FEPS

Federation of European Physiological Societies

FEPS NEWSLETTER

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http://www.feps.org

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Letter of the Secretary General of FEPS

The Federation of European Physiological Societies (FEPS) proudly launches the second FEPS Newsletter. FEPS is an "umbrella" organization of 27 national Physiological Societies in the European region. The total number of individual members of all national societies is exceeding 8.000. To promote communication between all individual Physiologists in Europe it was decided to establish a FEPS Newsletter to be distributed among all the individual members via their national Societies.

In the second FEPS Newsletter reports are published of two FEPS-supported activities at the joint Physiological Society-FEPS meeting in Bristol 2005: the Physiology Teaching workshop and the Young Physiology Symposium. Information about two important joint FEPS meetings in the not too far distant future are included as well: the Munich meeting in 2006 and the Bratislava Meeting in 2007. Finally, the table of contents of the October Volume of the official FEPS journal Acta Physiologica is presented. All members of the European physiological societies have free access to papers published in the Acta. The usernames and passwords will be provided by the Secretaries General of the national European Physiological Societies to their individual members. If you have not received the username and password, please, address the Secretary General of your society.

Ger J. van der Vusse
Secretary General of FEPS

Joint Meeting
Of
The German Physiological Society
And
The Federation of European Physiological Societies

Munich, March 26-29, 2006

Venue:
Geschwister-Sholl-Platz 1, 80539 Muenchen

Preliminary featured topics:

- Development physiology
- Neurophysiology
- Neuronal networks
- Ion channels
- Cardiovascular physiology
- Angiogenesis
- Smooth muscle physiology
- Physiology of growth responses
- Intracellular signal transduction
- Renal physiology
- Respiratory physiology
- The physiology of pain

Dear Colleagues:

We invite you to come to Munich in 2006!

The 85th Annual meeting of the German Physiological Society will be held from March 26th to 29th, 2006, in conjunction with the Federation of European Physiological Societies (FEPS). The conference will take place at the Ludwig-Maximilians University, in the heart of the Bavarian capital.

Throughout a program of oral and poster sessions, plenary lectures and symposia, leading investigators will present the latest insights from all fields of physiology, with a special emphasis on current "hot topics". There will also be a special platform organized by young European scientists, with their own selected topics and sessions.

In addition to the scientific exchange, we hope that this meeting will provide a platform for job recruitment and the initiation of new collaborations among physiologists throughout Europe.

Last, but certainly not least, we invite you to explore Munich, a city rich in arts, culture and hystory and look forward to hosting you at an outstanding scientific meeting in a world class social and cultural setting.

For the local organizers
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For registration, abstract submission and program, see

http://physinst.web.med.uni-muenchen.de/dpg06/

For information on hotels and touristic attractions in the Munich area, please, visit:

Http://www.muenchen-tourist.de

or email to:

Tourismus@muenchen.de

Joint Meeting
of
The Slovak Physiological Society
and
The Physiological Society
and
The Federation of European Physiological Societies

BRATISLAVA, September 11-14, 2007

Dear colleagues

We are delighted to invite you to this Joint Meeting in the capital of Slovakia.
With your help, suggestions and participation the most rapidly developing areas and hot topics will be adequately represented in plenary lectures, symposia, and open oral & poster presentations. A special platform will be organized for young European scientists. We will soon be asking for Symposium proposals, so that you can identify your recent fields of interest and help us to organize what will be an outstanding meeting.
We hope you will enjoy the science presented at the Joint Meeting and the friendly atmosphere in Bratislava, as well as its history, cultural life and beauty.

On behalf of the local organizers, Vladimir Strbák

Report of the workshop "Physiology Teaching" at the joint meeting of FEPS and the Physiological Society in Bristol, July 20, 2005

The workshop on "Teaching Physiology" was organized and chaired by David Byrne, Carlo Di Benedetta and Judy Harris, and financially supported by the Federation of Physiological Societies (FEPS) and the Physiological Society.
The main goal was to explore and to be informed about differences and similarities in teaching Physiology in different European countries. The main focus was on Medical Physiology Teaching instead of covering physiology teaching in schools like Biology, Pharmacy, and Biotechnology etc.
The workshop was divided in three parts.
The first dealt with Medical Physiology Teaching across Europe (morning session); the second was devoted to new "Experiences in teaching physiology" and the third related to "Innovations in assessment" (afternoon sessions). "Demonstrations and a Poster Viewing Session" were also included.
The workshop was introduced by Prof. Carlo Di Benedetta, emphasising that the initiative was in line with the Bologna Declaration and closely related to one of the main activities of FEPS. FEPS has also nominated an Educational Training Programme (ETP) Committee, chaired by Carlo Di Benedetta, with the participation of representatives of different European countries. ETP has produced a questionnaire about teaching Physiology in Medical Faculties which will be sent to all European Physiological Societies in the near future.
The participants in the morning session were Liisa Peltonen (Finland), Marc Zelter (France), Stefan Silbernagl (Germany), Győrgyi Benedek (Hungary), Francesco Vitiello (Italy), Mihai Gliga (Romania) and Eugene Lloyd (United Kingdom).
The curriculum of the Medical Schools in these countries usually lasts for 6 years, except for the UK where the duration is 5 years. In general there is a "numerus clausus" with the exception of France, where admission is made on the basis of "first come first served". The content of the physiology course in the above-mentioned countries appeared to be comparable.
A point of concern is the limited integration of physiology teaching with other disciplines, mainly the clinical ones; some improvements were reported by representatives from Germany, Finland and Italy. In Germany, in particular, some Physiology lectures are given in collaboration with clinicians and in the presence of a patient. Also the meagre financial support by the Medical Faculties is a serious constraint to achieving better results in physiology teaching and hiring more teaching staff; this also holds for countries like Hungary, where the departments of physiology still maintain a high and prestigious reputation. A common complaint is the small number of professors and the small percentage of medical doctors among the teaching staff. Once again, the exception was Hungary which enjoys a high percentage of Physiology professors with a medical background.
It was generally agreed that the advent of computer-controlled teaching systems, the Internet and more intense international relationships will substantially support physiology teaching in the future. Concerning the assessment different "traditional" methods are utilized like multiple-choice questions, oral and practical examinations.
In the afternoon session about "New Experiences in Teaching Physiology" lectures were given by David Byrne (United Kingdom), Luc Snoeckx (The Netherlands) and Judy R. Harris (United Kingdom). David Byrne gave an overview of an e-learning initiative at King's College London School of Medicine. A suite of interactive on-line patient-based scenario's are being used by 450 3rd year medical students in a blended learning environment backed up with face-to-face clinical tutor contact. These cases cover topics related to cardiovascular, respiratory, abdominal, and psychiatric and neurological problems and also refer to relevant pre-clinical basic science revision material. This approach is providing a truly vertically integrated curriculum with a high level of basic science embedded in clinical cases.

