Present and future Key Opinion Leaders meet in Barcelona and Buenos Aires

A n intimate gathering of 46 transplantation leaders met in Barcelona for the inaugural New Key Opinion Leader meeting in September to discuss present and future transplantation challenges.

“We have kept the format small and informal in order to encourage in-depth discussion of the issues presented,” explained Kathryn Wood, outgoing-TTS President. “We invited established TTS member investigators from each of the global regions to attend the meeting with one of their research fellows or junior faculty whom they think have the potential to be one of the leaders in the field of transplantation in the future. It was a great experience to meet such successful young investigators,” she continued.

Discussions focused on whether or not regulatory T-cells are critical for graft acceptance, factors influencing long-term renal allograft outcomes, non-heart beating donors, cardiovascular diseases in organ transplantation, translational studies exploring novel strategies, and factors influencing long-term liver transplantation outcomes.

Participants thought it was well organized, interesting, a valuable learning experience, and a true success. “It is a great format for cross-disciplinary interactions and for introducing young investigators,” said one participant following the meeting.

The meeting, held at Hostal de La Gavina, S’Agaro, Barcelona, Spain, was organized by TTS with the assistance of Drs Josep Lloveras and Josep Grinyo, from the Catalan Transplantation Society, on program development and meeting logistics.

A second New Key Opinion Leader meeting was held at the Sheraton Buenos Aires, Argentina at the end of October and was organized with the assistance of Drs Domingo Casadei and Felix Cantarovich. Topics covered included the impact of innate immunity and inflammation on graft outcome, the impact of transplant infectious disease on long-term outcomes, tumors and transplantation, medical and ethical aspects in transplantation, ABO incompatible donor recipient pairs, and using dendritic cells to stimulate and manipulate the immune response to a transplant.

TTS would like to thank Wyeth Pharmaceuticals for supporting the meetings in Barcelona and Buenos Aires through an unrestricted educational grant.

A third meeting will take place in January 2007 in Hong Kong.
Nicholas Tilney has a clear vision of where the Society should be headed in an age when transplantation ethics are challenged on a daily basis around the globe and is excited about making his vision reality.

“I want to thank Kathryn Wood and Jeremy Chapman for the tremendous initiatives they put in motion. I hope to be able to carry on what they have started in terms of positioning TTS on the international stage through the Society’s important relationship with the World Health Organization (WHO).”

“All of us in the field are worried about the irregularities in transplantation in China, India, the Middle East, Eastern Europe, and the Philippines, to name a few. I believe it is the Society’s responsibility to publicize the irregularities and unethical behaviors in transplantation, not only on our own but in collaboration with the WHO, which has the power to stimulate governments around the world into action,” said Tilney.

Other goals over the next two years include increasing membership among younger members of the global transplant community, enhancing activity of TTS’ Sections, and expanding the educational thrust of the Society through communication and technology.

Latin America, Singapore, and other areas of Asia have a growing amount of transplant activity and have been traditionally isolated from the majority of TTS activities. As a result, the Society hopes to be able to reach practitioners in these regions through the Key Opinion Leader meetings. Including council members from diverse regions around the world is another TTS initiative.

Tilney’s history with TTS dates back to 1973 when he first became a member. He was elected to the Council in 1984 and acted in a variety of capacities over his 6-year tenure, including chairing the Ethics Committee that published the first guidelines for practice for the Society.

In 1990 he was elected Vice-President, and then named President-elect in 2004.

“It’s wonderful and very flattering to have been elected to this position. I am a bit overwhelmed with the breadth of activities within the Society, but I am excited too. It is a demanding position that I am ready to take on as a challenge,” noted Tilney.

With the increasing complexity of the Society and because of its many new initiatives, TTS has opened a new International Headquarters in Montreal. “The Society is about much more than giving conferences now. It’s becoming an international force for the whole field of transplantation. It is an operation that requires dedication by many people,” explained Tilney.

