

The International Union of Physiological Sciences IUPS Editorial VII

We are now very close to the start of the 2009 IUPS Congress of Physiological Sciences to be held in Kyoto's magnificent International Conference Center, beautifully situated at the foot of Mount Hiei, only a 20-minute subway ride from Kyoto's city center. This internationally famous conference center provides state-of-the-art facilities and will be a visually most attractive frame for what promises to be a very exciting conference. The full details of the superb scientific program, generated by Yoshihisa Kurachi and the International as well as Local Scientific Program Committees, have been available for some time at the Congress website <http://www.iups2009.com> but are continually being updated. The many different types of events include invited lectures, regular IUPS symposia, whole-day symposia organized by the Physiological Society of Japan (PSJ) (which is actually completely international), as well as workshops and tutorials. We are happy to report that there has been very considerable advance interest in this Congress, which has led to submission of more than 3,000 abstracts. We are therefore looking forward to a well attended and very informative Congress that should give all attending an invaluable overview of the most important recent developments in physiology worldwide.

IUPS, like all major scientific organizations, is concerned that all available talent is used to maximal advantage. One important issue has been to make sure that there is a good representation at the Congress of the many excellent women physiologists from all over the world. Indeed, there is a regular IUPS symposium on "Women in Physiology" organized by Junko Kimura and Yuichi Suzuki (Japan). Kim Barrett (US), Chair of the American Physiological Society's Publications Committee—who is internationally renowned for her research on the mechanisms by which epidermal growth factor receptors control intestinal transport—is one of the invited speakers in this symposium. Although it is perhaps inevitable that the majority of the symposia have a majority of male speakers, there are—happily—exceptions. Irene Schulz (Germany), a world-leading physiologist

working on signal transduction mechanisms in pancreatic acinar cells, chairs and introduces a regular IUPS symposium on the "Molecular Basis of Pancreatitis" in which the majority of the invited speakers are women. Irene Schulz, who is Vice President of IUPS, is of course famous as the senior author of the sensational 1983 *Nature* paper in which the Ca^{2+} -releasing function of inositol trisphosphate was described for the first time. More recently, she has made decisive progress in understanding the mechanism by which hypertriglyceridemia induces pancreatitis (4), which she will undoubtedly share with the audience in Kyoto. Two other excellent women physiologists will give invited talks in this session. Anna Gukovskaya (US) speaks on the role of autophagy in pancreatitis, whereas Julia Gerasimenko (UK) will present novel results on the crucial role played by inositol trisphosphate receptors in the fatal intracellular activation of trypsin that initiates acute pancreatitis. Fortunately, there are so many women physiologists giving invited talks in the various symposia at the Congress that it is quite impossible to mention them all, but a few examples will give an impression of the wide range of topics in which they are engaged. In the whole-day PSJ symposium on the very topical subject of "Physiological Regulation Linked with Physical Activity and Health," Bente Pedersen (Denmark) will speak on the role of myokines in muscle-fat cross talk. Soraya Shirazi-Beechey (UK) chairs and is one of the speakers in the symposium on "Nutrient Sensing and Signalling in Response to a Meal." Elena Tomilovskaya (Russia) speaks on the effects of microgravity on gaze fixation reaction in the symposium on "Adaptation and Environmental Physiology," whereas Christine Petit (France) speaks on the molecular physiology of hair cells in the symposium on "The Hair Cell as a Sensory Receptor and Amplifier for Audition and Balance." In previous editorials (1, 2) we have listed all the names of the principal Invited Lecturers of which four are women: Frances Ashcroft (UK), Clara Franzini-Armstrong (US), Lily Jan (US), and Nadia Rosenthal (Italy). Following the

Congress, Penny Hansen (Canada) and Ann Sefton (Australia), who are co-chairs of the IUPS Education Committee, have organized the 7th IUPS Teaching Workshop, which takes place in Kobe, Japan.

The IUPS General Assembly, preceding the Congress itself, presents an opportunity for delegates from the national physiological societies and other adhering bodies of IUPS to exercise influence on the many important decisions that have to be made with regard to future leadership and functions of the Union. In our last editorial (3), we presented the slate with the names of the new and continuing Council and Executive Committee members that resulted from the deliberations of the Nominations Committee. This list was sent out to all adhering bodies, who had the opportunity to make alternate suggestions with respect to any proposed candidate. However, no alternate proposals have been made, so the election of the new Council and Executive Committee is unlikely to provide much excitement! The real excitement at the General Assembly concerns the invitations that we have received to host the 2017 IUPS Congress. IUPS has to plan well ahead, and therefore the selection of the site for the 2013 Congress was decided already in 2005 in San Diego. The invitation issued by The Physiological Society (UK) was selected, and it is therefore proposed that the 2013 Congress will take place in Birmingham, England. This decision has to be formally confirmed by the General Assembly in Kyoto following a presentation that should contain a fair amount of detail concerning the specific plans. With regard to the more open question as to the site for the 2017 Congress, we have received three very good and exciting bids from Brazil, Canada, and China. The delegations from each of these countries will present their cases to the Assembly, which will then proceed to a vote. There will also be an opportunity to discuss the important Long-Range Plan for the Union, which can be inspected by visiting the IUPS website (<http://www.iups.org>).

Although the IUPS Congress in Kyoto this summer is by far the most important event in the IUPS calendar this year, IUPS is always keen to encourage regional activities. Our website regularly features such events. In the autumn of 2009, The Chilean Physiological Society hosts the 23rd Congress of the Latino-American Physiological Sciences Association (ALACF) to be held in Pucon in

November in conjunction with the 2009 Calcium-Binding Protein Conference. In Europe, there are two meetings this autumn, namely the 2nd Congress of Physiological Sciences of Serbia with International Participation to be held in Kragujevac in September and the FEPS 2009 Congress, which is a Joint Meeting of the Slovenian Physiological Society, the Austrian Physiological Society, and FEPS to be held in

Ljubljana, Slovenia in November. More details about these events will appear on the IUPS website as the programs for these meetings emerge.

Just now, the most important point is of course to book tickets and hotels for Kyoto this summer! We look forward to seeing as many of you as possible for this great feast of physiological science. ■

References

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4. Wang Y, Sternfeld L, Yang F, Rodriguez JA, Ross C, Hayden MR, Carriere F, Liu G, Hofer W, Schulz I. Enhanced susceptibility to pancreatitis in severe hypertriglyceridemic lipoprotein lipase deficient mice and agonist-like function of pancreatic lipase in pancreatic cells. *Gut* 58: 422–430, 2009.