volume 12, supplement 3, October 2002, 877-9458.

S.04.04 Martien Kas

A stressful event dissociates food stimulating in hypothalamic neurons, implications for obesity and anorexia nervosa

S.04.08 Kathy Aitchson

Pharmacogenetic studies of tricyclic antidepressant response and an association study of a noradrenaline transporter variant in depression

Preclinical track
Hot Topic Session in preclinical neuropsychopharmacology

Martien Kas & Kathy Aitchison

“Today I went to the interesting plenary debate by Siegfried Kasper (Austria) and Sylvio Garattini. I also attended two symposia; one on depression and one on nicotine. These were quite interesting for me as well. Besides doing research I teach psychopharmacology at the School of Medicine in Biebrza, Brazil so this congress provides me with a lot of useful new information for my lectures. Tomorrow we will be presenting two posters at this congress, of which one on the activation of NADPH-diaphorase positive neurons, will actually be presented by one of my students. The poster I will be presenting is about the averse role of nitric oxide in the inferior colliculus and in the dorsolateral periaqueductal grey.”

2001 ECNP - Lilly Neuroscience Awards

The 2001 ECNP - Lilly Neuroscience Awards were given to Hanns Möhler (Switzerland) for basic research and to Eugene Paykel (United Kingdom) for clinical research. The presentation took place at the welcome reception on Saturday October 5.

Julien Mendlewicz, chair 2001 ECNP-Lilly Neuroscience Award Jury

As in previous years, a number of excellent scientists were nominated and although it was very hard to choose, the jury was unanimous in its choice.

Hanns Möhler is one of the most respected neuropharmacologists. His innovative work has made essential contributions to knowledge of the GABA system. He has been one of the pioneers in developing the GABA hypothesis of the action of benzodiazepines and in identifying GABA receptor subtypes. His more recent identification of the alpha-2-GABA receptor, as a target for anxiolytic agents, may have major consequences for the development of new anxiolytics and the understanding of the pathophysiology and the genetics of anxiety.

Eugene Paykel is a distinguished clinician and scientist having made major contributions to research in the clinical psychopharmacology of depression. In particular he has conducted pioneering controlled clinical trials, exploring the combination of antidepressants and psychological treatments. More recent are his important studies on relapse prevention in residual and minor depression.

Gerry Dawson

“...the functional role of GABA A receptor subtypes to show how it may be possible to develop anti-anxiety drugs that have fewer side effects than the existing benzodiazepines. This session was aimed at delegates who want to get involved in this new field of neuropsychopharmacology or just want to know the basic ideas behind the topic. My own presentation went well and I found the other presentations very interesting. The scientific community in this particular field of research is small. All the researchers know each other quite well and there is a certain friendly competitiveness between us. As a basic scientist I feel that the ECNP has much more to offer me now than previous meetings. The amount and quality of basic neuroscience has increased significantly, added to this the strong clinical base of the congress and you have the makings of a truly high-quality international meeting. I am also quite interested in the clinical track: how basic scientific research results are put to use in a clinical setting. Do I have any suggestions for next year? I thought our session was going to be more of a workshop but it turned out to be much bigger with less interaction with the audience than I expected. However, looking back, the symposium format worked just as well, but I think that both the speakers and the audience could have benefited from a panel discussion at the end. Perhaps the program committee would also consider organizing some sessions that are chaired by both a clinical and a preclinical scientist so that a wider perspective could be given to some important topics.”

Abdel El Medany

“...I think this is a good congress. Especially as there is so much on my specialization as a psychiatrist. I enjoyed the plenary debate on the topic of classical antipsychotics. I also got some new information, which is always helpful for my work in Egypt. Today I will be attending a symposium on depression in children. The only thing about the congress that bothers me is that because of all the parallel tracks, we cannot go to everything that interests us…”

Julien Mendlewicz, Eugene Paykel and Yves Lecrubrier

J. Mendlewicz, T. Naber and Y. Lecrubrier

J. Mendlewicz, Eugene Paykel and Y. Lecrubrier

J. Mendlewicz, Eugene Paykel and Y. Lecrubrier
ECNP Advisory Board of National Societies

We appeared to have hit the bull’s eye in Barcelona. As a figure of speech, of course. Twenty countries or regions accepted the invitation ECNP sent out around Europe for national societies in the field of neuropsychopharmacology to attend the founding meeting of ECNP Advisory Board of National Societies at the 15th ECNP Congress.