Originally from New Jersey, Tilney, the Francis D. Moore Professor of Surgery at Harvard Medical School and a Senior Surgeon at the Brigham and Women’s Hospital in Boston, was educated at Cornell University Medical College in New York. He received his surgical training at Peter Bent Brigham Hospital and was trained in transplantation biology at Oxford University and the University of Glasgow. Prior to his retirement, Tilney headed the kidney transplant unit for many years at Brigham and Women’s Hospital and was trained in transplantation biology at Harvard Medical School. He edited the text Transplantation Biology, and is the author of a history of the field, Transplant: from Myth to Reality.

Greetings from the President
On behalf of The Transplantation Society, we hope you have a happy, safe, and festive Holiday Season.
Inaugural World Transplant Congress a success

Over six thousand delegates from The Transplantation Society (TTS), the American Society of Transplant Surgeons (ASTS), and the American Transplant Society (ATS) gathered in Boston, Massachusetts in July to hear global leaders present cutting-edge research affecting the field of transplantation.

For TTS it was a 40th Anniversary celebration and a welcoming ceremony for the new Officers and Councillors. TTS installed a new President, Nicholas Tilney, and a new slate of Councillors representing each global region (See page 8 for a full list).

TTS’ much anticipated prizes were distributed during the Presidential address and at the President’s cocktail party. These were the distinguished Medawar Prize, the TTS Recognition Awards, the TTS Research Fellowships, and the Young Investigator Awards (See pages 4 and 5 for more details).

The state-of-the-art program discussed important new discoveries and initiatives in all areas of transplantation: infectious disease; ethics and economics; stem cell research; virology; islet transplants; global organ allocation; pediatrics; bioartificial organs and devices; gene therapy; living kidney donation; cardiovascular disease after renal transplants; skin cancer in solid organ transplants; immunosuppression minimization and withdrawal; T-cells and B-cells; and reproductive issues.

Senator Hillary Clinton, who has actively lobbied for increased funding for stem-cell research, addressed the World Transplant Congress attendees. The other presenter was Alonzo Mourning, NBA champion and a kidney transplant recipient.

WHAT’S HOT (BASIC SCIENCE)
Laurence Turka’s What’s Hot (Basic Science) lecture, a World Transplant Congress (WTC) highlight, reviewed recent research in transplantation and immunology.

Evidence from several laboratories described a subset of IL-17 producing T-cells (Th17) that are distinct from Th1 and Th2 cells. They are found at sites of tissue injury in autoimmune diseases. Antibodies to IL-17 block the incidence and severity of experimental allergic encephalitis in mice. While TGF-β promotes the induction of regulatory T cells (Treg), pathogenic Th17 cells are generated from naïve T-cells by TGF-β plus IL-6. Thus, IL-6 is a molecular switch in the generation of pathogenic or regulatory T-cells.

Treg are important in maintaining immune tolerance and Turka focused on the roles of IL-2 and IFN-γ. Patients with chemotherapy-induced lymphopenia were treated with IL-2 which markedly increased their Treg cells. The IL-2 induced Treg cells were similar to those in normal hosts. Neutralizing IFN-γ during transfer of alloantigen reactive Treg cells resulted in skin graft loss in mice. The function and generation of Treg cells was impaired in IFN-γ deficient mice, indicating a role for IFN-γ in the activation of Treg cells during tolerance development.

Toll-like receptors (TLRs) were discussed by Turka. Hyaluronan is an extracellular component which is released after tissue injury and stimulates TLR2 and TLR4. Hyaluronan- TLR interactions provide signals initially inducing inflammatory reactions and later protecting epithelial cells and promoting recovery. Immune complexes with mammalian nucleic acids activate TLRs and may be involved in systemic lupus erythematosus.

Turka also discussed anatomy of the immune response, dendritic cells and systems modelling, a technique for handling large and complex sets of data.

For more information about WTC’s program, please visit www.wtc2006.org

Expect e-posters at the XXII TTS Congress in Sydney

You can expect a great program at Sydney 2008, with cohesive, concurrent, and improved poster sessions.

Building on the success of the World Transplant Congress, the Sydney Congress committee is working on the idea of electronic posters to avoid transporting large cardboard posters. Poster sessions need to be improved in order to allow for effective interaction among investigators carrying out studies in similar fields.

If you have any ideas about improving this process or thoughts on how to introduce e-posters please contact Jeremy.Chapman@transplantation-soc.org.

