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SSPT Annual Report 2006

Scientific activities

On October 5-6, 2006, the fall meeting of the Swiss Society of Pharmacology and Toxicology was organized by a joint effort of the Swiss Society of Experimental Pharmacology (SSEP; Prof. Olivier Staub), the Swiss Society of Clinical Pharmacology and Toxicology (SSCPT; PD Dr. Thierry Buclin), and the Swiss Society of Toxicology (SST; Dr. Emanuela Felley-Bosco). This meeting was extremely successful with 4 minisymposia focusing on “Genetic and drug-induced heart problems”, “Redox homeostasis”, “Signal transduction as target for anticancer therapies”, and “Painful neurons”. The main lectures were complemented by posters. In addition, key note lectures were delivered by Folke Sjøkvist (Norway) and Alex Matter (Singapore). In addition, a round table discussion about job opportunities in Pharmacology was organized and three Poster Awards distributed.

A symposium on “Endocytosis and ubiquitylation” was organised by Prof. Oliver Staub at the USGEB meeting in Geneva (February 23-24, 2006).

The Swiss Society of Clinical Pharmacology and Toxicology (SSCPT) had its annual meeting together with the Swiss Society of Internal Medicine in May 2006 in Lausanne. Two symposia were organized by the SSCPT. The topics were “Placebo” and “Clinical Pharmacology of Substances of Abuse”. In addition, an interactive poster was organized session. Furthermore, the final examination in clinical pharmacology has been hold in its definitive form for the third time, i.e. with multiple choice questions and a practical part. Since the two test examinations in 2004 and 2005 have been successfully performed, the FMH approved the exam and it became sanctioning starting in 2006.

The next scientific meeting of our society, again a fall meeting, will be organized by Prof. Hans-Uwe Simon (SSEP) and Prof. Bernhard Lauterburg (SSCPT) on September 27-28, 2007, in Bern (www.pki.unibe.ch/). Dr. Martin Bopst (SST) is actively involved within the organizing committee. At this meeting, it is again planned that the Novartis Poster Prize is awarded for the three best presentations.

Continuing education initiative

According to the SSPT objectives set for 2005 to 2007 the efforts to increase the contribution of our society to the continuing education of physicians and pharmacists were successfully continued.

A one-day symposium on immunopharmacology with the title "Progress in Pharmacology: Immune system" was co-organised by Prof. Dr. P. Meier-Abt (Basel), Dr. M. Kondo-Oestreich (Geneva), Prof. Dr. L. Scapozza (Geneva), and Prof. Dr. Hans-Uwe Simon (Bern) in Bern on January 26, 2006. This meeting attracted more than 500 pharmacologists, toxicologists, pharmacists, medical doctors, and researchers. It was kindly sponsored by an unrestricted educational grant from Pfizer AG, Zurich. A similar symposium with the title "Pharmacology of the Endocrine System" is planned for January 25, 2007. For the organization of this meeting, the SSPT is gain responsible.

Three half-day symposia on new drugs for cardiovascular (March 30, 2006), sleep (June 16, 2006), and haematological disorders (October 26, 2006) were organized by Prof. Dr. U.T. Ruegg in School of Pharmacy Geneva-Lausanne.

The series "Cardiovascular Pharmacology Seminars", which is co-organized by Prof. Dr. P. Erne and Prof. Dr. K.G. Hofbauer, was continued with a conference on "Aktuelle Arzneimittel - Nutzen und Risiko" in Lucerne on October 19, 2006. The next seminar will take place in Lucerne on October 18, 2007.

In the summer of 2006, Prof. Dr. H.-U. Simon organised an International Summer School on Immunopharmacology in Heiligenschwendi on August 13-15, 2006.

