Preview on highlights in Barcelona 2008

Sven Ove Ogren, Sweden
Chair, Scientific Programme Committee

As chair of the Scientific Programme Committee (SPC), I am very pleased to give my opinion on the scientific programme at the 21st ECNP Congress in Barcelona. The scientific programme of the annual ECNP Congress is dedicated to give a broad presentation on groundbreaking work in the field of neuropsychopharmacology and related areas. The programme appeals to the entire neuropsychopharmacological community, spanning research from molecular to clinical fields with strong emphasis on the interfaces between different disciplines. The programme also has strong educational components to make it possible for researchers in any field to stay up to date on novel developments in related disciplines.

The programme is a result of many symposia proposals from both members and nonmembers. We would like to thank everybody who has contributed to make this year’s programme so varied, exciting and novel.

The speakers at the 21st ECNP Congress represent a wide variety of nationalities from Europe as well as non-European countries, which will guarantee a wide coverage of the research field. The international flavour is also represented by symposium S.15, which is run by the Canadian College of Neuropsychopharmacology dedicated to maternal stress and the health of the offspring. ECNP has also a strong emphasis on young scientists, which is represented in the programme by the Hot Topics symposia. Three symposia are structured around one in the interface track, consisting of a selection of ten young scientists based on their presentation at the 2008 ECNP Workshop in Nice, which takes place in early March each year. To give the opportunity for presentation of truly novel and groundbreaking work in the field, the Breaking News symposia were created. To include the latest developments in the field, the selection of the speakers for these symposia is made less than a month before the start of the congress. One can still apply for a lecture in one of these Breaking News symposia until 15 July 2008 via the ECNP website www.ecnp.eu.

I would like to highlight the three plenary lectures which are particularly outstanding. The lecture by Klaus Peter Lesch, who is the winner of the 2008 ECNP Neuropsychopharmacology Award in Clinical Research, deals with a tremendously important topic, namely how serotonin shapes the social brain. Graham Collinge will discuss the molecular basis for learning and memory and Barbara Sukhan will present her innovative work on depression and resilience.

As always, I find it very difficult to single out the symposia that I would like to attend. However, my strategy is to cover areas which I do not know so much about and which I personally find exciting. A symposium that I am very interested in is the combination of S.01 and S.14. S.01 deals with novel mechanisms for antipsychotic drugs and a particularly interesting lecture is the new finding that metabotropic glutamate-receptors may be new targets for antipsychotic drugs by Brian Kimon. In S.14, studies on schizophrenia brains by neuroimaging techniques have revealed important interactions between glutamate and dopamine in the brain, which is reviewed by Marc Laliberte. Exciting new findings on the genetic basis of the causes of autism is discussed in S.10. Recently, the first autism disease genes have been characterised and their role in synapse formation is discussed by Marion Leboyer. Also the brain mechanisms underlying autistic behaviors have started to be revealed by Christopher Gillberg. In S.20, the mechanism of action of mood-stabilizers is examined and new models. I am particularly interested in the presentation by Robert Belmaker on the analysis of mechanisms of lithium by the use of GSK-3b knockout mice. In addition, the presentations by Marc Caron and David Morikai give further insight in the complex action by which mechanisms for neuronal signalling are affected by mood-stabilizers and how they impact on chronic stress and cognitive functions in the prefrontal cortex.

In addition to the traditional symposia, ECNP has taken a strong initiative for educational updates, which cover six topics: unlicensed applications of licensed psychotropic drugs, combination studies with antipsychotics: report on the consensus meeting 2008, electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) in Europe, alternative/complementary therapy in psychiatric disorders, EPA session beyond psychopharmacology - impact of trust, culture and migration, and society and neuro-science: the neuroscience conundrum. There is also a very intensive satellite programme with 25 symposia covering a variety of aspects in neuropsychopharmacology.

Of course I would like to invite all of you to attend the poster sessions in which more than 700 posters are presented spread over the Sunday, Monday and Tuesday lunch hours. Last but not least for the early birds amongst you there are brainstorming sessions organised by ECNP members before the symposia start on Sunday through Tuesday. In these sessions, topics are put up for discussion that are thought to be of interest for the congress attendees by the organising ECNP members.

The 21st ECNP Congress is organised in Barcelona, which has a very old history. The city is believed to be founded, according to legends, by sailors from Gezeere who were in search for the Golden Fleece. Barcelona is today one of the most attractive cities in Europe with a mixture of old and new outstanding architecture, a rich culture-life, nice shopping and the marvellous Spanish cuisine. In addition, Barcelona has one of the best soccer teams in Europe with many enthusiastic supporters. In summary, Barcelona has something for every taste and is a marvellous meeting place for the 21st ECNP Congress.

