

Epigrap^M

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE AGAINST EPILEPSY

ISSUE 1 2003

Editorial

Welcome to another issue of **Epigrap^M**, the newsletter of the ILAE. We begin with the President's Message. Our President sets the scene in which he addresses the relationship between the League and its chapters, relations with the pharmaceutical industry and the International Congress in Tunis later in the year. One of our main features in this issue is the Epilepsy Summer School, held on the island of San Servolo in Venice. This course is hopefully the first of an annual series that brings together young clinicians and scientists who will be in the forefront of epilepsy research and care in times to come. Our Past President, Jerome Engel Jr, who has been at the helm of the classification task force, has kindly written an article especially for **Epigrap^M**, de-mystifying the new classification scheme. Another important feature refers to the creation of the Epilepsy Information Centre that will replace the International Epilepsy Resource Centre based in Switzerland. This initiative is partly in response to a need expressed by the Chapters in the first ILAE Chapters Convention held in Madrid. This event was very successful and we take the opportunity of covering it on page 3. The Executive Committee will be taking full note of the chapters' wishes as to how they feel ILAE should develop. The Global Campaign often features in **Epigrap^M** and in this issue we carry another update on page 5.

It gives me immense pleasure to report that **Epigrap^M** received very high commendation from the Chapters who view it as an important tool of communication and want it continued in its present format. As usual we always like to hear any comments you may have regarding **Epigrap^M** (address and contact details for Epigrap^M are on the back page). This issue of **Epigrap^M** has been mailed to all chapters who have up to date contact details for their members. The administrative office in Brussels is working hard to collect full information for all Chapters.

Ley Sander, Editor.

President's Message

Regions in the Front Line

The ILAE Congress activities during 2002 have put the ILAE regional system in the front line. The success of the three principal meetings held in Latin America, Asia and Oceania, and more recently in Europe (not to mention that of the American Epilepsy Society meeting, which is particularly attended by people coming from the North American region) bears witness to the viability of the Regional Commissions and confirms the effectiveness of the regional system established in order to facilitate interactions between the ILAE and its Chapters.

In the coming year, the International Epilepsy Congress (to be held in Tunis on 12-16 October 2003) will underline the direct relationship between the ILAE and individual Chapters.

These two aspects of our organisation are complementary: the Regional Commissions can substantially help the ILAE EC in its general planning, whilst the individual ILAE Chapters (which, in the final analysis, are the ILAE) can provide the central office with updated inputs that allow the ILAE to be perceived as a common home. This concept formed the basis of the Chapter Convention held on 5 October in Madrid (Spain) during the 5th European Congress on Epileptology. The aim of the convention was to offer Chapters an opportunity to express their views, needs and proposals concerning ILAE life in a much more open and exhaustive way than that so far offered by the ILAE General Assembly. At the same time, the meeting was also intended to discuss new services that the ILAE can offer and to exchange views on specific issues previously raised by the Chapters.

Main objectives

More than 40 chapters were represented and during the Convention, the main objectives of the League and its policies in relation to regional organisation, the production and circulation of scientific and professional information, educational and research

activities, and office organisation were reviewed and discussed. An overview of new Chapter services was presented, including the website "Chapter log-in" section and the project of a database for all ILAE Chapter members. The possibility of creating and managing websites for individual Chapters was considered with much



interest, and four major services were identified for future development:

- Education
- Research
- Chapter Development/Organisation
- Website services

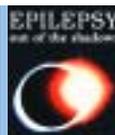
This event provided Chapters with a great opportunity to meet, exchange points of view and make suggestions concerning the future of the League. All of the participants were convinced about the usefulness of this type of meeting, and it was decided to repeat the experience next year during the International Epilepsy Congress in Tunis. ➤

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Pharmaceuticals

The pharmaceutical industry has always helped us to achieve ILAE objectives. Various types of synergies and partnerships have proved to be very productive and need to be strengthened for the future, provided that our respective fields of competence are duly defined and respected. Effective strategies of co-operation between the ILAE, the IBE and the pharmaceutical industry were discussed at a recent meeting with the representatives of six companies held in Madrid on 8 October 2003.

Stress was placed on the need to coordinate industry-supported initiatives relevant to ILAE and IBE priorities. In particular, the areas in which industrial cooperation is particularly important are the following:

- International and Regional meetings
- Educational projects
- Communications

- The Global Campaign
- Special projects of common interest

I think that one of the many ideas that emerged during the meeting is of particular importance: the suggestion that we should approach companies with specific projects in the form of a business plan clearly indicating their own interests. In relation to the forthcoming International Epilepsy Congress in Tunis, a number of companies have already declared that they are happy with the venue layout (particularly the exhibition space) and that they would be prepared to offer the same level of support as that given to other meetings provided that the global situation does not alter dramatically.

