Published in final edited form as:

Chem Biol Interact. 2009 March 16; 178(1-3): 1. doi:10.1016/j.cbi.2008.11.003.

Enzymology and Molecular Biology of Carbonyl Metabolism

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INTRODUCTION

The articles in this Special Edition of Chemico-Biological Interactions were based upon talks or posters presented at the 14th International Workshop on the **Enzymology and Molecular Biology of Carbonyl Metabolism**. The meeting was held in Kranjska Gora, Slovenia from July 8- 12, 2008. Scientists and students from over a dozen countries met in this charming mountain village to discuss science and enjoy each other's company.

We are not a society but are a group of scientists who have been meeting every two years to discuss three families of enzymes. These are alcohol dehydrogenase, aldehyde dehydrogenase and the large family of carbonyl reductases. The common theme is that all the enzymes perform their reaction on a carbonyl carbon. I have had the pleasure of being the scientific organizer of all the meetings. When we meet outside of the States it is necessary that I have a local co-organizer. We were very fortunate to have Dr. Tea Lanisnik Rizner of the Institute of Biochemistry, Medical Faculty, Ljubljana, Slovenia and her husband Tomaz serve as co-organizers along with my wife Esther Weiner.

Since 1982, when we first met in Bern, Switzerland, the fields of biochemistry and pharmacology have changed and so have our meetings. At the first few meetings most talks were on purifying and characterizing an enzyme. Now we know the structure of many and the sequences of all so the scope of the talks changed. Some presenter discussed detailed kinetic and structural implications on the mechanism of action of the enzyme while others describe compounds that were designed to act as inhibitors of the enzymes. The physiological role of the various enzymes was discussed by some authors as well as how the enzyme affected some aspect of disease. Many scientists made presentations related to detoxification and drug metabolism.

Being a non-society, we have no funds. This means that each participant had to pay their own way to the meeting. There were no invited speakers. Every senior scientist was given the opportunity to speak while students and post doctoral investigators could present posters. This year we were fortunate that the Slovenian Research Agency awarded us a grant that allowed us to subsidize the cost of meals and lodging for some graduate and post doctoral students. The Slovenian Biochemistry Society partially paid for the registration of Slovene participants who were members of the Society.

Though the articles represent a permanent record of what was presented they do not reveal the lively scientific discussions that occurred after each talk or during the poster session. Many

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new collaborations have emerged among participants attending previous meetings. It can be expected that the same will occur after this meeting as a result of people having time to meet and talk with fellow scientists in a relaxed atmosphere.

I must thank my three co-editors who reviewed the manuscripts with me. These were Greg Duester, Edmund Maser and Bryce Plapp. In addition, my appreciation must be extended to other participants who served as the second reviewer. No meeting is successful just because the science is interesting. I have been fortunate to have my wife serve as the non-scientific organizer for many of the meetings. As mentioned above, I need to thank Tea and Tomaz for all their help in assuring that the 14th meeting was a huge success. Lastly, I want to thank Emma O'Connell, managing editor of the Journal, for her help and patience and Dr. James Bond, Editor in Chief of the Journal, for approving us to be included in a special edition of the Journal.

Now that this meeting and publication is part of our twenty six year history Esther and I are ready to start planning the next meeting. It will most likely be in the States in July 2010. We invite scientists who have not attended previous meetings join us and become part of our carbonyl family. Please contact me so I can add your name and email address to our growing list of potential participants.