The SSEP initiated a new task force with the goal to establish a M.Sc. program in the field of Pharmacology. Members of this SSEP task force are PD Dr. G. Weitz-Schmidt (Basel; Leader of the task force), Prof. L. Scapozza (Geneva), Prof. H. Abriel (Lausanne), Prof. A. Huwiler (Bern), Prof. H.U. Zeilhofer (Zurich) and Prof. K. Vogt (Basel). Meanwhile, a collaboration was established between the SSEP and the European Center of Pharmaceutical Medicine (ECPM) in order to establish a Master of Advanced Studies (MAS) program in "Drug Development Sciences". For this program, the SSEP is going to contribute two modules: (1) Principles of Pharmacology, and (2) Pathophysiology based Experimental Pharmacology and Therapeutics (including the development of biomarkers, animal model, and disease prediction). The M.Sc. program will be registered at the University of Basel. It is planned that the program starts in fall 2007.

Toxicological education and training programs included several different courses. Modules 1 and 2 comprised courses on the education of animal experimentation, in which Dr. B. Schmid focussed on "Alternative approaches in animal testing" (May 12 and November 10, 2006). Furthermore, the SST contributed to a course on General Toxicology at the Pharmazentrum in Basel (November 16, 2006) with a lecture on "Regulatory Toxicology" (Dr. B. Schmid).

The course "Pharmaceutical Economics and Policy", jointly organized by the University of Lausanne and the Institute of Health Economics and Management, was continued in 2006 (period January-May). The toxicological and pharmacological aspects during this course were covered by Prof. J. Diezi and Dr. B. Schmid.

In addition, several toxicological courses were organized at the ETH in Zurich by Dr. Hansjörg Frei, at the Center for Xenobiotic and Environmental Risk Research (XERR), and the "Certificat d'études complémentaires en toxicology (CECT)" was continued at the University of Lausanne (Dr. E. Felley-Bosco, réseau lémanique de toxicology).

Taken together, numerous continuing education events are now taking place in various parts of Switzerland under the auspices of our society, all of which appear to be well received and attended by a regular audience.

National Activities

In 2006, a new "Ordinance on the Protection of Animals" has been elaborated by the Department of Economy of the Federal Government. The text of this new ordinance has been made available to the public in 2006. It was very clear that if this new ordinance came into force it would have important impact on all research including animal experiments. Because research in the fields of Pharmacology and Toxicology is particularly dependent on animal models of human diseases, the SSPT has sent a clear statement to the Federal Department of Economy expressing its concerns about the consequences of the new ordinance.

The Swiss Register of Toxicologists

The Swiss Register of Toxicologists (Dr. T. Maurer) has successfully continued the activities in the registration and re-registration of Swiss Toxicologists. The established contacts with the on-going education programs in toxicology abroad are maintained.

International contacts

Prof. Dr. U.T. Rüegg (Geneva) was elected into the board of IUPHAR as the treasurer.

Dr. B. Schmid was co-chairing the "Individual Members" meeting at the EUROTOX meeting in Dubrovnik (September 21, 2006), and also represented the SST at the General Assembly of the EUROTOX congress.

Prof. Dr. H.-U. Simon has close contacts to the board members of the German Society of Experimental and Clinical Pharmacology and Toxicology (DGPT) and is invited to their meetings.

Organisational matters

The Website of our society was regularly updated to provide useful information about our activities and local and international scientific events. In addition, our members were updated by the secretary of our society, Prof. Dr. Olivier Staub, via E-mail.

Two SSPT Board Meetings were held in 2006 in Bern (March 24 and November 24).

The SST held its first General Assembly Meeting in Lausanne, during the fall meeting of the SSPT (October 6, 2006). At this meeting, Professor Friedlieb Pfannkuch was unanimously elected as new president of the Society. He has more than twenty years experience in preclinical safety assessment in the pharmaceutical industry, and is strongly engaged in professional internal and interdisciplinary as well as academic education. He is succeeding Dr. Beat Schmid, who has successfully presided the Toxicology Section/Society since 1998.

The SSEP held its first General Assembly Meeting in Lausanne, during the fall meeting of the SSPT (October 6, 2006).

During the first SSPT meeting in 2007 (March 30, 2007), the SSPT presidency will be handed over to the president of the SSCPT, according to the SSPT by-laws.

I would like to thank all my colleagues on the board for their help and support during the last reporting period.

Prof. Hans-Uwe Simon
President SSPT

Bern, January 25, 2007