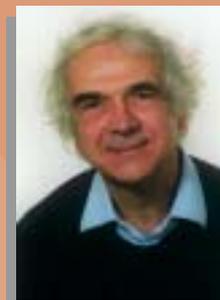
The ILAE considers the Tunis Congress particularly important because it is attempting to increase awareness of its activities inside Africa. Tunis was selected as

a venue not only because it is an acceptable and accessible location, but also because it will transmit a clear signal of its presence to the Continent.

The black clouds gathering in the sky of the international political situation have given rise to a number of concerns about the feasibility of the 25th International Congress. We are confident that common sense, together with feelings of mutual respect and solidarity, will ultimately prevail over warlike frenzy: as a society of scientists and doctors, we must not waiver in our commitment or allow the surrendering of our mission to the winds of hate.

See you in Tunis.

Giuliano Avanzini,
President, ILAE



The International Epilepsy Congress Secretariat

The International League Against Epilepsy throughout the world is involved in a complex and constant schedule of meetings, conferences and workshops. At the heart of all of these events lies a small core group of organisers, led by Mr Richard Holmes, International Director of Meetings.

The International Epilepsy Congress Secretariat was established in 2000 to provide support to the International Director of Meetings in all aspects of ILAE/IBE congress planning. The office now employs a skilled team of people who are working in co-operation with the international and local committees for each congress. A Project Manager for each meeting works in close collaboration with local representatives.

The office is responsible for the organisation of a wealth of meetings, which range in size from a few hundred to several thousand delegates. The International Epilepsy Congress with combined representation from ILAE and the International Bureau for Epilepsy worldwide is organised on a biennial basis. The 25th International Epilepsy Congress, which will be held in Tunis, is the next of these meetings. It is expected that up to 4,000 delegates will attend the meeting.

European Congress

The European Congress on Epileptology, which is held under the auspices of ILAE, also takes place every two years. The most

recent of these meetings was the 5th European Congress on Epileptology, held in the historic city of Madrid from the 6th-10th October. The meeting played host to numerous leading epileptologists and prominent scholars who gathered to exchange research developments and advances relating to every field of epilepsy. The congress was considered by all to be a great success and attracted in excess of 3,000 delegates to Madrid. The Congress Secretariat team, under Project Manager David Shirley, handled all planning and co-ordination for the congress.



The International Epilepsy Congress offices in Dublin, Ireland

In addition to these congresses, planning for regional meetings, such as the Asian & Oceanian Epilepsy Congress and the Latin American Epilepsy Congress is organised by the Congress Office, as well as the European Congresses on Epilepsy and Society, which are arranged under the IBE banner.

Upcoming Meetings

In addition to the work being conducted on the International and European Meetings, the Congress Secretariat team are busy preparing for various upcoming Regional Epilepsy Congresses. The 5th Asian & Oceanian Epilepsy Congress will take place in Bangkok in 2004 and the 3rd Latin American Epilepsy Congress will run in 2004 in Mexico City.

The venue for the 26th International Epilepsy Congress in 2005 is Paris, France and some may be surprised to learn that the site of the 27th International Meeting 2007, Singapore, has also already been selected!

The International Epilepsy Congress Secretariat team is on hand to answer any queries you may have relating to upcoming ILAE or IBE congresses. We are contactable at:

16 Mountdown Road, Walkinstown, Dublin 12, Ireland. Phone: +353 1 409 7796
Fax: +353 1 429 1290 e-mail: info@epilepsycongress.org www.epilepsycongress.org

First Chapter Convention organized by ILAE

For the first time, the ILAE organised a Chapter Convention which was held on October 5th 2002 in Madrid, Spain during the 5th European Congress on Epileptology. More than 40 Chapters were represented at this meeting. The purpose of the convention was to discuss new services that can be offered by the ILAE for the benefit of the Chapters and to exchange views on specific issues previously raised by the Chapters.

The President, the Secretary-General and the Treasurer opened the meeting by welcoming the participants and reviewing the main objectives of the League and the recent activities of their own offices.

“Chapters Login”

For the second part of the morning agenda, an overview of new chapters services was given by Peter J. Berry, our Administrative Director. Peter presented the new password protected section on the ILAE website, “Chapters Login”. Further information on how to access the section was sent to each Chapter in September. In this section, Chapters can pay their dues on-line, submit Chapter Congress dates for posting to the League’s website, and make changes to Chapter contact information. Regarding this last activity, Peter underlined the fact that the League is studying the possibility of creating a database of all ILAE Chapters Members. At the conclusion of the presentation, the Administrative Director asked all Chapters to provide suggestions on how the database could be maintained.

