

## **2<sup>nd</sup> African College of Neuropsychopharmacology Congress July 2016**

Report by Dr Kerry-Ann Louw and Dr Fleur Howells

The International College of Neuropsychopharmacology (CINP) is the oldest international organization working in this area, and has played a key role in encouraging conversations between basic and clinical researchers. In recent years, sister Colleagues have developed in America (ACNP), Asia (AsCNP), Europe (ECNP), and Scandinavia (SCNP). In 2015, CINP encouraged an initial meeting of African psychopharmacologists in Kenya. This year, the second African College of Neuropsychopharmacology Congress was hosted at Spier in Stellenbosch, Western Cape, South Africa over the weekend of 30-31 July 2016. This event was convened by Professor Dan Stein (Department of Psychiatry and Mental Health, University of Cape Town (UCT)), Dr Gerhard Grobler (Dept of Psychiatry, University of Pretoria) and Professor Lukoye Atwoli (Moi University, Kenya). The event hosted 268 delegates with representation from Kenya, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Ethiopia and Namibia. The congress focussed primarily on updating clinicians about current thinking on pharmacological approaches to the major psychiatric disorders. There were also presentations on basic neuroscience topics and a parallel “Young Scientists” Programme.

The meeting was generously supported CINP (represented by keynote speaker Prof Brian Dean) and ECNP (represented by keynote speaker Prof Joseph Zohar), as well as by a range of local pharmaceutical companies. Other international faculty included Professor Lukoye Atwoli (Moi University School of Medicine, Kenya), Professor David Baldwin (University of South Hampton, United Kingdom), Professor David Castle (University of Melbourne, Australia), Professor Damiaan Denys (University of Amsterdam, Netherlands), Professor Brian Leonard (University of Galway, Ireland) and Professor Gregers Wegener (Aarhus University, Denmark). Local faculty included Dr Samantha Brooks (UCT), Professor Bonga Chiliza (Stellenbosch University), Dr Eric DeCloedt (Stellenbosch University), Dr Janita De Vries (UCT), Dr Gerhard Grobler (Steve Biko Academic Hospital), Professor John Joska (UCT), Dr Fleur Howells (UCT), Dr Kerry-Ann Louw (UCT), Professor Solomon Rataemane (Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University), Professor Dan Stein (UCT), Dr Mike West (UCT), Dr Bavi Vythilingum (UCT) and Dr Zukiswa Zingela (Walter Sisulu University).

There were excellent talks by both international and local faculty. Some of the highlights included Prof Zohar’s talk on Neuroscience Based Nomenclature (NbN) which identified criticisms of current psychopharmacology nomenclature; particularly the failure of current nomenclature to identify drug mechanisms of action and their lack of clinical utility in guiding clinicians to select the best agents for their patients. ECNP, ACNP, AsCNP and CINP together with IUPHAR) have proposed a new pharmacologically-driven nomenclature focussing on Pharmacological Domain and Mode of Action. The Neuroscience Based Nomenclature includes four additional dimensions of information: Approved Indications, Efficacy and Side Effects, Practical Notes and Neurobiology. The first edition of NbN includes 108 compounds. Professor Zohar talked the audience through the use of an *NbNomenclature* App that can be downloaded for free from the iOS App Store and the Google Play Store.

Several talks addressed key clinical issues such as the pharmacotherapy of major psychiatric disorders (Major Depressive Disorder, Insomnia Disorder, Generalized Anxiety Disorder, Post-traumatic Stress Disorder, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, Alzheimer’s disease, ADHD, Schizophrenia and Substance Use Disorders), the use of treatment guidelines, prescribing in pregnancy and drug-

drug interactions. Dr Zingela's lecture on the cross-cultural aspects of psychopharmacology explored factors that contribute to differences between individuals' response to psychopharmacological interventions including cultural beliefs, treating psychiatrist bias, genetic polymorphisms, and dietary and environmental factors. Basic neuroscience lectures included Dr Brookes' presentation on the neural basis of psychotherapy for anxiety and related disorders, Professor Leonard's lecture debating whether neuroinflammation is a cause or co-incidence in mood disorders and Professor Dean's lecture on advances in the field of biomarkers. In the final presentation of the programme Dr Jantina de Vries, a bioethicist, discussed the ethical issues of genomic research in the African context.

A "Young Scientists" Parallel Session was held, supported by the Scandinavian College of Neuropsychopharmacology (SCNP) and the journal *Acta Neuropsychiatrica*. This Session included a Young Researcher Career Workshop which attracted postgraduate and postdoctoral fellows. This workshop was led by Prof Wegener and Dr Howells. During this interactive workshop there was discussion of developing research collaborations and networks, publication processes, and sharing of research experiences and research goals. The workshop was followed by poster and oral presentations submitted by young scientists, with a broad array of wonderful presentations from basic to bedside research studies. Poster presentations were given by Lian Taljaard (Stellenbosch University), Ingrid Eloff (Department of Health, Eastern Cape), Kavendren Odayar (Department of Health, Eastern Cape), Mari Retief (Stellenbosch University), Eileen Thomas (Stellenbosch University), and Duyilemi Ajonijebu (University of Kwa-Zulu Natal). Oral presentations were given by Lian Taljaard (Stellenbosch University), De Wet Wolmarans (North-West University), Khayelihle Makhathini (University of Kwa-Zulu Natal), Antoinette Burger (University of Cape Town), Sarel Brand (North-West University), Madeleine Uys (North-West University), and Phuti Choshi (University of Cape Town). Miss Antoinette Burger from the University of Cape Town was awarded the best Young Scientist presentation.

In addition to the academic programme the congress hosted a meeting to draw up the constitution of the AfCNP, aligning the organisation as a sister college alongside the American (ACNP), Asian (AsCNP), European (ECNP) and Scandinavian (ScCNP) neuropharmacology colleges. The third African College of Neuropsychopharmacology Conference is being planned for East Africa in 2017.