15th ECNP Congress
Exhiting scientific programme!

David J. Nutt,
chair Scientific Programme Committee 15th ECNP Congress

I am delighted to introduce you to the scientific programme of the next ECNP Congress. After the sad circumstances which necessitated cancellation of the Istanbul Congress, we are determined that Barcelona will be a wide-ranging success. We are aware of the great amount of work that was put into the Istanbul programme so we have incorporated symposia and themes from Istanbul into a revised programme for Barcelona. My feeling is that this guarantees an exceptionally strong scientific congress - one you will all enjoy greatly. Moreover, the following innovations will maximise the intellectual benefit and pleasure from this ECNP Congress to be held from October 5 - 9.

Meet the speaker
We have noticed for some time that young attendees are inhibited about asking the issues of the floor during question times at symposia. We have therefore decided to have a dedicated half an hour session at the end of a number of the symposia during which delegates can share questions and thoughts with the speakers in a more relaxed format. This proves a success, we hope to expand it to more symposia in future meetings.

Track system
A great deal of effort has gone into structuring the Barcelona Congress into five tracks. The vision is that for many individuals the most efficient way of benefitting from the congress would be to attend symposia in their track of interest. These tracks are:
- treatment track (on evidence based treatment)
- clinical research track (related to clinical research issues)
- interface track (which endevours to link preclinical and clinical research)
- preclinical track (on preclinical research)
- educational track.

In every session there will be one symposium from each track. This will provide a platform for the very latest advances.

I hope you agree that these innovations are stimulating improvements and even more reason for making the Barcelona Congress an essential entry in your diary!

Neuropsychopharmacology in Spain

Francesc Artigas, local adviser

The research in Health Sciences in Spain is done mainly in hospitals, universities and the research institutes of the Spanish Research Council (CSIC). The latter institution is good for 20% of all research done in the country. Together with cell and molecular biology or molecular genetics, neuroscience and pharmacology are among the disciplines doing well scientifically. Despite the fact that current expenditure in Research & Development is well below the EU mean (around 1% of the GNP in 2000), numerous research groups in these areas have an excellent international reputation and are expected to contribute to the success of the 15th ECNP Congress in Barcelona.

Following EU policy, a great deal of emphasis is being put in the research on genomics and proteomics, while current efforts of the Department of Science and Technology are aimed at increasing the number of mid-term post-doctoral contracts in an attempt to bring young scientists back into the country.

Cancellation of the ECNP Congress in Istanbul

The 14th ECNP Congress in Istanbul, scheduled for October 13 - 17 2001, was cancelled. We very much regret this decision, but there was no alternative. For a congress you need a balanced scientific programme and sufficient participants.

Jan M. van Ree, president, on behalf of the Executive Committee

just after the tragic events in the USA on September 11 2001, a number of invited speakers, some invited companies cancelled, or limited their participation. At that time we decided to proceed with the congress: the scientific programme was rescheduled and somewhat condensed, and additional security arrangements were implemented. However the military actions in Afghanistan intervened as they started on October 7. After that there was no longer a matrix in terms of participation to continue with the organisation of the congress. The Executive Committee feels very sorry about that, in particular for those who contributed to the preparations: the members of the Scientific Programme Committee, the members of the Local Advisory Committee, the staff of the ECNP Office and the staff of the organising secretariat Congrex.

We express our regrets about the situation to I. Hakki Ayhan and his associates, who spent a lot of time making sure the congress would be pleasant and delightful. We also want to thank the participants, including those contributing to the ACNP-symposium, who supported the continuation of the congress even after the start of the military actions.

After the cancellation we decided to summon a General Meeting of Members (March 15 - 17, 2002) to elect the members of the Executive Committee and to accept the reports. The current members of the Executive Committee hold office till that meeting. Some highlights of the scientific programme of the cancelled congress in Istanbul will be incorporated in the programme of the congress in Barcelona. The same holds for the educational track. We will make an inventory of the other consequences of the cancellation and inform our members in due course.

It is a real pity that the usual exchange of scientific information during the ECNP congresses could not take place in 2001. We will, however, continue with our activities and look forward to meeting our colleagues in Nice, Bucharest and Barcelona in 2002.
Fellowship Award winners 2001

Due to the cancellation of the congress in Istanbul, the presentation of the Fellowship Award could not take place. 8 of the 18 applicants were to be handed a certificate and a grant of €1,500 to cover part of their expenses to attend the congress. They will receive their awards in Barcelona in October 2002, but ecnp matters is already presenting them and their work in this issue.

The 2001 winners of the Fellowship Awards are:

- Anna Capasso
- Holger Jahn
- Michael Kleiner
- Matthias F. Liechti
- Zoltan Nemcsak
- World H. Otschot
- Ruel D. Stevens
- Luigi Trabace

They were asked the following questions:

1. The ECNP Fellowship Award is presented to individuals committed to either basic research, clinical or teaching activities in the field of neuropharmacology and closely related disciplines. In which activity are you engaged?

2. Could you tell us the aim of the two-day interaction with experts as members of the Educational Team to Warsaw, Poland, and the beautiful country?

They returned the following answers throughout this newsletter:

1. I am busy in basic research and I also teach experimental pharmacology, clinical pharmacology and toxicology. My main research concentrates on the interference between gluco- corticoids and opioid system and the study both in vitro and in vivo of the effect of glucocorticoids, opioids, and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs on the opioid effects (analgesia, constipation, hypotension and Straub reaction) intersecting mainly with µ opioid receptor.