The next speaker was Delphine Sartiaux, Assistant Administrative Director. Delphine provided the group with information on the responsibilities of the Headquarters Office. She pointed out the role and aims of the office in Brussels and reviewed the services provided to the League and the Chapters since the office opened in January 2002. She invited all Chapters to provide feedback and new ideas on what the Headquarters Office could do to assist the Chapters on a regular basis.

New services

To close the morning session, consultant Walt Shaw facilitated a roundtable discussion regarding the new services. This provided an opportunity for the Chapters to exchange ideas on how ILAE could be more helpful to them. Through this group breakout session, attendees identified four major services to be developed:

- Education
- Research
- Chapter Development/Organisation
- Website Services

Daily work

In the afternoon, Nele Devolder from the Headquarters Office gave an overview of her daily work and stressed the importance of cooperation with the Chapters in the update of the main contacting details of Chapters, which are essential for keeping members informed of the League’s activities.

Secretary-General Natalio Fejerman and Peter Berry introduced the proposed Chapter Operations Manual and stated that the Chapters will be kept informed in the coming months about this new publication.

Epilepsia

In addition, Peter Berry talked about the problems of distribution of *Epilepsia* and the League’s Subscription Program. He invited the participants to inform him and the new publisher, Blackwell Publishing, about any problems in receiving *Epilepsia*.

Treasurer Ley Sander presented the latest developments and challenges for the publication of *Epigraph*. He asked the participants to give their opinion about the most convenient solution for the circulation of *Epigraph*. He concluded by encouraging Chapters to contribute to *Epigraph* and to use this publication for informing other individuals about Chapters’ activities.

Global Campaign

Pete Engel, Immediate Past President of the League, gave an overview of the work covered by the Global Campaign. His report was followed by the presentation

organization of the League and its educational programs were proposed.

Discussion

The issues raised during the meeting generated discussions outside of the meeting room with Chapter Presidents, the ILAE Officers, and staff. In addition, many participants visited the ILAE booth during the congress to continue the discussion or to clarify issues regarding membership, dues, subscriptions, etc.

This event was a great opportunity for the Chapters to meet, exchange points of views, and provide suggestions for the future plans of the League. All participants were enthusiastic and convinced about the usefulness of this type of meeting. The experience will be certainly repeated next year during the congress in Tunis. A date for the next



of Peter Wolf on the latest activities of EUREPA.

The final session of the convention was an Open Forum during which Chapters could discuss innovative ideas tried and challenges encountered. The different groups had varying priorities according to the country and healthcare system in place. Various key areas were defined and some suggestions for the

Chapter Convention has not been set but the Chapters can be assured that the League will inform them well in advance about the planning of this meeting.

All information collected during the two breakout sessions have been compiled in a report, which is available to all Chapters via the web site: www.ilae-epilepsy.org

Demystifying the Classification Scheme

For the past five years, the ILAE Task Force on Classification and Terminology has been carefully evaluating the current international classifications for seizures and epilepsies with a view toward recommending substantial revisions.

Last year the Task Force published a report recommending a five-axis diagnostic scheme consisting of: i. *descriptive ictal phenomenology*, accompanied by a glossary of standardized terms; ii. *diagnostic seizure types*, accompanied by a list of seizures known or presumed to represent unique physiologic mechanisms and anatomic substrates; iii. *epilepsy syndromes*, accompanied by a list of agreed-upon syndromes; iv. *etiology*, accompanied by a preliminary list of diseases associated with epilepsy; and v. *impairment*, which is being adapted from the WHO ICIDH-2 (*Epilepsia* 2001; 42:796-803).

It is important to emphasize at this point that the recommendations in this report should not be considered a new classification. A classification is the manner in which entities, such as seizures or syndromes, are organized into a logical format for various purposes. The Task Force has proposed that clinicians use the five-axis diagnostic scheme to determine its utility for describing individual patients, but it is not a classification. Further discussions within the Task Force, and with all interested ILAE members, will take place before the glossary of ictal terminology, and the lists of seizure types and syndromes can be finalized. Considerable work is still needed to complete the list of etiologies, and the impairment axis. Nevertheless, the Task Force is now ready to begin discussion on classification, which is intended to be open to the entire membership of ILAE. Public debate will begin with a series of essays on concepts of classification as they might apply to the field of epileptology, which will be published in *Epilepsia*. The ILAE membership is invited to respond to these essays, either directly to the Task Force, or as letters to the editor of *Epilepsia*, and to express their own views on how future classifications should be organized. For the present, however, the current ILAE Classification of Epileptic Seizures (*Epilepsia* 1981; 22:489-501) and ILAE Classification of Epilepsies, Epileptic Syndromes, and Related Seizure Disorders (*Epilepsia* 1989; 30:389-399), should still be used.

