

## ***Summary of 2009 GRC on Cilia, Mucus and Mucociliary Interactions***

The 2009 Gordon Research Conference on "Cilia, Mucus and Mucociliary Interactions" was held in Il Ciocco, Italy, February 22-27, 2009. This was a multi-disciplinary meeting involving basic and clinical research scientists from academia, government agencies, and the pharmaceutical industry. The 2009 conference was the latest in a series that historically has an outstanding record for bringing together world authorities on basic cell biology of cilia and mucus under normal and pathologic conditions. The relatively small size of the meeting -- about 130 participants -- and the traditional GRC emphasis on discussion created an ideal atmosphere for interactions and collaborations among investigators and between investigators and trainees. The environment was further enhanced in that participants came from key laboratories throughout the world.

The meeting opened Sunday night with two 40-minute keynote talks from Drs. Peter Satir and Richard Boucher, who gave complementary overviews of the field, laid out the challenges for the future, and provided a framework for discussions throughout the remainder of the conference. This was followed by a total of 8 plenary sessions from Monday morning through Thursday evening. These sessions consisted primarily of 20-minute talks by invited speakers followed by 10 minutes of discussion, although shorter talks, selected from the submitted abstracts, were also presented. As is the tradition for GRCs, these talks focused on new data not yet published. Approximately one-third of the speakers and discussion leaders were women; about 20% of the speakers were young investigators (postdocs or recent Assistant Professors). Discussion leaders gave brief introductions to each session to provide a perspective on the topics to be covered; they also did an outstanding job keeping the sessions on schedule and stimulating discussion. A notable feature of this meeting was the emphasis on diseases, including rare diseases such as Sjogren's syndrome, primary ciliary dyskinesia, Bardet-Biedl syndrome, and other ciliopathies.

In addition to the plenary platform presentations, approximately 72 posters were on display from Monday through Thursday afternoon. Formal poster sessions were held from 4:00-6:00 PM every afternoon. The poster sessions were well attended and the presentations stimulated extensive discussions. Except for the poster sessions, afternoons were left open in order to allow one-on-one interactions and discussions within small groups. Many of these discussions promised to result in future collaborations as well as sharing of data and reagents. For example, two investigators (Drs. Amselem and Omran) discovered that they were working on the same gene; they combined their data for one of their talks and probably will be submitting back-to-back papers on their discoveries.

The GRC asks participants to fill out Conference Evaluation Forms at the conclusion of all GRC meetings. For this conference, 95% of attendees returned their evaluation forms, which in itself indicates very strong interest and support for the meeting. Using a scale of 1 (best) to 5, the form asks conferees to rate the meeting in the areas of science/ideas, discussion at sessions and posters, management/organization, atmosphere, and overall conference suitability. Scores for each of these areas ranged from 1.1 to 1.5. The overall score for this conference was 1.3, which is outstanding. The written comments on the forms were overwhelmingly positive and congratulatory.