Breaking News: Call for proposals

- Do you have breakthrough data?
- Are your new results of particular clinical interest?
- Do you want to present your new findings to your colleagues at the 21st ECNP Congress?

The Scientific Programme Committee invites you to propose a presentation* for one of the two Breaking News symposia that will be held during the 21st ECNP Congress.

The submission of proposals for the Breaking News symposia is open since 1 June 2008. The deadline for submission is 15 July 2008.

* Selected speakers for the Breaking News symposia will be treated as invited speaker, i.e. the registration for will be waived, hotel accommodation for 4 nights at single room rate in Barcelona, provided these costs cannot be claimed elsewhere. Airfare round trip tourist class ticket (APEX airfare) will be provided. Breakfast during the congress period, and travel in Barcelona will be slight adaptations for the next applicant.

Further information is available on the ECNP website www.ecnp.eu.

NEW: ECNP Research Grant for Young Scientists

The ECNP Research Grant for Young Scientists is a great success! In December 2007, ECNP has launched the ECNP Research Grant for Young Scientists. With this ECNP members are provided with a unique opportunity to support committed, promising European young scientists in neuropsychopharmacology to gain research experience in other centres by offering a maximum of three ECNP Research Grants for Young Scientists each year. Each grant consists of a maximum amount of Euro 50,000.

By 28 February 2008, over ten applications received which have been very varied by the scientific jury. The first application process will be evaluated and it is foreseen that there will be slight adaptations for the next application period.

The following two European young scientists have been granted the award:
- Georgi Hranov from the University Hospital of Neurology and Psychiatry “St. Naum”, Sofia, Bulgaria who will visit the Queen Elizabeth II Hospital, Department of Psychiatry, Herfordshire, United Kingdom
- Edward Marron from North Estonian Regional Hospital, Psychiatry Clinic, Research Department of Mental Health, Tallinn, Estonia who will visit the University of Bristol, Psychopharmacology Unit, Bristol, United Kingdom

ECNP is wishing them success and is looking forward to learn about their experiences.
One of the reasons why our treatments are so often ineffective or inadequate. Of course the scale of the intellectual challenge in neuropsychopharmacology is orders of magnitude greater than that in the pathological science underlying other illnesses and so requires greater efforts, more insights and wisdom and efforts to achieve breakthroughs. Marshalling and empowering the great body of scientists that can be found across Europe is one very straightforward yet powerful way to optimise this endeavour.

Having worked for two years in the USA - I was clinical research director at the National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism in NIH Washington - made me very aware of the intellectual power that can be marshalled if appropriate funds are made available to moti- mental tracts. Europe has the potential to achieve the same level of achievement and surpass if we use our talents and resources optimally. Indeed our longer and more diverse traditions of research may give us some advantages. For this reason I am very supportive of the input ECNP is making to the success of the European Brain Council (EBC). EBC is the overarching council that provides the voice in Brussels for all scientific, clinical and patient groups working on brain sciences, treatment of brain disorders and policy development relating to both. The financial security that ECNP has achieved over the past decade allows us to undertake activities of EBC to the benefit of all of Europe. These EBC activities include running the major policy forum symposium every February in Brussels to which parliamentary members are encour- aged to come. In February 2008 the first forum was held on Parkinson’s disease and the next forum in February 2009 is on the burdens of depression. Because the EBC office is located in Brussels it also has a major opportunity for lobbying the minister for science over the form and content of Framework Programme calls.

2. For years ECNP organises regional meetings and seminars in the ‘new’ European countries. However, their active involvement in the present developments of neuropsychopharmacology is still not that high. Could/should ECNP be even more active in this respect?

One of the great challenges to ECNP is to establish and then strengthen links with all of Europe, especially the ‘new’ European countries in the former Eastern bloc. This is being achieved with a number of different initiatives. For many years we have coordinated regional meetings in a number of these countries; these meetings consist of several symposia that are planned and funded by ECNP and include many of our top experts who speak alongside local researchers to the benefit of each. For areas where the research base is currently not strong enough to make such mixed symposia we hold educational sessions (now called the ECNP Seminar series) where a small group of international experts share their knowledge on research and clinical expertise with a selected group of local doctors and scientists. Both these forward-going initiatives are hugely enjoyed by speakers and participants alike which is why we have no problems in getting ECNP speakers.