Regarding concepts of classification, the Task Force has already recognized a number of areas where change might be required. Although the current seizure classification is purported to be semiological, it is not based entirely on behavioural phenomenology because EEG is also required for correct diagnosis. Two suggested approaches for revising the classification of seizures have been considered. One consists of purely behavioral phenomenology (*Epilepsia* 1998; 39:1006-1013), and the other attempts to utilize the latest information about underlying mechanisms and anatomical substrates, much of which was not available in 1980. Axis 1 and the glossary address the first approach, although it is not clear whether this purely descriptive terminology can, or should be, further organized into a classification format. Axis 2 addresses the second approach, and current debate on classifying the proposed list of seizures is focused on whether a generalized/partial (now recommended to be changed to focal) dichotomy is still appropriate. The Task Force has recommended that partial (focal) seizures no longer be classified according to retained (simple) or impaired (complex) consciousness. Similarly, with respect to eventual classification of the syndromes proposed for Axis 3, the value of strict dichotomies based on generalized vs. partial (focal) and idiopathic vs. symptomatic features has been questioned, and the term "cryptogenic" needs to be clarified. It is anticipated that recommended revised classifications for seizures, and for syndromes, will be based on scientific data, as is the case for other biological classifications, but that modular formats will permit easy adaptation for various disparate purposes such as teaching, clinical trials, epidemiological studies, and surgical treatment. Utility should be confirmed by pilot tests before final acceptance, but the revised classifications will be flexible and dynamic, with built-in mechanisms to permit regular updates as new information becomes available from research, and practical experience.

ILAE members can follow the work of the Task Force on Classification and Terminology on its website <epilepsia.org/ctf.

Jerome Engel Jr
Los Angeles, CA, USA

Bulletin Board

News from correspondents ...



SWITZERLAND

The Swiss Epilepsy Report 2002 by the Swiss chapter of the International League Against Epilepsy was published on October 5 on the occasion of the first national day of epilepsy. It describes the present situation concerning support and treatment of people with epilepsy in Switzerland. Papers on modern diagnostic and therapeutic procedures, epilepsy research and economical aspects of the disease are combined with articles on problems at school, in family life and in the job market. The report is aimed at political and social organizations and contains recommendations for future developments.

Swiss correspondent



SYRIA

The Syrian Chapter of the International League Against Epilepsy carried out three initiatives during 2002:

An EEG & Epilepsy day course in the context of 1st Syrian-Swedish Congress, Damascus, 3rd to 5th November 2002, a half day discussion on Epilepsy-related topics in a Damascus hospital in December 2002 and an Epilepsy session during the Syrian-French Congress, which was held at the Al-Assad University Hospital in Damascus from 30th March to 2nd April 2002. Other initiatives are planned for this year.

Syrian correspondent



TURKEY

The Turkish Epilepsy Society has established monthly meetings which have taken place for almost six years. An invited speaker and case discussions alternate on every last Friday of each month. Dr. Gilles van Luijtelaar was the guest speaker in September and spoke on the mechanisms of absence epilepsies. His slides and voice can be downloaded from our website www.turkepilepsi.org.tr. Military service, compulsory for every man in Turkey (except for certain conditions including epilepsy) will be one of the coming topics and a summary report is planned to be published in our journal *Epilepsi* after the discussion meeting. There will be a course and a half-day session devoted to epilepsy during the second congress of the Turkish Neuroscience Society which will be held in April 2003. Basic scientists and clinicians working in the field of epilepsy are collaborating to a greater extent as a result of such initiatives.

Turkish correspondent



CANADA

The Canadian League Against Epilepsy (CLAE) became a member of the ILAE in 1977. Until recently the CLAE consisted predominantly of clinicians-epileptologists. In September 2001 the Canadian Epilepsy Research Initiative (CERI), represented by more than 100 scientists, who work in the field of epilepsy, decided to join the CLAE.

The CLAE Board was expanded with representatives from CERI, CEC (Canadian Epilepsy Consortium) and CPEN (Canadian Pediatric Epilepsy Network). This association has already resulted in two conferences where scientists and clinicians presented their area of interest in order to develop research initiatives. A much closer relationship was established with Epilepsy Canada (the IBE representative) by an ex officio membership of the President of the CLAE on the Board of Epilepsy Canada and vice versa.

By establishing this umbrella organization we hope to address a broader spectrum of epilepsy issues and work in a more effective manner.

Canadian correspondent

Update on the Activities of the Global Campaign

The year 2002 was a very busy one for the Campaign and it is not easy to summarise the activities in an article of this length. Basically all activities initiated by the Secretariat derive from the action plan, which is published in the Campaign's annual report.

All over the world IBE/ILAE chapters and Regional WHO Offices are heavily involved in the Campaign and develop initiatives in their own countries and regions. We will try and highlight, very briefly, a number of the activities.