2. "The ECNP educational interactive training course will be as fruitful and rewarding as the first one, or even better. As the members of both the Executive Committee and the Educational Committee recognize the importance of this activity, the next destination has been assigned already: at the beginning of 2003, the Educational Team will visit Turkey. I would be very happy to visit the beautiful country and meet colleagues from ECNP members. In addition to the opportunity for the exchange of scientific knowledge, Both organisations of scientists from all over the world, to discuss and exchange experiences with us. It is clear that we would have been proud when it had not been necessary to cancel. However, it is our hope that the European College of Neuropsychopharmacology will continue its efforts to organize a scientifically sound congress and that, sooner or later, there will be a chance to meet our colleagues from Europe and other parts of the world at an ECNP congress in Turkey."

FELLOWSHIP AWARD WINNER 2001

Anna Capasso
Researcher in Neuropharmacology
Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences
University of Salerno, Italy

"I am busy in basic research and I also teach experimental pharmacology, clinical pharmacology and toxicology. My main research concentrates on the interference between glucocorticoids and opioid system and the study both in vitro and in vivo of the effect of glucocorticoids, opioids, and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs on the opioid effects (analgesia, constipation, hypotension and Straub reaction) intersecting mainly with µ opioid receptor."

Regarding the second research line, my research group demonstrated that dexamethasone is able to modify the opioid effects (analgesia, constipation, hypotension and Straub reaction) intersecting mainly with µ opioid receptor. It is worth mentioning that in the last decade five young Estonian scientists have received the ECNP Fellowship Awards in Tubingen, Italy, and we would have been proud when it had not been necessary to cancel. However, it is our hope that the European College of Neuropsychopharmacology will continue its efforts to organize a scientifically sound congress and that, sooner or later, there will be a chance to meet our colleagues from Europe and other parts of the world at an ECNP congress in Turkey."

2nd Educational Team

Different perspectives on Estonian questions

The Educational Committee is working together with a local committee consisting of Jakov Shlik and Eero Vasar from the University of Tartu (Estonia) to carry out the 2nd Educational Team activity of the ECNP. Although the location for this is going to be South Estonia, the intention is that participants will come from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

Joseph Zohar, chair Educational Committee

The local committee has the very delicate yet crucial task of selecting participants from the Baltic countries (15 to 20 from each country) based on their interest in research. The target is to get together the next, upcoming, generation of leaders in the field of neuropsychopharmacology and to provide them with an opportunity to intensify, two days' interaction with experts as well as with their peers on issues in the field of neuropsychopharmacology, so relevant to the goals of ECNP. Several topics were covered for this meeting. They include the methodology of clinical trials, anxiety disorders, issues involving resistant depression, and treatment update on new neuro-psychopharmacological approaches to schizophrenia.

Thorough discussion Each of the four subjects will be covered from four different perspectives: a formal update of the subject by an expert of ECNP; thorough discussion of the presentations by the participants; presentation of specific issues - either clinical management or research oriented - relevant to the above-mentioned subjects in a small group format; and concluding presentations to be discussed plenary. As an organisation ECNP is devoted to disseminating up-to-date knowledge in the area of neuropsychopharmacology. Therefore ECNP not only organises these activities, but also meets the expenses of the accommodation and meals for the participants, as well as covering the travel expenses of the four speakers.

A report of the first visit of the Educational Team to Warsaw, Poland, was printed in the previous issue of ecnp matters. As the chair of the Educational Committee, I hope that this interactive training course will be as fruitful and rewarding as the first one, or even better.

As the members of both the Executive Committee and the Educational Committee recognize the importance of this activity, the next destination has been assigned already: at the beginning of 2003, the Educational Team will visit Turkey.

ecnp matters will keep you posted!

Fruitful region for cooperation!

Jakov Shlik, local coordinator

The ECNP educational interactive training course in Estonia is an important initiative for the whole Baltic region. Young psychiatrists and trainers are particularly encouraged to use this available opportunity for learning and increasing the level of collaborative work within the region. The participants are asked to present their research or case reports related to the main topics of the course. With the help of an excellent faculty this will create a stimulating and interactive atmosphere. Neuropsychopharmacology has been an active field in Estonia for a long time. In addition to the more established directions of behavioural pharmacology and treatment research the emerging topics in Estonia are neuromodulatory and clinical drug trials where the level of expertise needs improvement. It is worth mentioning that in the last decade five young Estonian scientists have received the ECNP Fellowship Award for their research. Also, an increasing number of researchers and clinicians from the region have attended the ECNP regional meetings and congresses.

We hope that the current ECNP educational initiative will further stimulate the neuropsychopharmacological research and international involvement of the Baltic countries.

An unfortunate sad story...

