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CONFERENCE REPORT

12th World Congress of the International Photodynamic Association (IPA), 11–15th June 2009, Seattle, USA

Around 300 participants from more than 20 different countries and regions travelled to Seattle, USA in June to attend the 12th International Photodynamic Association (IPA) World Congress. This was co-organised locally by SPIE. This Congress followed in the great tradition of these biennial conferences which routinely attract leading clinical and scientific researchers in the fields of photodynamic therapy (PDT) and photodiagnosis (PD) alike.

The meeting was officially opened by the Congress President, *Professor David Kessel (USA)* who also received a presentation in thanks for his efforts in organising this Congress from IPA Secretary General, *Professor Patrick Barron (Japan)*. Two plenaries then commenced the scientific portion of the day. The first was delivered by *Professor Ravi Pandey (USA)* on behalf of *Professor Tom Daugherty (USA)* and considered the role of the academic in the development of new photosensitising drug formulations. This was followed by *Professor Julia Levy (Canada)* who drew on her own career to consider how PDT could be commercialised and thus brought to market as an effective therapy.

The second day started with another two very informative plenary sessions. *Professor Tayyaba Hasan (USA)* spoke about how molecular targeting could be used to enhance PDT treatment outcomes and then *Professor Steve Bown (UK)* talked about how PDT could be taken into mainstream clinical practice and the current barriers that are currently inhibiting this translation occurring on a larger scale.

The IPA Board Meeting was held at lunchtime. At this meeting of the IPA Directors, *Professor Patrick Barron (Japan)* stepped down as IPA Secretary General and *Dr Alison Curnow (UK)* was appointed as his successor. *Professor Eric Edell (USA)* also stepped down as IPA Treasurer and *Professor Tayyaba Hasan (USA)* who is also a newly elected President of the American Society of Photobiology (ASP), will now perform this important role on behalf of the society. *Professor Herwig Kostron (Austria)*, the next Congress President reported the preparation of the 13th IPA World Congress (Fig. 1).

The final two invited plenaries took place on the third day. *Professor Stanley Brown (UK)* talked about the rapid clinical developments taking place in antimicrobial PDT and *Professor Herwig Kostron (Austria)* gave an excellent overview of the role of PDT and PD in neurosurgery. *Professor Kostron* also took the opportunity to announce that the next IPA World Congress will be held in Innsbruck, Austria during 10th–14th May 2011.

Over 150 individual oral presentations were made in the 36 parallel sessions held throughout this IPA World Congress and these were hosted by a number of Chairs, to whom the society give thanks to for ensuring that all sessions ran in a timely manner. More than 90 poster presentations were also made available for viewing, during the lunch breaks. These contributions covered a wide range of PDT related topics and were considered by a scientific panel for the best poster prizes. This panel, led by *Professor Kristian Berg (Norway)*, decided to award four prizes to presenters from Brazil, Canada, Belarus/Russian Federation and USA, respectively.

The 12th IPA World Congress was both scientifically rigorous as well as clinically relevant and participants consisted



Fig. 1 Professor Tayyaba Hasan (IPA Treasurer), Dr Alison Curnow (IPA Secretary General) and Professor Herwig Kostron (13th IPA World Congress President) at the IPA Gala Dinner held at the Seattle Space Needle.

of a good mix of both scientists and clinicians. The programme was packed full of high quality content, delivered by both eminent and up-and-coming researchers. Discussions were interesting and thought provoking demonstrating that this is an area of medical research where there is still much to learn and to apply to further improve patient care.

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