Partly as a result of these initiatives but also because of the quality and structure of the ECNP Congress we are attracting more and more delegates from the former east. My interactions with them have made me see that they greatly value the educational updates track we have at the ECNP Congress as well as the chance to hear experts from both Europe and the USA in plenary lectures and scientific and satellite symposia. This enthusiasm and the fact that more and more clinical trials are being conducted in these countries make me sure that in a few years we shall be seeing them playing a much greater role in ECNP in terms of contributing to the scientific program through talks and poster presentations.

3. It has been reported before in ECNP Matters that young scientists are on the main screen at ECNP. What are for you the most important activities of ECNP for this group?

When I joined ECNP it was very clear to me that it had one thing in common with all the other international scientific organisations I have been involved in: seemingly being run by a group of older men and with little apparent interest in the presence or views of the younger generation. This is obviously an untenable situation for any organisation as it leads to atrophy and eventual ossification whilst newer more vibrant organisations then spring up to fill the void. Thankfully ECNP had enough officers with wisdom and vision to realise that we needed to inno- rate to keep alive and grow. A strong target has been to invest in young people to build a continuum in neuropsychopharmacology and to secure a foundation for future members of ECNP.

One thing ECNP does is to give a large number of travel awards and other prizes for young delegates at the ECNP Congress. Another incentive was to abolish registration fees for this group as long as they present a quality poster at the congress. This has been reported elsewhere in this newsletter, for the 21st ECNP Congress the registration fees have been drastically lowered. Recently ECNP has installed the ECNP Research Grants for Young Scientists. Further details on this new initiative can also be found else- where in this newsletter.

A unique innovation was the development of the annual workshop for young scientists. This is a meeting that ECNP supports so that 100 of the most promising young scien- tists in the field of neuropsychopharmacology in Europe can meet together to present posters and talks as well as hear international experts give overviews of their research and have the same experts comment on their work. In just a few years this has become a hugely popular event - excelling our initial hopes - and is now so sought after we have to use a very strict rationing system to allo- cate places, even the star delegates only get a guaranteed place once, whilst others must become associate members of ECNP and take up this challenge. What ECNP has done in this respect is a marvellous example to other fields of medicine especially in intellectual challenge in neuropsychopharmacology.
Neuropsychopharmacology in Spain

Celso Arango and Eduard Vieta
local advisors to the 21st ECNP Congress

The roots

The history of Spanish neuropsychopharmacology, as is the case for many neuroscience disciplines in our country, effectively starts with Santiago Ramón y Cajal (1852-1934). In the history of Spanish science, the work of Ramón y Cajal has had a very profound impact on the consolidation of scientific methodology and interest in the field of neuroscience. The inauguration in 1922 of the Cajal Institute allowed many researchers to initiate the first neuropsychopharmacology studies to be conducted in our country. Researchers such as Juan Negrín López and José María were disciples of Ramon y Cajal. Teófilo Hernando Ortega (1881-1976) became the first Spanish Professor in Pharmacology in 1912. Other pioneers in the field of neuropsychopharmacology in Spain were August Pi y Sunyer (1879-1936), who worked on the autonomous system, and Francisco García-Valdecasas (1910-2003), who described the effect of low doses of reserpine on the hypertensive action of noradrenaline. The latter and his disciples (Laporte, Salva, Esteve, and others) described the pharmacological profile and use of reserpine and its derivatives in psychiatric conditions, and studied the mechanism of action, safety, and central and peripheral effects of monoamines.

Neuropsychopharmacology after the Spanish Civil War

The Spanish Civil War and the subsequent dictatorship had tragic consequences for most emerging scientific disciplines in Spain. The impact of the anti-psychiatric movement was also important, but due to a lack of consensus with the rest of Europe, it did not have the same effects as in other neighboring countries. Juan José López-Ilundain (1898-1991) was a pioneer in the use of clomipramine in obsessive-compulsive disorder. Eduardo Cuenca, previously a Professor of Pharmacology in Cadiz, created one of the most influential psychopharmacological schools in our country, with disciples such as Juan Gibert, Manto Valdés, Cecilio Álamo, Francisco Lopez-Munoz, Juan Antonio Micó, among many others. In addition, Joaquín del Río studied the preclinical effects of neurolipids on the dopaminergic system, and Jesús Flórez, a professor at the University of Cadiz, made relevant contributions to the central pharmacology of endogenous opioids, especially in the area of respiratory effects. Jesús García-Serrata was particularly influential with his contributions on alpha-2 adrenoceptors in depression. In clinical pharmacology, significant contributions were made by Ramon Noguera, who participated in the earliest lithium studies, Juan Massana, with his trials in the area of anxiety and panic disorder, and Julio Valdivia, who studied MAOIs in dysphoria and obsessive-compulsive disorders.