Yves Lecrubier, president

As chair of this meeting I first laid down the land. ECNP thinks there are a lot of communal interests and fruitful discussions to gain by the cooperation between ECNP and the national societies. All representatives were asked to take part in an open discussion as to where cooperation seems the most desired and potentially effective. It was agreed on that developing the goals would not be a top-down but rather a bottom-up affair; the initial goal being to end the meeting with some kind of committee to come up with proposals.

Another feasible activity would be the linking of the representatives saw many possibilities the meeting concluded with the formation of a small committee to come up with possible areas of cooperation. It was agreed that the Advisory Board will get together again at the 16th ECNP Congress in Prague to discuss this proposal.

At the first meeting it became clear that the representatives saw many possibilities already. One idea that can be put into work fairly easily is the linking of the representatives on each other’s websites. Another feasible activity would be the mentioning of meetings in the different newsletters. For now, it is up to the committee to come up with proposals. ECNP masters will keep you informed.

ACNP AT ECNP AT ACNP AT ECNP AT ACNP

Every fall there are several really good things to look forward to in Europe. Harvest for the farmers, Oktoberfest for beer and oompah band lovers, and the annual congress of the European College of Neuropsychopharmacology for neuropsychopharmacologists. This year’s meeting in Barcelona was excellent!

Oakley Ray, executive secretary ACNP

The congress centre was a bit crowded for exhibits and even more so for posters, but I believe all who attended were able to view both the exhibits and the posters if they really wanted to. The real excitement in Barcelona did centre on science and meetings: outstanding!

The use of tracks making it easier to navigate through the many panels was a great step forward. I am sure many organizers will adopt something similar for future meetings.

Full house

I am a member of the ECNP but the primary reason for my attendance was the ACNP symposium Molecular Strategies for Understanding Neuropsychiatric Disorders. This panel, chaired by ACNP president Joe Coyle of Harvard, involved Donald Price, David Lewis, James Kennedy, Hussein Manji, and Randy Blakely as speakers. Joe must have done something right when he designed the panel. We had a full house on Monday October 7 and from what I could tell and the questions after the session, the audience appreciated the speakers and their content. The ACNP symposium was part of the continued on next page

Calendar of ECNP Events

ECNP Congresses:

- September 20 - 24, 2003
- October 9 - 13, 2004
- October 22 - 26, 2005
- September 16 - 20, 2006
- October 13 - 17, 2007

For further information:
- Organizing secretariat: 16th ECNP Congress
- Congres Holland BV
- PO Box 302
- 1000 AH Amsterdam
- The Netherlands
- phone: +31 20 50 40 200
- fax: +31 20 50 40 225
- e-mail: ecnp@congrex.nl

Scientific secretariat:
- ECNP-Office
- P.O. Box 85410
- 3508 AK Utrecht
- The Netherlands
- phone: +31 30 253 8567
- fax: +31 30 253 8568
- e-mail: secretariat@ecnp.nl
- website: www.ecnp.nl

ECNP Consensus Meeting:

- March 12 - 14, 2003
- ECNP Consensus meeting, Nice - France
- Clinical trials in addiction
- Clinical trials in social phobia

ECNP Workshop:

- March 15 - 17, 2003
- 4th ECNP Workshop, Nice - France
- Neuropsychopharmacology of addiction

ECNP Regional Meeting:

- May 2004
- 5th Regional Meeting
- Please check out the website www.ecnp.nl for updates.

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ACNP at ECNP:

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Every fall there are several really good things to look forward to in Europe. Harvest for the farmers, Oktoberfest for beer and oompah band lovers, and the annual congress of the European College of Neuropsychopharmacology for neuropsychopharmacologists. This year’s meeting in Barcelona was excellent!

Oakley Ray, executive secretary ACNP

The congress centre was a bit crowded for exhibits and even more so for posters, but I believe all who attended were able to view both the exhibits and the posters if they really wanted to. The real excitement in Barcelona did centre on science and meetings: outstanding! The use of tracks making it easier to navigate through the many panels was a great step forward. I am sure many organizers will adopt something similar for future meetings.

Full house

I am a member of the ECNP but the primary reason for my attendance was the ACNP symposium Molecular Strategies for Understanding Neuropsychiatric Disorders. This panel, chaired by ACNP president Joe Coyle of Harvard, involved Donald Price, David Lewis, James Kennedy, Hussein Manji, and Randy Blakely as speakers. Joe must have done something right when he designed the panel. We had a full house on Monday October 7 and from what I could tell and the questions after the session, the audience appreciated the speakers and their content. The ACNP symposium was part of the continued on next page

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General Assembly Barcelona

Promoting the attendance of young researchers; date, location and format of future meetings; and the educational track in the annual meetings. Some items discussed in the ECNP General Assembly of Members. The meeting was held on Monday, October 7, 2002 at the 15th ECNP Congress in Barcelona.