The Annual Report for the year 2001 was written, designed and printed in close collaboration between the members of the Campaign Secretariat in time for the meeting of the Executive Committees of IBE/ILAE and for the meeting of the WHO Regional Advisers for Mental Health (March). Reports can still be ordered from the Heemstede Office of the Campaign (ibe@xs4all.nl)

The Regional Advisers for Mental Health meet once a year for a three-day period in WHO Headquarters in Geneva. For the first time "epilepsy" was on the agenda and both IBE and ILAE were invited to participate in the discussion of this topic. Both IBE/ILAE representatives on the Secretariat were present, as well as Philip Lee, President of IBE. Prof. Giuliano Avanzini was unable to be present due to other commitments.

The questionnaires on countries' needs and resources have been sent to either IBE or ILAE chapters or to the WHO member states.

In the meantime they have been translated into French and Spanish for use in the French speaking countries of Africa and for Latin America. In total 100 have been returned.

Demonstration Projects

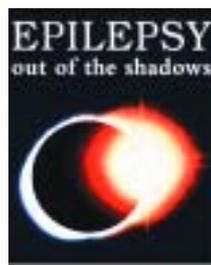
China: A progress report has been prepared, the second phase of the Project is ongoing. Already the Project is expanding to two other provinces. A report on the outcomes of the first phase of the Project has been submitted to a peer-reviewed journal.

Zimbabwe: The implementation of the Project in Zimbabwe has been delayed because of the political situation, travelling was not safe and therefore epidemiological data could not be collected. However, this Project has now been initiated.

Senegal: The first (epidemiological) phase of the Project has been completed and an article is being prepared on the outcomes.

Argentina: The protocol for the Project has been finalised.

Brazil: A protocol for a National Project on Epilepsy has been finalised and fundraising is taking place within the country to finance the project. The Ministry of Health is already showing an interest.



Preparations for the Regional Conference: "Epilepsy as a Public Health Priority" which is to take place in the Eastern Mediterranean Region have now begun. The conference is scheduled for March 2003 and will be held in Cairo, Egypt.

On February 13 2002 a Press Conference took place in the van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam, The Netherlands, with, amongst others, the participation of both

presidents of IBE and ILAE. The conference was made possible through an unrestricted educational grant from Sanofi-Synthelabo. It was attended by 48 journalists from 15 European countries.

Under the umbrella of the Campaign an Epilepsy Manual has been being developed to provide medical and clinical officers, working in rural areas in Africa with sufficient and sound background information. Translations are being prepared in the other (main) African languages: French and Portuguese.

Sessions at Congresses

- Sao Paulo, Brazil: a lecture was delivered on the Campaign at the 3rd meeting of the Brazilian Epilepsy Association
- World Congress of the International Child Neurological Association in Beijing, China, a session was organised.
- 4th Asian and Oceanian Epilepsy Congress a session took place.

Hanneke M. de Boer, Jerome Engel Jr. and Leonid Prilipko

COMPREHENSIVE EPILEPSY CONTROL PROGRAMME

A Community-Based Model for Developing Countries

The comprehensive Epilepsy Control Programme (CECP) PROGRAMME was formally started in March 2001.

OBJECTIVES OF CECP

1. To establish community-based epilepsy care centres.
2. To create awareness about epilepsy in the general public.
3. Training of primary care physicians in epilepsy.
4. Continue focus on long-term sustainability.

TESTED COMPONENTS OF CECP (Since March 2001)

1. Forty-one Satellite Epilepsy Centres (SEC) have been established for diagnosis, treatment and counselling.
2. Free Epilepsy Camps (FEC) are conducted (once a month, at SECs by rotation).
3. Public education material: Original matter for public education has been locally developed both in English and national language, "Urdu"

(also being translated into regional languages).

4. Education through the lay press: Education about epilepsy has been achieved through articles published in two daily newspapers in Urdu and English.
5. Education through Television: With the help of a very popular TV channel. "Indus Vision", we have produced a 20-minute documentary film on epilepsy.
6. CECP Website (www.cecp-pk.org): is being developed. Its purposes include public awareness, record patient data, training of doctors and telemedicine.
7. School Awareness Workshops (SAW): An integral part of sustainability on a long term basis, SAWs have been started in the major secondary schools of Karachi, with plans to cover most schools.
8. Epilepsy CME for Doctors: One-day monthly CME workshops (lectures, video-presentation and patient discussion) are also held to update the knowledge of the doctors running the SECs.
9. Exploring the possibility of Telemedicine: Internet facilities and cybercafes are now available in more than 800 towns/cities of Pakistan.

10. National Epilepsy Centre: A state of the art Epilepsy Centre has been planned through the help of a voluntary donor.

INDIRECT MEASURE OF SUCCESS -

Prior to the start of the CECP, an average of 800 epilepsy patients used to attend the Neurology Out Patients Department at the Department of Neurology, Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre every week. Now this number has reduced by 50%, the others using the facilities provided at the SECs. Since the start of CECP the sale of the four major AEDs in Pakistan has increased with a growth of 26%. This growth-pattern seems to coincide with the overall increased efforts by the CECP.