Modern neuropsychopharmacology in Spain

With the progression towards democracy and the emergence of a new generation of scientists and clinicians, the groups in the field of neuropsychopharmacology increased in quantity and quality. The field has become increasingly specialized and productive, with many groups working initially on their own, and more recently, often co-operatively under the umbrella of State-funded networks such as the recently created Centro de Investigación Biomédica en Red de Salud Mental (CIBERSAM). The most active groups in the preclinical area include those of Francesc Artigas from the CSIC in Barcelona, which described the augmentation effect of pindolol on SSRIs and, more recently, how antipsychotic drugs reverse the disruption in prefrontal cortex function produced by NMMA receptor blockade with phencyclidine. Jesus Avila and his group have made important contributions in the area of Alzheimer’s disease. Jordi Cami has extensively studied the basic psychopharmacology of amphetamines and MDMA receptors. Juan Gibert of the Department of Psychiatry and Pharmacology in Cadiz has described the mechanisms involved in the alleviation of morphine withdrawal syndrome induced by benzoalkaloids, and benzodiazepine-induced changes in the noradrenergic and serotonergic systems during morphine withdrawal. In that same department, Juan Antonio Micó has studied the neurobiological pathways between depression and pain and the effect of antidepressants on pain as a physical symptom in depression. Javier Meana of the Basque Country University has developed studies on neurotransmitter receptor disorders using post-mortem human brain samples in the Department of Pharmacology. Angel Panos in Cantabria has contributed to the development of techniques for the visualisation of neurotransmitter receptors and their application to the study of the mechanisms of action of antipsychotics. Moreover, Pedro Lorenzo from the Department of Pharmacology at the Complutense University in Madrid has spent the past three decades studying the effects of certain central acting drugs on neurogenic amines and different aspects of spastic dependence. More recently, Juan Carlos Leza from the same department has developed important contributions to the neuro-inflamatory mechanisms induced by stress and the relationship with stress-related disease and the possible pharmacological regulation of stress, and Rafael Maldonado from the laboratory of neuropsychopharmacology at the University Pompeu Fabra in Barcelona has made relevant contributions to the pre-clinical science of addiction and cannabinoid receptors.

In clinical neuropsychopharmacology, progress has come in parallel with specialisation, and the contribution of Spanish groups has become increasingly influential in Europe and worldwide. Eduard Vieta and his group performing research and clinical trials in bipolar disorder, Victor Perez and Enric Hervás with their work with Antigas on antidepressants, Jerónimo Sáiz in the field of anxiety and affective disorders, Marta Torres in addiction, and Celso Arango in the field of child and adolescent neuropsychopharmacology and negative symptoms in schizophrenia are highly visible examples, but not the only ones. There is a marked expansion in the number and influence of Spanish research groups in this area and the participation of Spanish neuropsychopharmacologists and clinicians in the ECNP Congresses is clear proof of this.

21st ECNP Congress, 30 August – 3 September 2008, Barcelona, Spain

The preliminary programme on the 21st ECNP Congress includes next to details on its programme and the registration, information on the welcome ceremony and reception, the congress party and further logistics on the congress. The announcement will be available by June 2008. It will be sent to all ECNP members and will also be available on the ECNP website www.ecnp.eu.

Young Scientists: almost 70% discount on late registration fee in 2008

ECNP has lowered registration fees for young scientists and participants from countries with developing economies (World Bank List – September 2007). Late registration fee (deadline 15 August 2008) is lowered by almost 70% from Euro 360 to Euro 115, incl. VAT.

For further information please visit the ECNP website www.ecnp.eu.

Congress Information System (CIS) available six weeks before the congress

The scientific programme, the satellite symposia programme and the papers of the 21st ECNP Congress that have been accepted for publication, will be available in a searchable database six weeks before the beginning of the congress. This service will be available on the ECNP website www.ecnp.eu.
Increasing public awareness on the mission and the achievements of ECNP and neuropsychopharmacology

The European College of Neuropsychopharmacology (ECNP) is a unique and remarkably broad interdisciplinary scientific platform, which strongly emphasises basic and translational research, moving new knowledge on fundamental disease mechanisms into clinical applications and vice versa, and taking into account the prevailing social, cultural and economic "real-world" setting of mental health care.

ECNP links critical advances in neuropsychopharmacology with the most recent knowledge, paradigms and methods of all basic and applied disciplines contributing to a better understanding of mental disorders and other disorders of the brain. Thus, ECNP bridges the gap between basic research, clinical science and mental health care and paves the way for improved new treatments strategies and in particular, the next generation of pharmaceutical treatments, which will improve the lives of millions of people suffering from mental and other disorders of the brain.