Ensure the publication of your clinical trials

The American Journal of Transplantation recently published a special article calling for a uniform clinical trial registration policy for Journals of Kidney Disease, Dialysis and Transplantation.

To have results of a clinical trial published in any of the major journals in the field of transplantation, the study will need to be available to the general public through a trial registry. The registry must meet a specific list of requirements, which include elements such as the trial’s investigators, research questions, methodology, interventions, outcomes measured,
AWARDS: Recognizing the best and brightest

The Medawar Prize

The Medawar Prize was named after Society co-founder Sir Peter Medawar. It is recognized as the highest dedicated award for outstanding contributions in the field of transplantation. The Medawar Prize has been awarded to two or more recipients at each of TTS’ biennial Congresses since 1990. The award is made possible by a generous endowment from Novartis Pharma AG.

Carl Groth’s vast professional experience is punctuated with success. He became Chief of Transplantation at Huddinge Hospital, Stockholm, Sweden, in 1976 and Professor of Transplantation Surgery at the Karolinska Institute in 1984. He was involved in the first human liver transplantation. He did early work in human pancreas transplantation, especially the surgical techniques and the effects on the secondary complications of diabetes. He pioneered work to find a cure for metabolic diseases by organ or cellular transplantation. A unique study in the early 1990s transplanted fetal pig islets into diabetic patients and resulted in evidence of survival of the pig tissue. He initiated, and led, the multicenter study which showed that Sirolimus can be used as a baseline immunosuppressive agent.

Groth was the President of The Transplantation Society (2000-2002). He is an Honorary Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons of England, the American Surgical Association and the American Society of Transplant Surgeons. He was a member of the Nobel Assembly at Karolinska Institute 1986-1999 and Chairman in 1998. He was awarded the King’s Medal for “Eminent accomplishments in transplantation.” He is currently on the newly appointed WHO Expert Advisory Panel on Human Cell, Tissue and Organ Transplantation.

Pekka Häyry was born in 1939 in rural Finland where his mother had been evacuated during the Russian siege of Helsinki; his father remained at the front with the Finnish Army. He returned to Helsinki after the war and received his M.D. and Ph.D. degrees. His research produced a cluster of articles that became instant classics of transplantation immunology. He became an accomplished surgeon climbing the ranks to Associate Chief of Surgery at the Helsinki University Hospital. He was named Professor Extraordinary of Transplantation Surgery and Immunology at the University of Helsinki. Since 1981, he has been Physician in Chief and Director of Transplantation Immunology of the University Hospital. His scientific and medical/surgical accomplishments have been rewarded by many knighthoods and honors from his country, other nations and his Church. He has also been Vice-President and President of TTS.

In his private life, Häyry has engaged in hands-on initiatives in ecology, in preservation of Byzantium culture and art, and in charitable enterprises to improve healthcare in impoverished nations.

Professor Sir Peter Morris is Nuffield Professor of Surgery Emeritus, and former Chairman of the Department of Surgery, and Director of the Transplant Centre, University of Oxford. He is past President of the Royal College of Surgeons of England, former Chairman of the British Heart Foundation, Chairman of the Council of the Institute of Health Sciences at the University of Oxford, a Fellow of the Royal Society and a Foreign Member of the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences and the American Philosophical Society.

His scientific career has revolved around transplantation and transplantation biology, with a major interest in the immune response to histocompatibility antigens and its suppression. His clinical interests have been in transplantation and vascular surgery.

He is a former President of TTS, the British Transplantation Society, the European Surgical Association and the International Surgical Society. He received several prizes for his work, the most prestigious is the Lister Medal. He is the editor of Kidney Transplantation: Principles and Practice, which is now in its 5th edition, and the widely acclaimed Oxford Textbook of Surgery.

In 1996 he was knighted for services to medicine. He has been a principle editor of Transplantation and currently serves as European Special Features Editor of Transplantation.
TITS RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS

TTS Research Fellowships are awarded for a period of two years to support basic and clinical research in the field of transplantation in the laboratory or clinical unit. The Fellowships are designed to provide research training for new young investigators with the potential of making significant contributions to the field of transplantation.