CONCLUSION - Pakistan is heading towards specialized epilepsy care at the primary health care level. It is utilizing the existing primary health care units in the community with a centralized supervision. It is aiming at public awareness of epilepsy in order to modify the treatment-seeking behaviour of patients.

Syed Wasim Akhtar, Zarin Mogal and Hasan Aziz
Department of Neurology, Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre, Karachi, Pakistan



Preparing the Epileptologists of Tomorrow



Participants and Faculty enjoying the Summer School.

The Venice Epilepsy Summer School which was established in July 2002 held its first course *Bridging Basic with Clinical Epileptology* and was sponsored by NATO, ILAE and the Istituto Besta of Milano.

The Summer School is part of the activities of the Epilepsy Section (chaired by Timothy Pedley) of the International School of Neurological Sciences (ISNV) of Venice, directed by Francesco Paladin.

Students' views

The format of a residential course with the opportunity of continuous interactions between teachers and students was very successful. The students' point of view is summarized as follows:

"Thirty-six students from thirty-four countries lived for two weeks on San Servolo, a tiny, beautiful island only ten minutes boat ride from Venice. The first week consisted of an intensive lecture course (although there was plenty of scope for active discussion), taught by world experts in their fields. We started with classifications of seizures and epilepsy, which in some areas was controversial and led to a great deal of discussion. We then studied advanced imaging techniques, were immersed in the most up-to-date basic science research on epileptogenesis and studied specific epileptic syndromes. In addition we discussed the genetics of epilepsy and pharmacotherapy. The middle section of the course was more practical, in which we studied MRI, histopathology, genetics databases and did some computer modeling of receptor function. During the two weeks we also presented some of our own research in a poster format and attended journal clubs. The final week was for many of us, the most demanding, and the most rewarding part of the course. We were split into small groups, worked with two tutors and designed a research project as if we preparing a grant proposal. Some of us were not specialists in our project topic and so in four days we had to become experts and prepare a presentation for the rest of our colleagues. In this week, we learnt how to research a new area as quickly and efficiently as possible, how to work closely with a small study group from different scientific backgrounds, and then finally on the day of presentation, how to defend a project in front of an extremely knowledgeable audience". (Kate Chandler – UK)

Specific comments from two students trained in basic science and clinical epileptology, respectively included the following:

"As a PhD student doing basic science research in the field of epilepsy, the two weeks on San Servolo was a tremendous experience. I feel that I have become a better scientist because first, I have had a detailed grounding in all aspects of epilepsy, and second, I have learnt a great deal about communication of science within both the clinical and basic science areas. I think we all made many good friends and useful scientific contacts from all over the world. I am sure that I will be using the skills that I have gained there for many years in my career in epilepsy research" (Kate Chandler, UK)

"As a clinician who has "some" background on basic science epileptology but most of the time "forgets" about it due to almost 100% patient-related activity, the course has indeed "bridged" this

gap in more ways than one. Firstly by reinforcing what I already knew (clinical epileptology) and making me relearn what I have "forgotten" and, most importantly, it gave me new information on basic epileptology theory and methods...and I should mention the unique experience of working closely with and having a lot of fun at the same time with a diverse group of students and experts for a whole 2 weeks, and making new friends along the way?" (Conrad Nievera; Philippines)

Refining skills

The second course, *Pharmacological Management of the Epilepsies*, will be held on 9 – 19 July 2003 under the auspices of the ILAE Commission on Therapeutic Strategies and the Commission on European Affairs. It is primarily targeted at physicians who are pursuing their training or are already specialists in neurology or paediatrics and wish to refine their skills in the pharmacological management of the epilepsies. Research scientists from academia and the pharmaceutical industry may also benefit from the course by gaining a deeper insight into practical issues involved in the clinical management of epilepsy. At the end of the course, attendees will be expected to have learnt how to (i) utilize basic knowledge in pathophysiology and pharmacology to predict the clinical effects of antiepileptic drugs (AEDs); (ii) apply pharmacokinetic principles to optimize dosing schedules, and interpret correctly blood concentrations of AEDs as a tool to dosage adjustment; (iii) determine when pharmacological treatment should be initiated and for how long it should be continued, based on a balanced assessment of risk to benefit ratios; (iv) exploit available drugs to maximum benefit, through a correct understanding of their indications, adverse effects profiles and modes of use; (v) predict, prevent and manage adverse drug interactions, and utilize optimally combinations of different drugs in the clinic; (vi) evaluate critically the available literature concerning AED trials, through analysis of variables that could affect study results and their interpretation; (vii) apply available knowledge to the construction of therapeutic guidelines; (viii) acquire the expertise necessary to design clinical AED trials and outcome studies in epilepsy. The course will be limited to a maximum of 40 applicants to allow an optimal level of interaction with the faculty. Lectures on general and specific topics will be interspersed with interactive seminars, workshops on specific topics, and break-out sessions where small groups of attendees and faculty will be involved in tutorials and problem-solving exercises.