Press conferences on the occasion of the 21st ECNP Congress

General press conference

• The mission and the achievements of ECNP and neuropsychopharmacology

David Nutt, United Kingdom, president; Sven Ove Ogren, Sweden, chair; SPC; Hans-Ulrich Wittchen, Germany, secretary

• Antidepressants in general and in suicide prevention

Erik Isometsä, Finland

Topic specific press conferences

• Neurogenesis in the adult brain: the association with stress and depression

Eliehard Fuchs, Germany

• The consensus statement 2007 on bipolar depression

Guy M. Goodwin, United Kingdom

• The first autism disease genes

Max Leboyer, France

• Advantages of new formulations of antipsychotic drugs

Lucia Panti, Italy

• Antidepressants as treatment on cognitive functions in Alzheimer’s disease

Ingmar Skog, Sweden

• Alcoholism-associated molecular adaptations in brain neurotranscict neurons

George Badian, Sweden

The European network for bipolar disorder

Eduard Vieta, Spain

councillor Executive Committee

One of the missions of ECNP is to foster research on neuropsychopharmacology in Europe (EU), and the best strategy to do that is likely to support the creation of European networks of centres with interdisciplinary expertise within a given area of neuropsychopharmacology. To this end, ECNP has funded the creation of the ECNP Network Initiative (ENI). Written ENI European networks on areas within neuropsychopharmacology are gathered that are willing to work together. The European network for bipolar disorder is a member of ENI. Recently this network received a grant under the 7th European Union Framework Programme. Eduard Vieta is the representative at the ENI for the European network for bipolar disorder.

The news that the 7th European Union Framework Programme would fund a project on a European Network of Excellence on Bipolar Disorder was very well received. The network is called ENBREC (European Network of Bipolar Research Expert Centres) and currently covers networks of bipolar expert centres reaching the critical mass in Germany, Italy, Norway, Spain, United Kingdom, and France (representing more than 300 million EU citizens), and plans to extend to other EU member states.

The network also includes the European Clinical Research Infrastructures Network (ECRIN), the 7th Framework Programme’s infrastructure providing support to multinational clinical studies. Integration of EU research and care on bipolar disorder will benefit EU patients and citizens, provide EU leadership in bipolar research, and hopefully strengthen drug development in the EU, in line with the expectations of the Innovative Medicines Initiative strategic research agenda. The coordinating person is Chantal Henry (Fundamental, France), and the National leaders are Eduard Vieta (Spain), Guy Goodwin (United Kingdom), Angelo Barbato (Italy), Michael Bauer (Germany) Olle Andreassen (Norway), and Jacques Demotes-Maynadier (ECRIN).

ENBREC will provide an EU-integrated facility for research on the mechanism of disease, on diagnosis and on treatment. In addition, it will help implement these innovative strategies in the healthcare for such a strongly disabling illness.

Bipolar disorder is characterised by recurrent manic and depressive episodes, affecting more than 1% of the EU population. Delay in the diagnosis (based only on clinical features), uncertainties in the definition of episodes and on the treatment strategy best adapted to each patient lead to devastating socio-economic, professional and family consequences. The creation of this network is expected to translate research into improved health care for all those working in the area of bipolar disorder in specific and neuropsychopharmacology in general.

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The joined ECNP-AEP Seminar in Neuropsychopharmacology was held in Hotel Panorama, Siófok, Hungary from 10 – 12 April 2008. The 38 participants have been recruited mostly from the young scientists belonging to the PhD schools of the 4 Medical Universities in Hungary (Budapest, Szeged, Pécs, Debrecen). Several participants are also active clinicians in addition to their research. The goal of the seminar was to stimulate young scientists in performing research and to help them preparing and writing scientific papers and presenting lectures. The majority of participants were PhD students, while others received their PhD degree some years ago. The participants were medical doctors (21), psychologists (7), pharmacists (5) and biologists (5).