Luc Snoeckx from the Faculty of Medicine in Maastricht discussed his long-lasting experience with "Problem Based Learning" (PBL), introduced as a teaching method in Maastricht in 1974. The medical curriculum was revised in 2001, aiming to better integrate basic science with patient-oriented teaching. It is of note that no conclusive evidence could be provided for a better learning result by students in PBL compared to a more traditional, discipline- oriented curriculum.

Judy Harris described plans for the introduction of Human Patient Simulators into Physiology teaching at the Bristol University. The simulators are realistic, life-sized manikins that are controlled by software that provides mathematical modelling for cardiovascular, respiratory and neurological processes. The manikins "breath, blink, speak and can produce urine". Physiological responses to drug administration can also be simulated. The simulators will be integrated with existing physiology teaching for medical, dental, veterinary, and BSc students to enable students to extend the data that they are currently obtaining from each other in practical classes.

Besides the traditional assessment covered in the morning session, two other methods were presented by Dr. Mihai Gliga (Romania) and Dr Tony Gardner-Medwin (United Kingdom) describing the use of computer based assessment techniques in the afternoon session. Dr Gliga described a PC-based system currently in use in Romania. The system provides the technical infrastructure to enable students to carry out continuous self evaluation over a range of topics and to follow personal improvements both in real time and in subsequent test performances. Moreover professors and academic staff are able to add and update the latest information concerning physiology teaching to the testing system. The use of special dedicated software is essential for achieving these results. It was suggested that other schools might adopt the proposed software.

Confidence-based marking (CBM) of web-based questions was introduced by Tony Gardner-Medwin. In CBM, students indicate their level of confidence in the answers they give and their scores are weighted accordingly – the maximum score being given for a correct answer with a high confidence level. This method helps to encourage reflection, justification and rigour. The experience at UCL and Imperial College London suggests that CBM is easy for students to understand and is judged to be fair and a stimulus to learning. Gardner-Medwin expressed the hope that the method can also be implemented in other Medical Schools and disciplines since the software can be used via the UCL website and adapted to other material.

Particularly stimulating were the demonstrations aggregated to the workshop concerned with "the use of high fidelity simulators to facilitate teaching of the diagnosis and treatment of circulatory shock", and "the integration of a high fidelity Human Patient Simulator with existing physiology practical classes".

The posters on display were very interesting and related to "reusable learning objects in undergraduate medical education", "frequently asked questions: an on-line solution to an off-line problem" and "peer-assessment of formative essays in the final year of a BSc".

In conclusion, many inputs were collected from the workshop which can be transferred as suggestions to the national physiological societies, which would therefore become aware of alternative organization of the courses, new experiences in teaching Physiology and methodologies adopted for assessing medical students.

Since only representatives from a limited number of countries could participate in the workshop it is advisable to collect information from physiological societies not represented in order to have a body of information useful for all the national physiological societies.

The workshop was very well attended and a lively discussion followed each presentation.

Prof. Carlo di Benedetta, Bari, September 2005

Report of the Young Physiologist Symposium, Bristol 2005

The first joint international meeting of The Physiological Society and FEPS in Bristol was preceded by the Young Physiologists' Symposium. This meeting was completely organized by young physiologists from Bristol (Annabel Simms, Andrew Benest and Robert Gillies) and Maastricht (Erik Harks) and can be considered as a great success. The theme of the meeting was "functional genomics in *in vivo* physiology" and about 40 participants, mostly Ph.D. students and junior post-docs, administered the lectures and poster sessions. The topics varied from for example the identification of renal-selective peptides for targeted gene delivery and techniques to augment gene transfer to airways, to *in vivo* re-colonization of fetal mouse gut by genetically marked progenitors. All presentations were of a high scientific level and were followed by enthusiastic discussions. The scientific part of the meeting was concluded by a wine reception and evening meal at an Italian restaurant.
Hopefully, the success of this Young Physiologists' symposium will be continued in Munich next year.

Erik Harks
Maastricht, 4 October 2005

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