

The Third International Symposium on Alcoholic Liver and Pancreatic Diseases (ALPD) and Cirrhosis

July 17-18, 2008
Bilbao, Spain

Summary

The Third International Symposium on Alcoholic Liver and Pancreatic Diseases (ALPD) and Cirrhosis, held in Bilbao, Spain in July, brought together more than 100 participants from 11 nations including the US, France, Germany, Australia, the UK, China, Egypt and Japan. The scientific committee in charge of organizing the symposium included Prof. Dr. José M Mato, Director General of CIC bioGUNE; Prof. Dr. José C. Fernández-Checa of the Hospital Clínic of Barcelona, CIBERehd, IDIBAPS and Barcelona Biomedical Research Institute; Prof. Dr. Shelly C. Lu of the ALPD Research Center, Los Angeles; and Prof. Dr. Stephen Pandol, Associate Director of the ALPD Research Center of Los Angeles and Professor of the UCLA.

This meeting was unique because it focused on two organs affected by alcohol. In the liver and pancreas, like in other organs, the overlap between alcohol-related metabolic stress, impaired tissue regeneration and altered immune responses leads to chronic inflammation, fibrosis and end-stage disease. But, in contrast to other organs, the liver and pancreas have a close developmental and anatomical relationship and therefore share many mechanisms driving alcohol-induced diseases. The symposium program included Special Lectures, Plenary Sessions and two Poster Sessions, which provided an outstanding forum for exchanging the newest and cutting-edge research findings on common and distinct molecular mechanisms that underlie alcoholic liver and pancreatic diseases and cirrhosis, the major alcohol-associated diseases world-wide. Thirty six outstanding speakers and moderators were invited from around the world to participate in enlightening discussions on the following four thematic topics: Mechanisms on ALPD; Cell Death and Cancer; Clinical Research; Biomarkers in ALPD and Cirrhosis. Special lectures were delivered by authorities in this field at the international level: Dr. Juan Rodés, General Director of Hospital Clinic Barcelona reviewed the current knowledge on the pathophysiology and treatment of hepatorenal syndrome, a life-threatening rare entity that is commonly associated with advanced liver disease; Dr. George Kunos, Scientific Director of the NIAAA talked about his pioneering on endocannabinoids as mediators of some of the pathological processes in chronic liver disease; Dr. Scott Friedman, Chief of Division of Liver Diseases, Mount Sinai School of Medicine discussed divergent regulatory pathways in the activation of hepatic stellate cells, including alternative splicing of a growth inhibitory transcription factor (Kruppel-like factor-6), epigenetic regulation of a factor regulating stellate cell survival (nuclear factor kappaB), and regulation of a transcription factor whose expression maintains stellate cell quiescence (LIM homeobox gene). Among NIAAA participants were Dr. Kenneth Warren, Deputy Director of the NIAAA who made special remarks on NIAAA funding opportunities for alcohol-related research, and Dr. Sam Zakhari, Director of Division of Metabolism and Health Effects, NIAAA who delivered closing remarks for the symposium. Overall, the symposium helped further develop constructive international collaborations that will result in true advantages for people with alcohol-related rare digestive diseases. It also gave a unique opportunity for young and budding investigators to interact at an international level. The excitement of this symposium will be passed onto the fourth symposium now scheduled to take place in Egypt in October 2009.

The following link provides the detailed information on the date, place, agenda, speakers, and sponsorships: http://www.cicbiogune.com/congreso/congreso2_ALPD/programme.php.