Yves Lecrubier, president

Arvid Carlsson (1923, Sweden) has been appointed honorary member of ECNP. Together with two other pioneering scientists in this area, Paul Greengard and Eric Kandel, he received the 2000 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine. His research showed that Parkinson's disease is caused by a lack of dopamine in the basal ganglia of the brain. This knowledge inspired the development of effective drug treatment (L-Dopa) normalizing motor control. The research of the role dopamine plays in the brain has also resulted in increasing our understanding of antipsychotic drugs by showing that they affect synaptic transmission by blocking dopamine receptors. Arvid Carlsson's discoveries have furthermore had a major impact on the treatment of depression; he has contributed to the development of selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors, a new generation of antidepressants. (Please turn to the front page for an interview with Arvid Carlson.)

The track system of organizing the scientific programme saw the light in Barcelona. This system guides delegates to the type of information they are most interested in. There are 5 simultaneous held tracks to choose from:
- a treatment track
- a clinical research track
- an international track
- a preclinical track
- an educational track.

A month in advance of the 15th Congress the abstracts of the presentations could be viewed on the Internet. The Executive Committee is of the opinion that this enhances the depth of discussion at the congress itself.

The ECNP Travel Award was introduced in order to promote the attendance of young researchers. In Barcelona about 40 participants were presented with this award. Another initiative is the ECNP-ACNP Exchange Award that has been established to promote exchange of the best posters by young scientists at the ECNP and ACNP congresses. The award consists of a registered web page and remuneration of travel and accommodation costs for the annual meeting of the American College of Neuropsychopharmacology, December 8–12, 2002 and vice versa. In return, winners must present a poster. The winners are consulted about major changes in the copy.

It is decided that at future congresses the ECNP Neuropsychopharmacology Award will be presented without any support by pharmaceutical companies. One year the prize will go to a basic science researcher and the next year to a clinical researcher.

Several ECNP educational activities were presented by Joseph Zohar, chair Educational Committee. He reported on the success of the interactive training courses in both Poland (2000) and Estonia (2001). He also mentioned the planned future training courses in Turkey (2003) and in Bulgaria (2004). (Also see page 3.)

This 15th ECNP Congress in Barcelona congress marks the foundation of the ECNP Advisory Board of National Societies. (See page 7 for more information.)

ECNP is a founding member of the European Brain Council. Main priorities are:
- collaborating with the European Commission to keep brain research in the research area in the frameworks;
- working together with the European Parliament on decisions directly related to brain research;
- gathering data on the cost of brain diseases through the project 'Cost of Disorders of the Brain in Europe';
- writing a position paper on major disorders and promoting the necessity of basic pharmacological research for gaining any improvements.

The annual account of 2001 was commented on by the treasurer René Kahn.

ECNP is installing Scientific Advisory Panels on the topics affecting disorders and antidepressants, psychotic disorders and antipsychotics, anxiety disorders and anxiolytics, degenerative disorders, neurological disorders, addiction, and basic neuroscience. The members of these panels will be invited to contribute to the scientific programme of the annual congress by suggesting topics and speakers to the Scientific Committee. Also, attendance of young researchers at future meetings will be encouraged by participation of young researchers, strengthening links with members;
- promoting educational activities;
- improving levels of awareness and knowledge via interaction with different organizations;
- increasing impact on European education;
- possibly obtaining consultant status in European Union.

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The social side of the meeting was very interesting. I enjoyed the opening ceremony, and Yves Lecrubier walking and talking - I could almost see him as Maurice Chevalier. After I watched a few human pyramids I had seen enough climbing and I turned my attention to talking with old friends and meeting new ones. All in all, the ceremony and reception worked well in the outside garden.

The other event to which all registrants were invited was the concluding congress party. Rain moved it inside to the French Railway Station, but all had a good time. Music, dancing, wine, food, beautiful women, handsome men - the closing ceremony was a rouser. Everyone got into the act.

In all honesty; when you have good science, good people, a casual atmosphere, plenty of opportunity to talk, or not what more can you want? That's why I very much enjoyed all of the ECNP Congress this year. And that is why I am already planning and looking forward to ECNP in Prague next year. You should do the same.