I. Hakki Ayan, chair Local Advisory Committee 14th ECNP Congress

The aim of any international scientific meeting is the exchange of knowledge and bringing together people involved or interested in scientific results. Scientific meetings should not be influenced by political issues. The story started 10 years ago. The Turkish Psychopharmacological Society asked for collaboration with ECNP to exchange scientific knowledge. Both share the same mission and vision with respect to science and the contribution of communities to scientific interaction. Time passed and a trustworthy alliance developed. The organisation of the 14th ECNP Congress finally came into sight with an estimated participation of 6,000 from a wide range of communities. Then within a few weeks only, this 10-year-old successful effort becomes an unfortunate and sad story. After September 11, ECNP and the Turkish partners strongly insisted to go on with the organisation, but compulsorily gave up in the end. (Also see the article on page 1 by Jan van Ree on the cancellation). We are sincerely thankful to the Executive Committee of ECNP for using every effort to go ahead with the congress. There is no doubt it would have been an immense opportunity for Turkish scientists to meet distinguished scientists from all over the world, to discuss and exchange experiences with them. This is not possible for most of them otherwise. It is prestigious for Turkey to host an ECNP congress and we would like to share the sociocultural, natural and historical beauties of our country.

Hope

Besides the frustration that these expectations are not met, it is not easy for Turkish participants to understand why the congress could not be realized. We do not believe that cancellation of the congress contributes to the war on terrorism. We would have been proud when it had not been necessary to cancel. However, it is our hope that the European College of Neuropsychopharmacology will continue its efforts to organise a scientifically sound congress and that, sooner or later, there will be a chance to meet our colleagues from Europe and other parts of the world at an ECNP congress in Turkey.
Paul Janssen: ‘The decrease in the number of farmers has led to less common sense.

Paul Janssen is known to everyone as ‘Dr Paul’, so no exception is made in this interview. In 1933 he started a pharmaceutical research company in Belgian Flanders. In the small building where his father imported and sold pharmaceuticals, he discovered drugs which are still used worldwide. Fifty years later Janssen Pharmaceutica employs about 20,000 people worldwide and Dr Paul is just as dedicated to finding cures for major diseases threatening people this day and age. A keynote interview with the man who has experienced first hand the changes in developing pharmaceuticals.

Kirsten Bett, educational writer ECPN-Office

What is the greatest difference in developing neuropsychopharmacologists now and, say, 25 years ago?

‘Janssen Pharmaceutica’s objective has remained the same. Its main task is to synthesize compounds in order to create effective drugs. The circumstances in which we try to achieve this, however, have changed enormously. Especially after the Halodol disaster; the United States have now learnt so much that we need a lot more money to develop new drugs. The costs of developing one drug are US$ 250 million. So now you need lots of money to survive in this business. When I started out money was definitely not an objective – my family liked to discuss all kinds of issues but money was thought of as a vulgar topic. To be honest though, we did need a few royalties to survive. I was very fortunate to work with very talented scientists like Paul Demoen, a self-made man who could do anything with his hands; and Tony Jeganus, in those days a gifted hippy whose Jesuit uncle asked me to “keep off the streets”. Luck kept coming our way with David de Jong who worked in Amsterdam for another research institute. He did several pharmaceutical tests on compounds we synthesized and we struck gold: R79 (isopropadrole) in 1958 and a year later R253 (diisopromine). The royalties kept flowing in as we discovered about a lakh new drugs annually which was great as it created opportunities for us to expand and give more scientists the opportunity to find new cures for major illnesses.

Our breakthrough in neuropsychopharmacology occurred in 1958: haloperidol which helped millions of sufferers from paranoid schizophrenia.

Could you tell us more about your first neuropsychopharmaceutical success?

‘A friend of mine inspired the search, mally, as he shared his ideas with me regarding the similarity in symptoms shown by cyclists with amphetamine intoxication and people suffering from paranoid schizophrenia. For example, after crossing the finish line of a cycle race a cyclist was so intoxicated, he did not realize he had won. Even when he was pulled off his bike and congratulated by a reporter, he tried to continue cycling. Also stereotyped of a psychosis, he kept repeating utter nonsense. It was obvious for me that finding a treatment for amphetamine intoxication would provide a cure for paranoid schizophrenia, a serious illness affecting a lot of people all over the world.

We set out to find an antagonist for amphetamine intoxication. Stereotypically, mice will keep on gnawing if they are suffering from this condition, so we injected them beforehand to see if they would react positively and stop the gnawing. Quicker than expected the compound haloperidol did the trick.

The next step was to test the effect on human beings. Before then I had never spoken to a psychiatrist because the only one I had encountered at university was quite mad himself - making such a show of his lecture, that I decided to steer clear of university. My opinion, in the development of neuropsychopharmaceuticals.

Have changes in patients’ and animal rights influenced the development of drugs?

‘Threatening the development of neuropsychopharmaceuticals these days is the bureaucratic of the Food and Drug Administrations worldwide. The already mentioned tragedy of thalidomide put the world in an unnecessary state of fear regarding side effects of drugs. Of course, it really was a tragedy but just think of how many drugs are not being developed because there are not enough suffering to justify the ridiculously high investment costs. The bureaucracy these days is just unbearable.

Continued on page 4

Jocelyn K. Koole-Knopseneger
Petra Debels
Kristen Bett
Tineke Hof
Liedewig J. Jepsen
Marjoleijn Lemmens
Jenny Rabbe-Mølker

The Office

Hoelder Jahn: Department of Psychiatry University of Hamburg, Germany

“I am engaged in clinical work on affective disorders and related basic research in the field of neuropeptides and neurotransmitters. My recent research activities span from clinical trials in depression and panic disorder to macrodialysis and behavioural experiments in transgenic mouse models.”

