

Report of the IUPHAR Section on Drug Metabolism to Executive Committee - April, 2005

Report from the IUPHAR Section of Drug Metabolism for 2004

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Prof Gabrielle Hawksworth (UK)

The officers were elected by the General Meeting of the Section held during the 14th International Congress of Pharmacology in San Francisco in 2002. They provide broad geographical representation and areas of expertise.

Section - sponsored meetings and workshops

The Section's activities have largely focussed on its primary remit: to promote drug metabolism activities in developing countries and at IUPHAR-supported international meetings. Indeed, given the demand for support of meetings in developing countries, the Section has recently formulated guidelines for assessing applications for the funding of regional activities. These guidelines can be found at the IUPHAR Web pages (<http://www.iuphar.org>)

The Section-sponsored Drug Metabolism Workshops in developing countries have concentrated on two geographical areas, the Balkans and Africa, due largely to perceived benefit, local demand and the enthusiasm of the local organisers and participants. Details of section-sponsored meetings are outlined below.

The 6th Xenobiotic Metabolism and Toxicity Workshop of Balkan Countries was held in Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina on June 16 -19, 2004, and focussed on research activities in the areas of xenobiotic metabolism in the Balkan countries, as well as regulatory considerations (including

bioequivalence studies). The workshop included two poster sessions and a hands-on demonstration of pharmacokinetic modelling, organized by Dr Amin Rostami-Hodjegan (University of Sheffield). The chair of the local organising committee was Professor R Skrbic. As with the previous workshop, there were over 100 participants at this workshop representing most Balkan countries. There were also plenary lectures presented by outside speakers and a session sponsored through the COST Action B15 on "Changing methodologies to study drug metabolism and pharmacokinetics in drug development". The next Balkan Congress will be held in Ohrid, Macedonia, in May-June 2006.

The Section has obtained evaluations and feedback from previous organizers of the Balkans Workshops, and a report will be prepared shortly.

A workshop on Pharmacokinetics and Research Ethics was held at the School of Medicine, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein in South Africa from 6th to 8th December 2004. It was hosted by the Department of Pharmacology under the auspices of the African Society for Drug Metabolism and Development, and chaired by Prof Andrew Walubo. Originally the workshop was planned to be held in Nigeria but, due to unexpected circumstances, the location had to be moved to Bloemfontein at a very short notice. The aim of the workshop was to guide young scientists and researchers on how to undertake pharmacokinetics studies with high ethical standards, hence the theme, "Pharmacokinetics and Research Ethics". There were 32 participants from South Africa, Rwanda, Mozambique, Kenya, and Tanzania. Participants' evaluation was largely very positive.

The Section is supporting another workshop ('Drug Metabolism in Clinical Trials Design'), to be hosted by the African Institute for Biomedical Science and Technology in 2005.

The Section is involved in the planning of a workshop on Pharmacogenetics. The workshop will be held in China during 2006 as a satellite of the 15th World Congress of Pharmacology. The workshop will be co-sponsored by the Southeast Asian Western Pacific Regional Federation of Pharmacologists and the Pacific Rim Association for Clinical Pharmacogenetics.

In summary, the workshops to promote drug metabolism activities in developing countries have been an outstanding success at a regional level, and there is continuing enthusiasm for future workshops. The workshops obviously pose a challenge for raising funds, and this is even more difficult in developing countries. Generally, at least 70-80% of the funding for these workshops has to be raised from outside IUPHAR, but the seed funding from the Section is extremely valuable for initiating the meetings. The Section wishes to acknowledge the role of Professor Grant Wilkinson, as Treasurer, in raising funds to support the workshops in developing countries.

IUPHAR Congresses

Members of the Section contributed to the organisation of the 8th World Conference on Clinical Pharmacology and Therapeutics held in Brisbane, Queensland, Australia from 1-6 August 2004. Drug metabolism and disposition was well represented on the meeting program, and feedback regarding the content and quality of sessions was highly favourable. An informal meeting of the Section Executive was held during the course of the Congress.

The Section has been active in submitting suggestions for symposia for inclusion in the program of the 15th World Congress of Pharmacology (Beijing, 2006).

Other initiatives

In 2001 the Section received a grant from ICSU for \$50,000 for a project, 'Enhancing Global Input into a Human Drug Metabolism Database'. This is a collaborative project to develop a database that extends the collection of drug metabolism data beyond the large pharmaceutical companies. The project is coordinated by Dr Paul Erhardt, University of Toledo, Ohio, USA. The focus initially is on anticancer drugs. A meeting was held with Dr Erhardt in 2004 to assess the progress of the project.

Section account - 2004

Thanks largely to the efforts of the Treasurer, Professor Grant Wilkinson, the opening balance of the Section's account (held by the American Society for Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics) was \$36,148.15. Interest earned during 2004 was \$347.58. Expenditure totalled \$3,800, which comprised the annual account maintenance fee (\$300) and workshop seeding funds (\$3,500). The end of year balance was \$32,695.73. Although the Section has been able to raise funds from external sources in the past, more recent attempts to obtain corporate sponsorship have been unsuccessful and this will ultimately impact on the Section's ability to support symposia and workshops.

JOHN MINERS
Section Chair

OLAVI PELKONEN
Section Secretary

March 2005