The main topics of the seminar addressed were schizophrenia, affective and anxiety disorders (basic research and suicidal behavior), and clinical research in affective disorders. The overall moderator of the seminar was Joseph Zohar, and the invited and internationally recognized experts on the field of the main topics were Kostas Fountoulakis (mood and anxiety disorders), Cyril Höschl (schizophrenia) and Göran Isacsson (suicidality). Three well recognized Hungarian experts (György Barczi, Gábor Paládi and Zoltán Rihmer) also participated actively at the meeting, their duty was to chair and stimulate the discussion in the workshops and hold their own presentations. Each workshop had a local and a foreign expert moderator. On Saturday the participants in each workshop elected a reporter, who presented a summary of their workshop during the plenary session on Saturday afternoon. The committee of foreign and Hungarian experts decided to grant three best presentations. Gabor Csalák, Xenia Gonda and Judit Lazary, with the ECNP Seminar Award. The award offers the winners participation in the upcoming ECNP Congress with a waived registration fee and Euro 500 to cover expenses, on the condition that they send in a paper for poster presentation and that the paper is accepted.

In addition to the very high standard scientific program, social programmes were also organized. Friday afternoon we visited a horse riding show in a museum village in Szántódpuszta, and afterwards we had dinner in a traditional Csarda, with traditional Hungarian dishes and folk music. There was a very good and stimulating atmosphere during both the scientific and cultural part of the seminar. It was good to see the strong scientific work of the young researchers in Hungary. It has been a good opportunity for the young researchers to gain deeper insight into research both from well acknowledged experts and from fellow young researchers.

**Call for nominations ECNP Neuropsychopharmacology Award 2009 in Basic Science Research**

Deadline for submission of nominations is 15 January 2009.

**The Spanish Society of Biological Psychiatry**

The Spanish Society of Biological Psychiatry (Sociedad Española de Psiquiatría Biológica, SEPB) was founded in 1974, when biological psychiatry was at the beginning of its rise. SEPB’s main objective is to promote the study of human behaviour according to the scientific methods. Throughout its history SEPB has represented a cornerstone of the biological psychiatry viewpoints in Spain. At the beginning, in the ‘70s and early ‘80s, the society played an important informative role of the advances in biological psychiatry that were taking place around the world and -not less important- the relevance of the scientific approach in psychiatry research. Progressively, SEPB has undertaken other functions such as continuous medical education and research promotion through grants and awards. Now, SEPB has over 400 members and its current president is Professor Jose Ginés, Sevilla and the elected president is Professor Julio Bobes, Oviedo.

SEPB has entered an agreement with the Spanish Psychiatric Society (Sociedad Española de Psiquiatría, SEP) to work as partners. In 2000 SEPB and SEP have founded the Spanish Foundation of Psychiatry and Mental Health (Fundación Española de Psiquiatría y Salud Mental (FEPSM) and many activities are sponsored jointly. A good example of this joint sponsorship is the next, 12th Spanish Psychiatric Annual Meeting, 5-7 November 2008 in Valencia. For further information please visit the meeting website www.psiquiatriavala08.com.
Report from the ECNP Workshop on Neuropsychopharmacology for Young Scientists in Europe, 6 – 9 March 2008, Nice, France

David Nutt, United Kingdom
chair workshop committee

For the last year as chair of the ECNP Workshop Committee, I am delighted to report that the 2008 workshop in Nice was yet again a great success. The 100 young scientists were participants in an excellently organised meeting with top scientists presenting basic and up-to-date information on their area of expertise, while 20 young scientists were challenged to present their work sometimes for the first time in front of not only these experts but also their colleagues from all over Europe.

Input from participants

Cristina Benatti, Italy
It was a great pleasure and equally an honour to have attended the ECNP Workshop. I found all the sessions both interesting and captivating. The poster sessions attracted a large audience and much was discussed. Many ideas were exchanged, protocols were compared in a friendly and sociable atmosphere. One of the best aspects of our work is to have the opportunity to meet and discuss with people who may or may not work in our field but who have a similar background. On both evenings it was difficult to leave the sessions, so some of the debates were continued during dinner.

My poster’s topic was ‘Molecular effects of a subchronic and chronic treatment with escitalopram in the rat central nervous system’. We studied the effects of escitalopram on expression levels of possible targets of antidepressant drugs. Our results suggest that spatially distinct signalling pathways may be involved in the differential effect on gene expression observed following either a 7 or a 21-day treatment with escitalopram.

Danuta Jantas, Poland
It was the first time that I attend the ECNP Workshop. I have presented the poster titled ‘The attenuating effect of memantine on dösormin- induced apoptosis of primary neurons and neuroblastoma SH-SY5Y cells’. My data showed that memantine, an NMDA receptor antagonist used in the treatments of Alzheimer’s disease, could attenuate apoptotic processes induced via activation of the death receptors pathway in both mouse primary neurons and in human neuroblastoma SH-SY5Y cells and that this effect does not dependent on blockade NMDA receptor. Since apoptotic processes are involved in the pathology of many neurodegenerative diseases, the anti-apoptotic action of memantine demonstrated by us could be responsible for its neuroprotective effect observed in experimental and clinical studies. Although the presentations and poster sessions presented only small amount of data from in vitro studies and from neurodegenerative/neuroprotective field, in which I’ve been working almost four years, I found all of them highly interesting. I have widened my knowledge on the neuropsychopharmacology field, especially from studies on in-vivo models and tests for assessment of beneficial effects of potential drugs. I liked very much all sessions because besides summarising present data they provided new direction for further research. The atmosphere during the workshop was great; it has stimulated discussions during the presentations and poster sessions and allowed to make new friends in the research field.