For example, I am conducting a still ongoing major FNR study. In this study I try to delineate the neuroanatomical structures that are involved in OX-4-induced panic attacks and how these circuits can be influenced by putative anxiolytics like ataluric norepinephrine OX-4 receptors. Our group has already worked on this neuropeptides in several other models and the combination with functional imaging techniques offers new and challenging prospects.”

The ECNP-Office operates under the responsibility of the Executive Committee and is instrumental in all ECNP activities, ranging from the membership administration to the coordination of the congresses visited by thousands of participants. But who are the Office?”

Dr Paul: “I am 75 years old so old enough to get angry about this.”

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Continued on page 4

Mathias E. Liechti
departmental researcher
assistant
University Hospital of Psychiatry
Zurich, Switzerland

“I am a medical doctor specialising in internal medicine and pharmacology, working in the research group of Franz J. Vollerrer. For the past three years I have been conducting basic experimental research into the acute neuropsychopharmaceutical effects of the recreational drug MDMA (‘Ecstasy’) in humans. The main focus of my work has been on the role of the serotonin and dopamine systems in mediating the psychopharmacological effects of MDMA. In a series of double-blind placebo-controlled studies, subjective responses to MDMA were assessed after MDMA and, after MDMA plus pretreatment with different specific neurotransmitter antagonists. MDMA’s effects were measured using various psychometric scales, measures of vital signs, and the prepulse inhibition paradigm of the acoustic startle reflex which is a mesure of sensorimotor gating. Another focus was on gender specific differences in the subjective effects of MDMA. These and further studies are aimed at providing deeper insight into the human neuropsychopharmacology of MDMA.”

FELLOWSHIP AWARD WINNER 2001

Holger Jahn: Department of Psychiatry University of Hamburg, Germany

“I am engaged in clinical work on affective disorders and related basic research in the field of neuropeptides and neurotransmitters. My recent research activities span from clinical trials in depression and panic disorder to macrodialysis and behavioural experiments in transgenic mouse models.”

For example, I am conducting a still ongoing major FNR study. In this study I try to delineate the neuroanatomical structures that are involved in OX-4-induced panic attacks and how these circuits can be influenced by putative anxiolyotics like ataluric norepinephrine OX-4 receptors. Our group has already worked on this neuropeptides in several other models and the combination with functional imaging techniques offers new and challenging prospects.”

FELLOWSHIP AWARD WINNER 2001
Continued from page 3

Bucharest
- National Museum of History
- Romanian Athenaeum
- National Art Museum
- Museum of Art Collections
- Parliament Palace
- Village Museum
- Old princely Court
- Cismigiu Gardens

Bucharest stands for excellent exchange of knowledge

Mihai D. Ghenea, chair Local Advisory Committee

Psychiatric practice has a long history born in Romania. That is why there are many psychiatric hospitals, in cities with medical universities like Bucharest, Timisoara and Cluj as well as in smaller towns. More than 1,000 psychiatrists work in hospitals and outpatient services. Their practice is supervised by two professional associations, the Romanian Psychiatric Association and the Romanian Association of Psychopharmacology.

The patients' interests are represented by the Mental Health League. Psychiatric practice is doubled by scientific activity. Romanian psychiatrists participating with papers and articles at local and international scientific meetings. Also, they are involved in some pharmacoclinical studies in schizophrenia, mood disorders, Alzheimer's disease and panic disorder. Their findings are much appreciated. We hope for a large participation of Romanian and foreign psychiatrists at the 7th ECNP Regional Meeting to allow a good exchange of information and ideas and a better knowledge of the problems met in patient care. It should not come as a surprise that there will be a large list of topics regarding patient care: first episode schizophrenia, resistant depression, first episode schizophrenia, and anxiety disorders.

We are looking forward to having you here in Bucharest.

The essence of my work is to study the biological aspects of suicidal behaviour using neuromodulatory stress and psychophysiology. As an example, we validated a flesinoxan test as a serotonergic probe in normal volunteers by using the apomorphine test. In addition, we also assessed the release of various hormones (ACTH, cortisol, prolactin, growth hormone and neuropeptides) and a decrease in oral temperature after the administration of flesinoxan, a SHTA full agonist. In a second step, we assessed a sample of 40 DSM-IV major depressed inpatients subgrouped into 20 suicide attempters and 20 non-attempters compared to 20 normal controls. We measured hormonal and body temperature responses to flesinoxan 1mg. Depressed patients had significantly lower ACTH, prolactin and cortisol responses to flesinoxan compared to control subjects. Suicidal and non-suicidal depressed patients differed significantly in their delta peak cortisol responses (p=0.0005), and in their delta temperature responses (p=0.001). These results support the SHTA receptor down regulation hypothesis of suicidal behaviour, also assessing the role of dopamine in suicidal behaviour by using the apomorphine test. Furthermore, the research included neuromodulatory stress and psychophysiological changes. Our study has been presented to a participant involved in clinical research, the other to a participant involved in preclinical research.

The daily poster session is felt to be one of the most important events of the meeting. Actually, this is a time for scientific exchange and for the younger scientists to present their new findings, one of the main goals of regional meetings.

In addition to the attractive programme I am convinced that the participants will enjoy the city of Bucharest and the location of the congress in the centre of the city.