Detailed information is available on the ILAE and ISNV web sites:

www.ilae-epilepsy.org

and

<http://195.31.128.133/isnv/sezioni/istituzionale/info.html>.

Giuliano Avanzini,

Milano, Italy

...a tremendous experience. I feel that I have become a better scientist...

EPILEPSY INFORMATION CENTRE



It was decided that the centre should hold copies of all information material produced by the IBE and its Chapters. Shortly after-wards, contact was made with the ILAE and an agreement was drawn up for the IERC to become a joint venture of the ILAE and IBE in conjunction with the Swiss Epilepsy Centre. The aim was to provide a central archive for resources about epilepsy, videos, information pamphlets, training programmes, professional guidelines, and material dealing with good practice. This would enable chapters to have access to existing information and material on all aspects of epilepsy so that with the permission of the original "creators" they could adapt these to their own needs. A secondary aspect was to preserve historical information material.

Database

IERC was never intended to be a mailing centre. People seeking information could, through the database, find out who produced or distributed the material needed and then contact them directly. At present the IERC contains a video collection of approximately 550 tapes, in addition there are over 600

articles ranging from handouts over pamphlets/leaflets to books.

All this material is accessible via the internet and the database can be individually searched for topics of interest. For the video tapes there is a summary of content as well as a commentary.

Commitment

Due to some logistical difficulties IBE had to withdraw its support for the IERC. The future planning and continuing support of the ILAE was discussed in a recent meeting between representatives of the Executive of ILAE, IERC and the Swiss Epilepsy Centre. At this meeting the future commitment of the ILAE in supporting the IERC was agreed. In addition to the support aspects of future development were also a point of discussion.

The experience to date has shown that a wider variety of information is requested than was originally thought and that also it is often extremely difficult to obtain the original material. For this reason there was general agreement that the IERC should be re-named in view of the new function it is to take over. The IERC no longer exists, and it has been replaced by a new ILAE Epilepsy Information Centre (Epi Info).

The Epi Info will provide services to chapters with regard to the provision of epilepsy information. This information will, with the involvement of all chapters, be more comprehensive and in the future more easy to access. The Epi Info centre will as far as possible digitise as much of the material as possible, including videos, enabling them to be directly downloaded. The need of the ILAE chapters for relevant information material was clearly demonstrated at the recent Chapter Congress in Madrid and the Epi Info Centre will be a tool enabling information to be both obtained and exchanged. Einstein once stated "progress is based on the exchange of knowledge" using this as a motto I appeal to all of you who have information material related to Epilepsy to please send it to the Epi Info Centre. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all of you who have already done this.

Ian Mothersill

**Epilepsy Information Centre
Swiss Epilepsy Centre, Bleulerstrasse 60
Ch-8008 Zürich, Switzerland.**

e-mail: Mothersill@swissepi.ch

Website: www.swissepi.ch

ILAE British Branch Young Scientific Investigators Prize 2003 (£1,000)

The Council of the International League Against Epilepsy are pleased to announce their intention to award the above prize at their Annual Scientific Meeting in Manchester, UK in June 2003.

This award is open to any health professional or basic scientist working in the field of epilepsy around the world.

Entrants must be 35 years or under on December 31st 2002. Entries which must be in English and not more than 5,000 words will be judged by a panel of experts whose decision will be final. Unpublished work on any aspect of basic science related to epilepsy or reviews of any basic science aspect of epilepsy will be accepted. Closing date is April 1st 2003.

For further details please contact Juliet Solomon via e-mail: j.solomon@ion.ucl.ac.uk or via telephone on +44 207 837 3611 ext 4285.

EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF YOUNG NEUROLOGISTS AND TRAINEES

The epilepsy sub-specialty group of the European Association of Young Neurologists and Trainees (YNT) held their inauguration session during the 5th European Congress on Epileptology in Madrid (October 6th-10th 2002).

The aim of the meeting was to enable young researchers interested in epilepsy to informally discuss their work.

The group intends to organise meetings at future international conferences and to further build up a network of motivated young neurologists working in the field of epilepsy. Details on free membership and future plans and activities are available at:

www.ynt-Europe.com/epilepsy/

YNT Epi-group steering committee:

Conrad Rejdak PhD	k.rejdak@Europe.com
Simona Tigarán PhD	mona@akhphd.au.dk
Jan Claassen MD	Jaclaassen@aol.com
Antonio Gil-Nagel MD	agnagel@ya.com

Diary Dates

If you would like to publicise an event taking place in your part of the world which would be of interest to ILAE members, we would be happy to receive the relevant information. Please provide date, venue, subject and contact details including contact person, address, telephone/fax number, email address and web site. Please forward this information to the Epigraph office (details below).

