

## Activities of the GI Pharmacology Section

After our well-attended & very successful gastrointestinal (GI) pharmacology symposia, workshops & poster sessions at the 2010 World Congress of Pharmacology in Copenhagen, the Section was fully energized to expand our activities & recruit new, especially young, investigators in the field of GI pharmacology. One of our members from Ukraine spoke to most of the poster presenters, obtained their name, address & consent for joining the GI Pharmacology Section. Based on this strong interest, at the end of 2010 & 2011 we started to reorganize the national chapters, e.g., to create a standard representatives from each country that has substantial number of qualified investigators.

Specific events of 2011:

February 2011, Vienna, Austria: Short meeting with senior GI pharmacology researchers from Europe to create national chapters & plan future activities, meetings & symposia in Europe & worldwide.

April 2011, Washington, DC, USA, Experimental Biology/ASPET annual meeting: With the technical help of ASPET secretariat, we arranged a special room for an evening meeting for GI pharmacologists, but despite publicity & announcements posted at the Washington Convention Center, there was little turn-out for this "meet-and-greet-plan" meeting. As we learned during this annual meeting of FASEB societies, only a small number of GI pharmacology topics have been submitted to the EB/FASEB meetings during the last few years. This coincides with my own personal observations that more & more basic science reports are being sent to the annual AGA (American Gastroenterological Association) meetings, even by labs that previously submitted their best abstracts to EB/FASEB. Facing this shift toward organ-specific meetings (not only in GI but in neurosciences, cardiac & renal diseases), ASPET leaders told me that they don't see a need & possibility to create a new ASPET GI pharmacology section/division that Dr. Tim Gaginella & I established about 20 years ago (but it was not well managed after I got more involved with local university & medical center administrative / executive activities). Nevertheless, ASPET advised me to speak to Dr. David Port, chair of the Molecular Pharmacology Section of ASPET, to create a subsection on GI pharmacology. He was indeed receptive & we will continue these discussions at the 2012 EB/ASPET meeting (see below text).

May 2011, Chicago, IL, USA, AGA/DDW (Digestive Diseases Week) annual meeting: Informal business meeting of the GI pharmacologists who were present in much larger numbers, not only from USA, but from Canada, Europe, Japan, China & Australia as well. A consensus has been achieved for the creation of a national chapter in GI pharmacology & to organize more international meetings. At the AGA/DDW meeting there were about 300 titles/abstracts in basic & clinical GI pharmacology, not counting the numerous clinical trials of new drug testing. We also concluded there is a shift in interest toward investigating the pathogenesis, prevention & treatment of lower GI diseases (e.g., ulcerative colitis, Crohn's disease), from the upper GI disorders (e.g., 'peptic' ulcers).

October 2011, St. Petersburg, Russia, 6th International Symposia on Cell/Organ Injury & Cytoprotection / Organoprotection: the main focuses of these international meetings are the mechanisms, pharmacologic prevention & treatment of GI diseases and the meeting is traditionally attended by 60-100 senior & junior investigators. This symposium was one of the best one, organized by Prof. L. Filaretova & it was graciously supported by a small contribution from IUPHAR. A separate report with photographs has been previously submitted to appear in the June issue of "Pharmacology International". Proceedings are also being prepared/edited now for larger presentations to be published in a special book by Karger (edited by Prof. Filaretova & Takeuchi), while selected original presentations will be published in the *Journal of Physiology & Pharmacology*.

Plans of the GI Pharmacology Section for 2012:

Most of the activities planned for 2012 are the logical extension of our activities & planned in 2011 or before that. The main goals remain to formally create national chapters of the IUPHAR GI Pharmacology Section and, through these 'grass-root' efforts, increase our membership, especially among young investigators & educators.

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- April 2012, San Diego, CA, USA, Experimental Biology/ASPET annual meeting: As a follow-up to our discussions at last year EB/ASPET meeting, we will continue our discussion with the leadership of Molecular Pharmacology Section of ASPET to establish a GI Pharmacology sub-section. Slightly more GI pharmacology-related abstracts have been submitted to San Diego than last year in Washington; thus, we will attempt to organize a small informal meeting with the presenters of posters & oral communications.
- May 2012, San Diego, CA, USA, AGA/DDW (Digestive Diseases Week) annual meeting: Although this is officially an USA annual event, it is attended by thousands of foreign participants (total about 15,000 every year), especially with large participation of clinicians & basic science investigators from EU countries (Italy, Germany, UK, Austria, Hungary, Poland), Japan & China. Actually, the DDW events are the largest international gathering of GI pharmacologists. Dozens of GI pharmacology topics have been scheduled for oral presentations of the main AGA/DDW program & hundreds of similar posters will be on display each day during the 4-day meeting. Thus, in addition to our informal business meeting, we will have bilateral talks with the national chapter representatives from most of these countries.
- July 2012, Tokyo, Japan, IUPHAR International Symposium on GI Pharmacology: Prof. Takeuchi will organize meeting following the 2012 ICUR (International Conference on Ulcer Research) that will be preceded by the annual meeting of the Japanese Society for Experimental Ulcers. Although international participation will be assured by the last two meetings esp., the ICUR, but special well known investigators & young researchers in the field of GI pharmacology will be invited to the GI Pharmacology Symposium.
- September 2012, Budapest, Hungary, annual meeting of the Hungarian Pharmacological Society, with a half-day program dedicated to GI pharmacology, with substantial international participation.
- September 2012, Honolulu, Hawaii, USA, 7th International Symposia on Cell/Organ Injury & Cytoprotection/Organoprotection. Since most of the GI pharmacology contributions of the last two decades came from Japan & USA, every few years there are some GI meetings on 'half-way' between the two countries. Although the main focus of these symposia are the mechanisms, pathogenesis & pharmacologic prevention or treatment of GI lesions, most of the presentations at recent symposia were on the topic of GI pharmacology. This will be assured this year again especially since the organizer is an internationally known GI pharmacologist Prof. Takeuchi who will be facing in Japan mandatory retirement next year... Thus, this will be his last major international meeting...
- Most of the 2012 conferences will be supported by local & personal funds, but we would like to request from IUPHAR a \$6,000 support for two large international meetings (i.e., \$3K for each) in Tokyo & Honolulu. This modest investment from IUPHAR will promote & reinforce GI pharmacology for established & young investigators.

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