FELLOWSHIP AWARD WINNER 2001

William Pitchot
Research Unit of the Psychiatric University Hospital of Uio Belgium

"I am involved in clinical research, and also engaged in training and teaching activities in neuropsychopharmacology and clinical psychiatry. I have already presented original findings at international congresses and published several papers in high level journals. The essence of my work is to study the biological aspects of suicidal behaviour using neuromodulatory stress and psychophysiology. As an example, we validated a flesinoxan test as a serotonergic probe in normal volunteers by using the apomorphine test. Furthermore, the research included neuromodulatory stress and psychophysiological changes. Our study has been presented to a participant involved in clinical research, the other to a participant involved in preclinical research. The daily poster session is felt to be one of the most important events of the meeting. Actually, this is a time for scientific exchange and for the younger scientists to present their new findings, one of the main goals of regional meetings. In addition to the attractive programme I am convinced that the participants will enjoy the city of Bucharest and the location of the congress in the centre of the city.

Personally I do not think neuropsychopharmacological advances are very effective with the possible exception of certain neuroleptics for treating psychoses. Lithium has proved its worth to people suffering from manic depression. Obsession and depression are great problems of our times and we need to find cures for them. Many actual antidepressants are not very effective. Sadly enough there are no magic potions... Our work has only just started - we have so much to do in this area!"
The ACNP panel at the ECNP meeting is always coordinated by the ACNP president - Charles O’Brien in 2001. For Istanbul his topic was ‘Recent Advances in Brain Imaging Techniques and Contributions to Understanding Pathophysiology of Neuropsychiatric Conditions’. The speakers would have been John Gore, Hank Kung, Marc Laruelle, Kevin O. Lim, and Robert W. McClay - an outstanding list.

The planning has already started for the ACNP panel at the ECNP meeting in Barcelona. The president of the ACNP in 2002 is Joseph Coyle. The topic he has selected for his session is ‘Molecular Models of Neuropsychiatric Disorders: Alzheimer’s Disease; Schizophrenia’.

The members of the ACNP were saddened to hear that the ECNP Congress in Istanbul was cancelled, but we understood. I was in Poland on a speaking tour on September 11. I had talks in the Czech Republic and Slovakia before my panel at the CINP Regional Meeting in Budapest on September 21. A week later the CINP Regional Meeting in Hiroshima was a success with 1400 attendees. From there I travelled to Beijing and Hong Kong. Then I heard the ECNP Congress had been cancelled. So I changed my flight plans and returned to Nashville via Los Angeles rather than through Istanbul and London.

The use of placebo - a continuous debate

In ecnp matters no. 1 (July 2001) it was reported that the Declaration of Helsinki had been adapted in Edinburgh (October 2000). One of the changes was that testing of drugs should be done against the best current treatment and in general not against placebo. This has initiated a lot of discussions.

Jan M. van Ree, president

As stated in the previous report, the new phrasing is not in line with the outcome of ECNP consensus meetings. The ECNP guidance is not binding, but also many researchers dealing with clinical trials, are concerned about the consequences when this adaptation is implemented. Due to all the criticism, the World Medical Association has looked again at its guidance. The association has concluded that the use of placebo in trials might be ethically acceptable in certain circumstances. These were:

- where for compelling and scientifically sound methodological reasons its use was necessary to determine the efficacy or safety of a prophylactic, diagnostic, or therapeutic method;
- where a prophylactic, diagnostic, or therapeutic method was being investigated for a minor condition and the patient who received placebo would not be subject to any additional risk of serious or irreversible harm.

It seems that the World Medical Association has somewhat changed its position, in that the use of placebo is no longer completely unacceptable. But the situation is far from clear. Certainly in the area of neuropsychopharmacology, in which the outcome of clinical trials demonstrates a variable response to placebo over trials and a high response to placebo in a number of diseases, it is hard to image the testing of efficacy without incorporating patients who are treated with placebo.

More discussion is needed.

European Accreditation Committee in CNS

Continuing Medical Education (CME) consists of educational activities aimed at maintaining, developing or increasing the knowledge, skills and professional performance. Several EC countries have established CME systems, some of which are mandatory. However, the systems take no account of the European perspective.

Daniel Sorey & Julian Mendlewicz, European Accreditation Committee

The initial objective of the European Accreditation Committee (EAC) in the central nervous system (CNS) focused on developing a true European perspective to CME in CNS (psychiatry, neuropsychopharmacology, neurology): a pan-European dimension to education in CNS in order to establish methodologies for the most effective forms of CME, to ensure that common European educational standards can be developed, and to assist in promoting education in CNS in European countries.

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Hans-Jörg Milius, Germany; NMDA antagonists in the treatment of severe dementia

John A. Kemp, Switzerland: NMDA receptors in CNS disorders: insights from mutant mice

FELLOWSHIP AWARD WINNER 2001

Zoltan Nemes
Assistant lecturer
Department of Psychiatry
Debrecen University, Hungary

“My principal activity is basic research besides lecturing graduate and postgraduate medical courses.

Most neurodegenerative diseases, including Alzheimer’s disease, are characterized by the formation of insoluble deposits of abundant cyttoplasmic proteins. We analysed the sequence localization of isopeptide bonds between lysine and glutamine side chains, a common isopeptide bond created by transglutaminase enzymes in the cortex of people suffering from Alzheimer’s disease.