1st Sharm El Sheikh Epilepsy Conference, Hyatt Regency Hotel, Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt 5-8 March, 2003

For further information contact:

Dr. Hassan S. Hosny, Cairo University,
21 El Mansour Mohamed St., #17
Zamalek 11211, Cairo, Egypt.

Tel: +20 2 303 3338 Fax: +20 2 304 7117

e-mail: hhosny@internetegypt.com

Epilepsy, Neurobiology and Religious Creativity, Vadstena, Sweden, 20-22 March 2003

The relationship between neurological disorders and religious visionary inspiration has been under discussion in scientific circles during the last decades. The Swedish Chapter of the ILAE and Linköping University support the conference.

Scientific programme. The main themes are: The temporal lobe and its function; Expressions of religious revelations; Great men and women with epilepsy; Epilepsy in literature and art; Neural correlates of religious experience; Dreams and visions.

For further information contact:

Professor Birgitta Söderfeldt,
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SE-581 85 Linköping, Sweden

e-mail: epilepsy2003@inr.liu.se

<http://infoweb.unit.liu.se/hu/inr/conference2003/presentation>

4th Spring Epilepsy Research Conference, Marriott Grand Cayman Beach Resort in Grand Cayman, BWI, April 26-May 3, 2003

The scientific program is being organised and will be posted soon at

<http://www.caymanconferences.com/epilepsy/>

Session suggestions are welcome.

25th International Epilepsy Congress Tunis, 12th-16th October 2003

Preparation is well under way for the next international ILAE/IBE congress in Tunisia. The congress team is working to co-ordinate all aspects of the event in cooperation with the International Organising Committee and Scientific Advisory Committee, and in close co-operation with Professor Amel Mrabet, the Congress' President.

The meeting will run from the 12th-16th October 2003 and will explore five main topics: 'Epilepsy Surgery in Children', 'Transmissible Diseases', 'Epilepsy Research in the Post Genomic Era', 'Status Epilepticus and its Consequences', 'Addressing the Treatment Gap - Diagnosis and Treatment Needs in Developing Countries', 'Quality of Life for Children with Epilepsy' and 'Epilepsy Problems in Learning and Behaviour'. These topics have been selected with a view to combining clinical, scientific and social areas within the Epilepsy sphere and providing a comprehensive insight into current issues at work in the field. The meeting promises an exciting and stimulating experience for all delegates in a city with a wealth of exotic culture and ancient historic attractions.

Registrations for the congress will be open from early December 2002 and potential presenters are also invited to submit abstracts of their research to the Congress Secretariat via the website at www.epilepsycongress.org.

Queries relating to this congress can be directed to Soazig Daniel, Project Manager (soazig@epilepsycongress.org)

or

ILAE & IBE Congress Secretariat,
16 Mountdown Road,
Walkinstown, Dublin 12
Ireland

Tel: +353 1 409 7796 Fax: +353 1 429 1290

The 7th Eilat Conference on New Antiepileptic Drugs (Eilat VII), Eilat, Israel (with a backup site in Italy), 9-13 May 2004.

The program is designed to provide critical reviews and updated information about new anti-epileptic drugs (AEDs) that are in different stages of development, as well as to present progress reports on recent findings concerning marketed new anti-epileptic drugs. In addition, sessions will be devoted to Advances in the Pathophysiology of Drug Resistance; New AEDs in Paediatric Epilepsy Syndromes; Modes of AED Action and Spectrum of Adverse Effects; A Re-appraisal of Comparative Responses to AEDs Combinations.

For further information contact:

Target Tours Ltd, Eilat VII,
PO Box 29041
Tel Aviv 61290, Israel

Tel: +972 3 5175150 Fax: +972 3 5175155

e-mail: eilatvii@targetconf.com
www.eilatvii.com

6th European Congress on Epileptology, Vienna, 27th June - 1st July 2004

Preparatory work is being conducted for the next European ILAE meeting. The '6th European Congress on Epileptology' will take place in Vienna.

The programme will include sessions on areas such as - 'Epilepsy Syndromes', 'Drugs, Epilepsy and Psychiatry', 'Remission vs Refractoriness' and 'New Treatment Options', as well as a comprehensive programme of Discussion Groups, Workshops and Teaching sessions.

All available information on this meeting is now available at www.epilepsyvienna2004.org or by contacting Vienna@epilepsycongress.org.

Epigraph is edited by Professor Ley Sander.

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