The 2006 winners are:

TTS Research Fellowship
Xian-Lian Li

TTS-Basic Science Research Fellowship
Joyce Popoola

TTS-Transplantation Proceedings/Transplantation Research Fellowship
Giorgio Raimondi

TTS-Roche Research Fellowship in Transplant Infectious Disease
Josep Oriol Manuel Altes

TTS RECOGNITION AWARDS

The 2006 TTS Recognition Awards were presented at the World Transplant Congress in July to investigators who have made outstanding contributions in transplantation. The 2006 winners are:

TTS-Roche Award for Outstanding Achievement Transplantation Science (Basic) Lucienne Chatenoud

TTS-Roche Award for Excellence in Translational Science Christian Larsen and Thomas Pearson

TTS-Roche Award for Outstanding Achievement Transplantation Science (Clinical) Camillo Ricordi

TTS-Roche Award for Worldwide Impact in Transplantation Wojciech Rowinski

TTS-Roche Award for Excellence in Transplant Infectious Disease Robert Rubin

TTS-Genzyme Award for Innovation in Surgery and Technology Jean-Michel Dubernard

TTS-Genzyme Award for Education and Training in Transplantation Peter Neuhaus

Young Investigator Awards

2006 Recipients

Recipients of the TTS-Astellas Pharma Inc. Young Investigator Award in 2006 submitted abstracts to the 1st World Transplant Congress in Boston and received the highest scores by an international review panel. Recipients of the award are listed on the TTS website and will be featured in Tribune throughout 2007.

S H I N  I T A K U R A
Chimerism and Islet Allograft Tolerance
Shin Itakura received an award for a study that concluded “Mesenchymal Stem Cells Facilitate Induction of Mixed Chimerism and Islet Allograft Tolerance without GVHD in Rats.” An intraportal infusion of islets and bone marrow cells (BMC) with or without mesenchymal stem cells (MSC) was given to diabetic rats. More rats (3/6) given MSC developed mixed chimerism and donor specific tolerance than controls (1/6), but the reversal of diabetes was transient. Short-term immunosuppression post transplant achieved chimerism and long-term reversal of diabetes in rats (5/7) given islets, BMC and MSC. Accumulation of CD3/NKR-P1A/CD8 triple positive NKT cells caused islet cell destruction and was blocked by immunosuppression. Rats were protected from GVHD by MSC.

Itakura is currently a visiting scientist at California’s City of Hope/Beckman Research Institute as part of his Ph.D. studies at Graduate School of Agricultural and Life Sciences (Tokyo University).

J O S É  C A B A L L E R O - C O R B A L Á N
Pancreas Transportation and Preservation in Islet Isolation
José Caballero-Corbalán studied the efficacy of preserving pancreases prior to islet isolation either in the Two Layer Method (TLM, n = 107) or in University of Wisconsin solution (UW) (n = 107) alone. The islet equivalent number (IEQ), the IEQ/gram of pancreas and the number of pancreases used for islet transplantation were recorded. Various factors that influence the outcome of islet isolation, including cold ischemia time, donor BMI, gender, age, blood group and cytomegalovirus (CMV) status, were analyzed to check for homogeneity between the groups. He concluded there was “No Beneficial Effect of the Two Layer Method (PFC-UW) Compared with Transportation in UW Alone on the Outcome of Human Islet Isolation and Clinical Transplantation.”

Caballero-Corbalán is currently a Ph.D. student in the Division of Clinical Immunology, Transplantation Immunology group (Prof. Olle Korsgren) at Uppsala University (Sweden).
Society takes stand on the use of organs from executed prisoners

At the World Transplant Congress (WTC) in Boston, The Transplantation Society (TTS) Ethics Committee officially announced their position against transplanting organs from executed prisoners.

“The Society and its Ethics Committee have been working towards establishing global ethical transplantation practices over the past few years and has repeatedly declared its opposition to the use of organs from executed prisoners. TTS has a responsibility to provide global leadership on ethical practices and the situation in China necessitated TTS comment,” said Annika Tibell, TTS’ newly appointed Ethics Committee Chair.

TTS’ statement emphasizes a fundamental principle that organs and tissues are given freely, without coercion. Prisoners that are executed have virtually become the only source of transplantable organs in China, with more than 11,000 transplants performed in 2005. Lucrative and unethical transplant tourism has become an international concern with no oversight of recipient candidacy or recipient outcome.