Through MS/MS sequencing and database search we could identify four dominant cross-linked sequences accounting for >85% of tissue cross-link content. Our data reveal new insights into the genesis of intraneural inclusions by showing how cross-linking of smaller proteins might impede their posttranslational breakdown and contribute to inclusion formation during degeneration of nerve cells.”


daniel.sorey@ecnp.nl
www.ecnp.nl

EMCNP at ACNP
European Accreditation Committee in CNS

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As mentioned in the previous issue of ecnp matters, EAC has been granted support from the European Union, within the framework of the Leonardo da Vinci Project (EUR/W 209/1111a/FC/ January 2000 – May 2000) of the European Commission. The implementation of European accreditation by EAC can be considered as a major achievement of this Leonardo project. It will facilitate the development of guidelines and processes which should be adhered to in providing CME, and to ensure that the required standards are being met by any organisation providing CME in CNS.

A country survey on CME systems in ten European countries shows that a high percentage of respondents in all countries felt that a common European system of quality control for CME in CNS was needed (between 76% and 98%). There is also a low percentage of people aware of the system (33.3% for CME and 17.4% for CME specific to CNS disorders), implying that not only a quality control system is needed, but also a system of promoting the existence of CME for CNS disorders. Information on the project and EAC has been given in publications in scientific journals, newsletters and on a special website.

www.ecnp-eac.org

A website has been created (www.ecnp-eac.org) in order to promote the concept of European CME in CNS. The website is also used by the scientific community for on-line evaluation of congresses accredited by EAC.

Network of assessors

Highly regarded CNS experts throughout Europe have accepted to collaborate with EAC. These experts are well-informed of the requirements of CME so they can be called on to assess scientific programmes of meetings, published course material and help to ensure that all CME activities are validated. It is anticipated that in the course of developing CME in CNS, great effort will be put into creating high quality learning packages which can be accessed from home. These could come in any format: books, audio cassettes, CD-ROMs, websites, videos... all accredited by EAC.

European Brain Council meets in Brussels

The European Brain Council (EBC) brings together representatives of European umbrella organisations involved in brain research and related areas. The founding members of the EBC include scientific organisations, patient associations, members of the industry and insurance.

Jes Olesen, chair EBC

As mentioned in ecnp matters no. 14, EBC submitted a document concerning the 6th Framework Programme to the European Commission (EC). The document stressed the importance of stimulating research activities in the areas of neurodegenerative diseases, stroke, headache and chronic pain, major depression, schizophrenia, and substance abuse. At the EBC meeting of October 3, 2001, a report was given of the success of the document and the meeting with EC commissioner Mr. Boussouf, resulting in the pursued inclusion of disorders of the nervous system into the 6th Framework Programme.

The EBC Constitution is being finalised in order to incorporate the organisation under the Belgian law. This official incorporation is an absolute necessity for its future activities. EBC membership will follow the EC policy of ‘inclusion’ and wants to bring together a broad range of organisations involved in brain research or its promotion.

Jes Olesen, chair EBC aims at a close collaboration with the Commission and the European Parliament. This collaboration will be of great importance for the impact of the future activities EBC will undertake.

* European Federation of Neurological Societies (EFNS); European Federation of Neurological Associations (EFNA); Federation of European Neuroscience Societies (FENS); European College of Neuropsychopharmacology (ECNP); Global Alliance of Mental Illness Advocacy Networks (GAMIAN); European Dana Alliance for the Brain (EDAB); European Association of Neurouroeprologists (EANS); Allgemeine Orts KrankenKasse (AOK)

Introducing patients’ art Czech Republic

The future printed material concerning the 16th ECNP Congress in Prague (September 20-24, 2003) will include fascinating, colourful art by patients of ‘Balance Psychiatricka Liceba’. Vanda Valenta, head physician of Rehabilitation of this hospital, has sent the ECNP Office wonderful paintings, among which the ones printed alongside.

Michael Kellner

Associate Professor

Department of Psychiatry and Psychotherapy

University Hospital Hamburg- Eppendorf, Germany

FELLOWSHIP AWARD WINNER 2001

Rael Straus

Psychiatry Research Coordinator

Beer Yaakov Mental Health Center, Sackler School of Medicine

Tel Aviv University, Israel

My activities centre around clinical and genetic research in the field of neuropsychopharmacology particularly with respect to first episode psychosis. I study the premorbid status of patients in their first episode of psychosis in order to determine relationships with baseline symptoms, treatment response or side effects. The results demonstrate several findings including:

- worse premorbid functioning in men;
- a third of the patients exhibit sustained poor premorbid functioning;
- various premorbid scores predict susceptibility to taurine dyskinesia (TD). Measures of premorbid functions confirm that the disease pathogenesis is manifest prior to the usual age of onset and presentation of the first psychotic symptoms. Our findings provide further evidence for a poor prognostic schizophrenia phenotype, one which manifests both impaired premorbid functions as well as the later onset of the serious side effect of TD.

FELLOWSHIP AWARD WINNER 2001

Eppendorf, University Hospital Psychiatry and associate professor Michael Kellner
Brain imaging and neuropsychopharmacology
3rd ECNP Workshop, Nice - France
March 15-17, 2002

Topics of this workshop are:
- physiology and pharmacology of brain imaging
- applications of brain imaging
- the future of brain imaging.

