Published in final edited form as:

J Neuroimmune Pharmacol. 2016 April ; 11(Suppl 1): S1–S2. doi:10.1007/s11481-016-9661-1.

The 22nd Scientific Conference of the Society on Neuroimmune Pharmacology

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Keywords

Brain; HIV; Drug abuse; Alcohol; Behavior; Pharmacology; Immunology; Neuroscience

On behalf of the organizers and the president, Dr. Sanjay Maggirwar, we welcome you to the 22nd Scientific Conference of the Society on Neuroimmune Pharmacology (SNIP). The meeting will take place for the first time in Poland, in the historic city of Krakow, from April 6 to 9, 2016. The conference will present some of the newest and most cutting edge research in the intersecting areas of neuroscience, immunology, pharmacology and its translational aspects.

Drug and alcohol abuse as well as HIV infection and AIDS continue to be an important part of the scientific program but this year also brings several new scientific and organizational features to emphasize the theme of broadening the association of our society with new contributors. First, SNIP convenes its conference for the first time in Poland with the specific intention to promote scientific exchange and collaborations of old and new SNIP members with all of Europe and beyond. Second, SNIP is partnering with the Neurotoxicity Society to organize the opening Presidential Symposium. Third, a special symposium will be jointly held by the Italian Society for Pharmacology Symposium (SIF) and SNIP. Fourth, specific attention will be drawn to the role of glial cells in aspects of drug abuse and neuronal injury and degeneration. Fifth and sixth, the potential of physical exercise and of the gut microbiome to affect the neuroimmune axis will be prominently discussed, and seventh, early stage investigators will for the first time present their work in short 5-min talks. Finally, in order to accommodate all of the exciting science of the conference, we will have nine and thus more symposia than during any previous conferences.

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Conflict of Interest The authors have no conflicts of interest.

Disclosure SNIP and Springer, the publisher of JNIP, are parties to a contractual arrangement. RJN is the chair and MK the vice chair of SNIP's meeting committee.

SNIP has a long-standing commitment to support the developing generations of young scientists. Accordingly, SNIP bestows Early Career Investigator (ECI) Travel Awards (ECITA) onto pre-doctoral and postdoctoral scientists using a competitive application and committee based assessment procedure. However, all ECIs will present their work at a special ECI poster session that will kick off the meeting on Wed evening, April 6th. Moreover, trainees will for the first time have a chance to present their research in 5-min short talks during a special symposium on Saturday. In addition, trainees and all ECITA recipients will have a chance to network with seasoned scientists during the 'Meet the Mentors' lunch on Thursday.

The conference includes two major poster sessions, a format of presenting science that traditionally provides the most direct opportunity for discussion. Besides the ECI posters on Wednesday, a second poster session will be held on Thursday showcasing the contributions of all non-ECI participants.

Four plenary lectures will cover some major new scientific and technological developments. Dr. Kamel Khalili will give the first plenary talk on Thursday morning discussing the use of CRISPR technology to eliminate HIV from infected cells. Dr. Anne Bang will present "Human Induced Pluripotent Stem Cell (hiPSC) Based Disease Models in Drug Discovery" at the second plenary talk on Thursday afternoon. The third plenary talk will be presented by Dr. Sieghart Soppor and address "Microglia activation and neurotransmitter disturbances in the SIV/macaque model for AIDS". The fourth and final plenary talk will feature Dr. Howard Gendelman speaking about "Neuroimmune transformation in Parkinson's disease".

Nine symposia scheduled throughout the conference will discuss specific topics. The presidential symposium on Thursday will be a collaborative event of SNIP and the Neurotoxicity Society and examine neurotoxic and neuroinflammatory effects of drugs of abuse and cART drugs. The second symposium will consider the link between neuroinflammation and the gut: What is its relevance to HIV infection, neurological pathology, and therapy? The third symposium will analyze the neurobiology of exercise in drug abuse and neurodegenerative diseases and will be sponsored by the Academy of Physical Education, Katowice, Poland. Friday, April 8, will start with the fourth, this year's local host symposium supported by the Institute of Pharmacology, Polish Academy of Sciences. A special symposium will be jointly held by the Italian Society for Pharmacology Symposium (SIF) and SNIP and include a panel-style question and answer session. The sixth symposium will consider astrocyte-neuron interactions: metabolism, ion homeostasis and impulse propagation. Friday's session will conclude early to allow a free afternoon so that participants can tour historic sites in or around Krakow.

On Saturday, April 9, the seventh symposium will discuss the role of glial cells in neurodegeneration. Afterwards, the ECI symposium will provide trainees an opportunity to present their research in 5-min short talks. The last symposium of the conference will present a cross-section of the research performed by members of SNIP.

Krakow is an old city in South-Eastern Poland. A free afternoon on Friday, April 8th, will give the opportunity to explore and discover the city's rich history. This year's banquet and

awards ceremony will take place, with a brief tour included, on Saturday evening at the famous Wieliczka Salt Mines near Krakow. The banquet's speaker, Dr. Alexei Verkhratsky, will reassess neurocentrism: Principles of astrogliopathology.

This conference would not have been possible without the support and contributions of numerous people and institutions. We thank the National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA) of the National Institute of Health (NIH) for support via an R13 DA023184 conference award (to S.L. Chang), the Polish Academy of Sciences, Warszawa, Poland, the Academy of Physical Education, Katowice, Poland, the Institute of Pharmacology, Krakow, Poland, the Institute of Neuroimmune Pharmacology, Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine, Florida International University, USA; the Ponce Research Institute, Ponce Health Sciences University, USA, and the Center for AIDS Research (CFAR) of the University of Miami, USA, for financial and organizational support. We also wish to recognize the generosity of Dr. Pravin Singhal, Long Island Jewish Medical Center for support of trainee participation in the annual SNIP meeting. We thank the president, and members of the executive, ECITA, finance and meeting committees of SNIP for their hard work. Special thanks goes to Dr. Michal Toborek, who established links between SNIP and the scientific community of the host country, and moreover, helped to secure funding from scientific institutions in Poland. Finally, the conference was organized in partnership with the Institute of Pharmacology, Krakow, Poland, and the Academy of Physical Education, Katowice, Poland. Now, enjoy exciting science in a historic location.

Acknowledgments

The meetings of SNIP are in part supported by an R13 DA023184 conference award (to S.L. Chang) and this year's meeting is also supported by funds from the Polish Academy of Sciences, the Academy of Physical Education, the Institute of Pharmacology, Krakow, Poland, the Institute of Neuroimmune Pharmacology, Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine, Florida International University, USA, the Carol Swarts MD Emerging Neuroscience Laboratory University of Nebraska Medical Center, the Ponce Research Institute, Ponce Health Sciences University, USA, the Journal of Neuroimmune Pharmacology, Dr. Pravin Singhal, Long Island Jewish Medical Center and the Center for AIDS Research (CFAR) of the University of Miami. The preparation of this commentary was supported by NIH grants MH087332, MH104131, MH105330, DA026306 (MK), MD007579, GM106970 (RJN).