“Chinese transplant centers have been known to advertise on the web offering transplantations to foreign citizens. Although we commend the Chinese government’s recent efforts to improve regulation on this issue, recovering organs from executed prisoners is not an acceptable practice. Hopefully international media attention and our lobbying efforts, in conjunction with the World Health Organization (WHO), will help bring an end to these unethical procedures,” said Tibell.

Going forward, the Committee’s 14 members from Sweden, USA, Canada, Pakistan, India, Lebanon, Mexico, Brazil, Singapore, Japan and Poland will analyze ethical issues in the field of transplantation during their two-year term.

“Recommendations developed at the Amsterdam and Vancouver Forums on live donation will be our guidelines for developing standards of practice on the deceased donation issue. The Committee will also discuss transplant tourism, commercialization, protection of live donors, reimbursement to live donors and donation after cardiac death,” continued Tibell.

Tibell has been a member of TTS since the early 1990s and a member of the Ethics Committee since 2004. She has been active in the European Association for the Study of Diabetes (EASD) as President for the working group on Artificial Insulin Delivery, Islet and Pancreas Transplantation and has been the Vice President of the European Council Xenotransplantation Committee. She studied medicine at The Karolinska Institute and joined the Department of Transplantation Surgery in Stockholm in 1987. She is now the Chairman of the Department and Head of the Research Committee at the Karolinska University Hospital.
IXA discusses transplant ethics in Boston
Kazu Yamada, Emanuele Cozzi and Megan Sykes, together with various contributors succeeded in highlighting and critically evaluating the status of xenotransplantation at WTC 2006 during several industry specific meetings.

IXA hosted three meetings in Boston, including a Satellite Symposium entitled Advances in xenotransplantation: is the Gal knockout pig essential to clinical success? and a symposium about Xenotransplantation: Current standards for clinical trials. The proceedings from these meetings will be published in an upcoming issue of Xenotransplantation.

These timely meetings provided an update on ethical, regulatory and safety standards for clinical xenotransplantation and highlighted some of the important issues related to xenotransplantation in emerging nations. The symposium served as a backdrop for a closed session the following day on the Mexico City porcine islet/Sertoli cell transplants. The meeting included IXA’s Council, Ethics Committee, and Dr. Rafael Valdes and his collaborators and was held in response to a request by Dr. Valdes. It permitted a detailed and candid discussion between all parties of the regulation, source animals, ethics, and data surrounding this work.

WHO and IXA collaborate
The University Hospital Geneva and the International Xenotransplantation Association (IXA) have created a website www.humanxenotransplant.org in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO).

The site aims to establish an inventory on all types of current human xenotransplantation practices. While it is known that xenotransplantation is performed in several countries with or without national oversight or regulation, the scope of these practices is unknown. The decision to launch the site came from consultations between WHO and experts in the field of xenotransplantation last year.

The collection of worldwide data on human xenotransplantation is being led by Leo Bühler at the University of Geneva. The information will ultimately be used to inform national health authorities, health care staff and the public. Its objective is to encourage good practices with internationally harmonized guidelines and regulation of xenotransplantation.

The research group encourages any person aware of current human xenotransplantation practices to contribute this information at www.humanxenotransplant.org.

Xenotransplantation leader dies
IXA notes with great sadness the passing of a valued member and colleague, Robert Zhong, University of Western Ontario, who died of lung cancer on September 8th. Dr. Zhong will be greatly missed for his research productivity and enthusiasm for our field, and for his warm and collegial personality.

TTS Sections plan first joint meeting
CTS, IPITA and IXA invite you to the first Joint Meeting of the Cell Transplant Society (CTS), The International Pancreas and Islet Transplant Association (IPITA), and the International Xenotransplantation Association (IXA). It will be held in Minneapolis, MN, USA from September 15-20, 2007. The conference Chairs will be David Sutherland, Bernhard Hering, and Megan Sykes. Visit www.cts-ipita-ixa-2007.org for further details.

Global leaders in intestinal transplantation to discuss 20 years of evolution
Under the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) patronage, with Dr. Douglas Farmer, MD as Symposium Chair and Director, the X International Small Bowel Transplantation Symposium is scheduled to take place in Los Angeles, California from September 5-8, 2007.