Within the programme of symposia and poster session, the interactive mentoring session on Friday March 15 is new and unique in its objective to develop a research project with comment of experts and the floor. Three presented participants will give a presentation of the project. After their brief outline the audience is divided among three groups. During 40 minutes each group will discuss the project and design experiments together with the project presenter and a mentor. In a plenary meeting each draft design will be presented, followed by a general discussion.

The workshop is open to ECNP members who can also invite two other people. Corporate ECNP members can register three representatives. Registration forms have been sent along with the announcements to the members.

ECNP Consensus Meeting 2002

After the workshop, Nice will also witness the ECNP Consensus Meeting on long-term treatment in psychiatric and neurological diseases’ from March 17-20, 2002. In this meeting experts from the scientific community, the regulatory agencies and the pharmaceutical industry aim to prepare a consensus document that can be used as a guideline to perform clinical trials that fulfill the criteria set by the registration authorities.

Calendar of Events of the European College of Neuropsychopharmacology

Conferences:

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<td>15th ECNP Congress, Barcelona - Spain</td>
<td>October 5 - 9, 2002</td>
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<tr>
<td>16th ECNP Congress, Prague - Czech Republic</td>
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<td>17th ECNP Congress, Stockholm - Sweden</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

For further information:
- Scientific secretariat: ECNP-Office
- P.O. Box 85410
- 3508 AK Utrecht
- The Netherlands

- Professional secretariat: Congrex Holland BV
- P.O. Box 302
- 1000 AH Amsterdam
- The Netherlands

- Phone: +31 30 50 40 225
- Fax: +31 30 253 8567
- E-mail: secretariat@congrex.nl
- Website: http://www.congrex.nl

3rd ECNP Workshop:

Brain imaging and neuropsychopharmacology
March 15 - 17, 2002
Nice - France.

ECNP Consensus meeting:

Long-term treatment in psychiatric and neurological diseases
March 17 - 20, 2002
Nice - France.

For further information:
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- 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: http://www.ecnp.nl

Brain Awareness Week
March 11-17, 2002

Each March hundreds of events inspiring interest in brain research are staged as part of Brain Awareness Week. In Europe the events have been coordinated by The European Dana Alliance for The Brain and like-minded partner organisations. The next Brain Awareness Week takes place from March 11-17, 2002.

In March 2001 over 300 events were organised in 25 countries (outside the Americas). Brain Awareness Week participants are medical and science professionals, anyone interested in the topics, and organisations ranging from hospitals and university departments to charities. For 2002, ECNP has listed the workshop in Nice (see above left) from March 15-17 as an activity.

7th ECNP Regional meeting:

April 19 - 21, 2002
Bucharest - Romania

For further information:
- Organising secretariat: New Concept Travel
- P.O. Box 78510
- 3508 AK Utrecht
- The Netherlands

- Phone: +40 1 231 7071 - 77 (7 lines)
- Email: nct@bt.ro
- Website: http://www.ecnp.nl

Events other organisations

CCNP 2002 Annual Meeting

The 25th Annual Meeting of the Canadian College of Neuropsychopharmacology (CCNP) will be held June 9-12, 2002 at the Westin Hotel in Ottawa, Ontario. This meeting will be the 25th Anniversary of the CCNP, symposia, plenary lectures and award lectures will be included in the program. Abstract deadline: April 15, 2002. For details contact: Ms. Rachelle Anderson, tel. (780) 407-6597; fax (780) 407-6672; email: rmena@ualberta.ca.

Czech Neuropsychopharmacological Society
British Association for Psychopharmacology

Workshop Psychopharmacology of Cannabis and ‘Ecstasy’

April 18 - 21, 2002, Brno Masaryk University Centre Conference, Czech Republic

For further information:
- A.E. Sulcova
- Department of Pharmacology
- Faculty of Medicine
- Masaryk University
- Jostova 10
- 662 43 Brno
- Czech Republic
- Phone: +420-5-42126077
- Fax: +420-5-42126080
- E-mail: sulcova@med.muni.cz

FELLOWSHIP AWARD WINNER 2001

Luigia Trabace
associate professor
Faculty of Medicine
University of Foggia
Italy

“My main activity is basic research. While excess nitric oxide (NO) production is neurotoxic; at physiological concentrations it may reduce responsivity of N-methyl-D-aspartate (NMDA) receptors and play a role in synaptic plasticity. We investigated differential roles of NO using in vivo microdialysis technique in mice lacking functional expression of neuronal nitric oxide synthase (nNOS%). We found that, at the threshold dose for NMDA effects, NO may regulate NMDA receptors by both reducing its sensitivity and by promoting plasticity changes. In contrast, at potentially neurotoxic NMDA doses, NO-induced desensitisation is insufficient to prevent the large amount of NO released induced by NMDA. Thus, under these conditions, nNOS−/− mice show reduced evocation of neurotransmitter release.”

Luigia Trabace
associate professor
Faculty of Medicine
University of Foggia
Italy
The decision to cancel the 14th ECNP Congress in Istanbul was discussed. In the weeks after September 11, 2001 - the day of the tragic events in the USA - there were many contacts between the members of the EC. Although ECNP has done its utmost to continue with the organisation of the congress, ultimately the number of participants and speakers did not guarantee a matrix for a well-balanced congress. The EC concluded that the cancellation was regrettable but inevitable, and thanked all who have contributed to the organisation of the congress, in particular the Turkish colleagues, and those who supported the congress to the very end.

