WELCOME – “HOW IMMUNOLOGY HAS WON IN HUNGARY”

This quotation is from the late *János Gergely*, the internationally best recognized Hungarian immunologist of the last decades. He said this sentence just after the highly successful 8th International Congress of Immunology at Budapest, in 1992. The series of Signals and Signal Processing in Immune System conferences (held every two years since 1979), the Basic and Clinical Immunogenomics (2004) and Immunoinformatics-Immunomics (2006) all confirm the significance of contemporary Hungarian immunology. Some major topics in basic immunology include regulation of innate immunity, complement system, cytokine research, Fc- and Toll-like receptors, as well as inflammation biology studies. Much effort is devoted to better understanding of molecular details of antigen presentation by dendritic cell and vaccination. There are well-established traditional as well as new centres of clinical immunology (autoimmunity, immuno-dermatology, pregnancy-related topics, asthma and immunodeficiency) in Hungary, e.g. in Debrecen, Szeged, Pécs and Budapest. Recently, genomics, proteomics, systems biology and bioinformatics have had a strong influence on immune research at both methodological and conceptual levels. There are core facilities nationwide, serving these high-throughput technologies and data evaluations on well-designed collaborative basis.

The Hungarian Society for Immunology plays a principal role in the organization of domestic immune research by organizing annual scientific conferences. The next (40th) conference will be held in Kecskemét between 12–14 October, 2011. Within the frames of the Divisions of Medical- as well as Biological Sciences of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, a common Committee of Immunology is in charge of establishing the most important new scientific trends and making academic awards in both experimental and clinical immunology. The popular communication for students and interested public is managed at the Day of Immunology, usually in April, every year. Hungarian immunology research is widely accepted internationally, which is reflected by the regular invitation of Hungarian fellow immunologists as keynote speakers and their active presence in various high-ranking scientific journals.

We are very proud that the originators and organizers of such prestigious international conferences as the 1st European Conference of Microbiology and Immunology decided to bring this meeting to Budapest.

Let me also warmly welcome the start of a new journal *European Journal of Microbiology and Immunology* (EU-JMI) founded based on Hungarian initiative but functioning with the support of international scientific board. Hopefully EU-JMI will publish outstanding papers from this rapidly growing field and will contribute to development of international collaborations.

How has immunology won in Hungary? I am convinced that by plenty of collaboration and collegiate support. If one enters into an immunology meeting in Hungary, they immediately find themselves faced with benevolence and a friendly atmosphere.

This is a kind of heritage from our great ancestors. Hopefully, our generation will be able to pass it on to our younger followers.

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