In my opinion the whole organisation of the meeting was perfect, not only the scientific part of the meeting, but also social activities and accommodation were top level. I do not have suggestions for improvement. It was such and interesting and stimulating workshop that I hope to be back to Nice in the future.

Dasha Gaysina, United Kingdom
This was the second time that I participate at the ECNP Workshop. I consider the topics interesting and I like the combination of listening to outstanding scientists and young ones just like me. In addition, I appreciate the possibility to present my own results and in the same time to have the opportunity to see the posters of other young scientists in the field. The title from my poster was ‘Association of dystrobrevin binding protein 1 gene (DTNBP1) in a bipolar case-control study (BACC5)’.

Ulrike Moser, Austria
This year was my second attendance at the ECNP Workshop. I appreciated the convenient and friendly atmosphere between the senior and young researchers. I had many opportunities to discuss my results with some colleagues who are also doing their research in the same field.

I liked most the clinical-neuropsychopharmacology session and the lecture about dementia since I am also a clinician. Furthermore, I enjoyed the poster sessions as there was a lot of opportunities to socialise with colleagues from other universities. In summary, I want to note that this is a well-organised and very high-level workshop to provide young researchers the opportunity to gain in-depth knowledge in the field of neuropsychopharmacology.

As topic of my poster I presented some data of a neuromedicalinological PET study. We investigated the relationship between the neurosteroids cortisol and dehydroepiandrosterone (DHEAS) and the serotonin-1A binding potentials (5-HT1A BPs) in the hypothalamus, as this is an important brain region in association with the Hypothalamic–Pituitary–Adrenal-axis. In conclusion, we found highly significant correlations of the DHEAS plasma levels with the hypothalamic 5-HT1A BPs which implies interactions between the two. Such an interaction has been shown only for cortisol before.

Matteo Paini, Italy
I found the workshop really interesting since it gives young scientists from all over Europe the chance to share their point of view about common research topics in a very relaxed and informal atmosphere. I appreciated both lectures and poster sessions, in which I could improve my knowledge about topics related to my research field. As a conclusion, I think that the ECNP Workshop is very well organised and it’s a great experience to participate.

The topic of my poster was ‘Modulation of intracellular signalling pathways by acute stress in rat hippocampus’ in which we focused on the effects of a brief acute stress on hippocampal signalling molecules, in particular BDNF, ERKs, CaMKII and NMDA receptor subunits. We found that stress is able to modulate such signalling proteins in different ways: 1) stress is able to induce the BDNF-ERK pathway after the first exposure to stress, presumably priming the response to the following presentation; 2) stress reduces the activation of CaMKII with an opposite effect on NR1 activation, maybe because of different kinetics of phospho-CaMKII dephosphorylation.

Jole Wouda, The Netherlands
The title of my poster was ‘ß-Adrenoceptor mediated inhibition of long-term alcohol-related memory consolidation’. My study showed for the first time that alcohol seeking behaviour in animals trained to self administer alcohol in operant chambers can be reduced by disrupting reconsolidation of alcohol-related memories with the ß-adrenoceptor antagonist propranolol.

Therefore ß-adrenergic receptors may represent a novel target for pharmacotherapy of addictive behaviours, in particular in the context of cue-exposure therapies. I enjoyed the poster sessions very much. Since the posters addressed a wide variety of topics, discussions with the different presenters provided an opportunity to broaden my knowledge on subjects beside my own field of expertise. The downside of the variety of topics was that poster presentations lacked the depth you would have discussing them with experts in the field.
The format of the regional meeting includes keynote lectures, meet-the-expert sessions, symposia, poster sessions and satellite symposia.

The Scientific Programme Committee of the 10th ECNP Regional Meeting has composed a programme with presentations of leading experts in the field who have initiated and successfully developed new directions in basic and clinical studies on bipolar disorder, psychosis, depression, anxiety, psychogenetics and neuroplasticity.