The consequences of the cancellation were discussed thoroughly. The General Meeting of Members was rescheduled for March, 2002 in Nice, France, including the election of new members of the EC. The founding meeting of an Advisory Board of European National Societies in the field of neuropsychopharmacology was postponed. The ECNP-Lilly Neuroscience Awards and the Fellowship Awards will be presented in Barcelona. Concerning the finances and liabilities, the picture was not yet complete. It was foreseen that the extra work due to the cancellation will interfere with ECNP activities in 2002.

The General Meeting of Members in March, 2002 was prepared, including the reports of the Secretary, Treasurer, and ENP (European Neuropsychopharmacology). It was decided to institute Scientific Advisory Panels within ECNP to assist with a number of scientifically oriented issues (see article on this page).

The policy that support for congresses from pharmaceutical companies is limited to satellite symposia and the exhibition was confirmed. In line with this policy, it was decided to discontinue company support for the CD-ROM and the ECNP-awards.

It was felt that the current daily programme of the ECNP congress was somewhat too long, which could have impact on the attendance. A revised schedule was approved by which the daily programme lasts 75 minutes less.

The first ecnp matters, the ECNP newsletter, appeared in July 2001. A real achievement. Both the content and the lay out were appreciated. The Editorial Committee and the editor of ecnp matters were thanked for the work done.

A new award has been initiated for young European scientists: the ECNP Travel Award. Whereas the ECNP Poster Award is a prize for the presentation of the poster as well as the scientific excellence of the paper; the ECNP Travel Award will be granted to the best paper accepted for publication and presentation.

The report of the European Accreditation Committee for CME in CNS was discussed. ECNP fully supports the idea to achieve a reliable system of European accreditation. (See the article on page 5 and 6)

Due to efforts of the European Brain Council, of which ECNP is a founding member, the Framework Programme of the European Union will now include research in the field of neuroscience, neurology and psychiatry. (See the article on page 6)

A new version of the ECNP desk calendar was mailed in December to all ECNP members. Its illustrations of contemporary art were made in the painting group of Jan M. van Ree, president. The 3rd version of the ECNP desk calendar was mailed in December to all ECNP members. Its illustrations of contemporary art were made in the painting group of Jan M. van Ree, president. The 3rd version of the ECNP desk calendar was mailed in December to all ECNP members. Its illustrations of contemporary art were made in the painting group of Jan M. van Ree, president.

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New research funds for treatment trials for schizophrenia and bipolar disorder

The Stanley Medical Research Institute (SMRI) announces the availability of $10 - $15 million per year in new funds specifically designated to support clinical trials for schizophrenia and bipolar disorder. SMRI will support studies on compounds in development and studies on the off-label use of existing compounds, and studies of novel and indigenous compounds that may be of benefit for these disorders. A variety of study designs will be considered, including adjunctive trials, uncontrolled pilot trials, and randomised controlled trials. Trials may be from single sites or from multiple collaborating sites. A complete list of drug trials currently being supported by SMRI is available at www.stanleyresearch.org (Click on Clinical Trials Funded by the Stanley Medical Research Institute on the Research Programs webpage).

Funding for the trials may range from $50,000 up to $300,000 per year for up to three years depending on the design. Indirect costs can be paid up to 15% as part of the total grant.

Deadlines for submission of applications: March 1 of each year and October 1 of each year.

Following review by a scientific advisory board, applicants will be notified within six weeks. Funds will be sent when IRB approval and administrative forms have been completed.

Applications can be submitted on-line at www.stanleyresearch.org. Questions should be directed to Dr David Daniel, Dr Michael Knable, or Dr Fuller Torrey at wilsenk@stanleyresearch.org.

Scientific Advisory Panels

ECNP has grown during the last years and its activities have increased. There is a need to broaden the group of scientists involved in the scientific activities of ECNP. These include the scientific programme of congresses and meetings, scientific advice, for example, about CPMP guidelines, the review of papers, and the selection of poster presentations. Seven panels will be formed, starting with five members each, concentrating on the following topics:

- affective disorders and antidepressants
- psychotic disorders and antipsychotics
- mood disorders and anxiolytics
- degenerative disorders
- neurological disorders
- addiction
- basic neuroscience.

ecnp matters

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Edited by

Kirsten Bett, editor
Jocelyn Koole-Krusemeijer, adviser
Jan M. van Ree, adviser

Executive Committee ECNP

Jan M. van Ree (the Netherlands), president
Julien Mendlewicz (Belgium), vice-president
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Donatella Mancuzi (Italy)
Shuaat A. Montgomery (United Kingdom)
David J. Nutt (United Kingdom)

Contributors

Feve Lacaniere
I. Hakti Ayhan
Kirsten Bett
Mihai D. Gheorghe
Liedewij J. Jepsen
Jocelyn Koole-Krusemeijer
Yves Lecrubier (France)
Jan M. van Ree
Jes Olesen
A. Carlo Altamura
Manfred Ackenheil (Germany), Yves Lecrubier (France), Jan M. van Ree (the Netherlands),

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carbon: Jan M. van Ree
photography: Kirsten Bett

Call for copy

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Copy (600 words maximum) can be sent to ECNP-Office

at: Kirsten Bett
PO Box 85410
3508 AK Utrecht
The Netherlands

phone: +31 30 253 8567
secretariat@ecnp.nl

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