Lectures, plenary sessions, workshops, and posters will focus on new techniques and management of intestinal failure, analysis of UNOS waiting list for intestinal transplant, new surgical techniques, immunosuppression and weaning protocols, post-transplant infections and malignancy complications, intestinal graft monitoring tests and much more.

Registration for the Symposium opened October 15, 2006. Abstract submission deadline is scheduled for April 2007. More information can be obtained at the website http://transplant.mednet.ucla.edu/sbts2007/. Visit this site to join the mailing list to receive further information.

Basic Science – Mark your calendar
The 2007 Basic Science Symposium of The Transplantation Society will be held September 5-8, 2007 in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada at the Westin Nova Scotian Hotel and Conference Centre. The event will be co-sponsored by the Canadian Society of Transplantation. Visit www.bss2007.ca for further details.

Continued from page 3

The Global Alliance for Transplantation
Representatives from the 15 member societies on the Global Alliance for Transplantation Board met in Boston during the WTC to establish four areas where they will take action: relationships, information, education, and guidelines.

With communication and information identified as major priorities, an international dictionary for use by registries will be developed in 2007 with input from global partners. This dictionary is also designed to support small registries and augment statistical techniques. WHO will introduce the Global Knowledge in Transplantation website as well: www.who.int/transplantation/knowledgebase/en.

Guidelines for living donor for both renal and non-renal transplants are being established in a TTS and National Kidney Foundation collaborative effort. A report is due to be published in Transplantation soon and work on formal evidence-based guidelines is commencing under the banner of Kidney Disease: Improving Global Outcomes (KDIGO).

The Board has agreed to meet regularly to keep channels of communication open and to foster strong relationships.
UPCOMING MEETINGS

2007

Basic Science Symposium 2007
Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada
September 5 to 8, 2007
(Westin Nova Scotian Hotel and Conference Center)
CHAIRS: Ken West, Anthony Jevnikar, and Lori West
WEBSITE: www.bss2007.ca

Xth International Small Bowel Transplantation Symposium
Santa Monica, CA, USA
Summer 5 to 8, 2007
(Fairmont-Miramar Hotel)
CHAIR: Douglas G. Farmer

Joint Meeting of IXA, IPITA, and Cell Transplant Societies
Minneapolis, MN, USA
September 15 to 20, 2007
CHAIRS: Megan Sykes, David Sutherland, Bernhard Hering

2007 Organ Donation Congress (9th ISODP and 6th ITCS)
Philadelphia, PA, USA
November 11 to 14, 2007
(Loews Philadelphia Hotel)
CHAIR: Howard M. Nathan
WEBSITE: www.isodp2007.org

2008

22nd International Congress of The Transplantation Society
Sydney, Australia
August 10 to 14, 2008
CHAIR: Jeremy Chapman
WEBSITE: www.transplantation2008.org

THE TRANSPANTATION SOCIETY OFFICERS

The new Officers and Councillors of The Transplantation Society were announced in July at the World Transplant Congress. To consolidate its position as the leading global organization, the Council will now have representation from all six regions of the world: North America, Latin America, Europe, Africa-Middle East, Oceania, and Asia.

OFFICERS
Nicholas L. Tilney
President
Kathryn Wood
Immediate Past President
Jeremy Chapman
President-Elect
Megan Sykes
Vice President
Richard D.M. Allen
Senior Treasurer
Ron Shapiro
Junior Treasurer
Hans Sollinger
Secretary
Francis L. Delmonico
Director of Medical Affairs

COUNCILLORS
Maggie Dallman (Europe)
Henrik Ekberg (Europe)
John Fung (North America)
Mehmet A. Haberal
(Middle East & Africa)
Barry D. Kahan
(North America)
Stephen Lynch (Oceania)

Camillo Ricordi
(North America)
Oscar Salvatierra, Jr.
(North America)
Manikkam Suthanthiran
(North America)
Koichi Tanaka (Asia)
Yves Vanrenterghem
(Europe)
Federico Villamil
(Latin America)

International Headquarters
Filomena Picciano, Director of Society Operations

For a list of all meetings please check www.transplantation-soc.org