For further information please visit the ECNP website www.ecnp.eu

Young scientists in Europe may be eligible to a number of ECNP incentives related to the ECNP Congress:

- Waived or reduced fee
  - As usual, the registration fee for young scientists is waived provided they have submitted a paper for poster presentation that is accepted for presentation and publication in the journal European Neuropsychopharmacology.
  - In 2008, the reduced fee is lowered up to 80% for the early registration fee (valid until 31 March 2008) and 70% for the late registration fee (valid until 15 August 2008), as compared to 2007.

- Award
  - ECNP has granted 46 young scientists an ECNP Travel Award based on the scientific quality of their paper for poster presentation. The awards will be presented at 11.05 hours on each day poster presentations will be held.

Hot Topics symposia
- From the 2008 ECNP Workshop on Neuropsychopharmacology for Young Scientists 16 young scientists will present their research in the Hot Topics symposia on Sunday, 31 August 2008.

For further information please visit the ECNP website www.ecnp.eu.
Calendar of ECNP Meetings

ECNP Congresses

30 August–3 September 2008
12–16 September 2008
28 August–1 September 2009
3–7 September 2011
13–17 October 2012
5–9 October 2013

For further information:
Scientific secretariat
Organising secretariat 21st ECNP Congress
ECNP-Office
P.O. Box 85410
1160 AK Utrecht
The Netherlands

phone: +31 30 253 8567
fax: +31 30 253 8568
email: secretariat@ecnp.eu
website: www.ecnp.eu

21st ECNP Congress, Barcelona, Spain
22nd ECNP Congress, Istanbul, Turkey
23rd ECNP Congress, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
24th ECNP Congress, Paris, France
25th ECNP Congress, Vienna, Austria
26th ECNP Congress, Barcelona, Spain

ECNP Workshop on Neuropsychopharmacology for Young Scientists in Europe

5–8 March 2009, Nizh, France

Topics:
• Molecular neuropsychopharmacology
• Behavioural pharmacology
• Clinical neuropsychopharmacology
• Addition: towards new drug targets

4–7 March 2010, Nizh, France

ECNP Consensus Meeting

8–11 March 2009, Nice, France

Topics:
• Biomarkers and experimental medicine in developing new treatments in neuropsychopharmacology

For further information:
website: www.ecnp.eu
email: info2009@ecnp.eu

10th ECNP Regional Meeting

23–25 April 2009, Tallinn, Estonia

For further information:
website: www.ecnp.eu
e-mail: tallinn2009@ecnp.eu

2009 ECNP Seminar in Neuropsychopharmacology

28–30 May 2009, Poland

Meetings national societies

Italian Society of Neuropsychopharmacology

XVI National Congress
24–26 June 2008, Milan, Italy

Information: www.newtours.it/sinpf2008
British Association for Psychopharmacology (BAP)
2008 Summer Meeting
28–30 July 2008, Hargrove, United Kingdom

Information: www.bap.org.uk/summer_meeting_2008/index2.html

Swiss Society for Biological Psychiatry (SSBP)
Annual Meeting as joint meeting with the Swiss Society for Psychiatry and Psychotherapy and the Swiss Society for Neuropsychopharmacology
30 October–1 November 2008, Basel, Switzerland
Information: www.ssbp.ch

Austrian Society of Neuropsychopharmacology and Biological Psychiatry
10th Annual Meeting
28–30 November 2008, Vienna, Austria
Information: www.medizin-akademie.at

Meetings related organisations

6th FENS Forum of European Neuroscience
12–16 July 2008, Geneva, Switzerland
Information: forum.fens.org/2008

IX World Conference on Clinical Pharmacology and Therapeutics - CPT2008
27–71 August 2008, Quebec, Canada
Information: www.cpt2008.org

The Brain Lipids Conference 2008
8–11 September 2008, Oslo, Norway
Information: www.hb2008.org

2nd World Congress on Controversies in Neurology (COCNy)
23–26 October 2008, Athens, Greece
Information: www.comcmed.com/cocny

18th Neuropharmacology Conference in association with IUPHAR
12–14 November 2008, Washington DC, USA
Information: www.neuropharmacology-conference.chievier.com

2008 ACNP Annual Meeting
17–19 December 2008, Scottsdale, USA
Information: www.acnp.org

1st World Congress on Controversies in Psychiatry (COPsy)
18–21 June 2009, Berlin, Germany,
Information: www.comcmed.com/copsy

Eighth International Conference on Bipolar Disorder
25–27 June 2009, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA
Information: healymk@upmc.edu

ECNP Matters

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• Biomarkers and experimental medicine in developing new treatments in neuropsychopharmacology

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