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Highlights from the World Congress of Microcirculation 2018

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The 11th World Congress for Microcirculation (WCM2018) was held in Vancouver, BC, Canada from September 9–13, 2018. It marked the first return of the Congress to Canada since its inaugural meeting in Toronto in 1975. The World Congress is held on a rotating 4 year basis in a unique location that aligns with a regional microcirculatory society that includes, but isn't exclusive to Japan, China, Australia and New Zealand, North America, Britain and the European Union. The theme of WCM2018 was "Microcirculation in health and disease" with a focus on emerging technologies. Its objective was to advance research and education in the microcirculation, aptly described as "an organ within an organ". As microcirculatory function is linked to disease progression, its viewed as a rich therapeutic target in the treatment of peripheral vascular disease, diabetes, stroke, dementia, cancer and sepsis. Working with the microcirculatory societies around the world and our scientific advisory committee, the local organizing committee developed an exciting meeting with research presentations concentrated within six themes: A) Tone Regulation, Oxygen Transport and Blood Flow Control; B) Angiogenesis and Remodeling; C) Inflammation, Injury, Oxidative Stress and Immunology; D) Lymphatics, Permeability, and Cell Surface Interactions; E) Bioengineering, Computational Analysis and Instrumentation; and F) Translational Microcirculation.

Four hundred people attended the 4-day conference which consisted of two plenary lectures, two honorary award lectures, and 34 designed symposia. Each symposium (2 hr duration) was moderated by a chair who set the scientific theme and invited three speakers (30 min presentation). Greater than 150 abstracts were presented at the three poster sessions and are reprinted in this issue of "Microcirculation. Each poster session was moderated and trainee posters were judged by 3 senior investigators with a total of 15 poster prizes offered over the sessions.

In designing the conference, organizers paid carefully attention to career stage, gender and minority status. In this regard, > 40% of the speakers were female, and >40% were early career investigators (assistant professor or younger). Our commitment to early career investigators was enforced further with the inclusion of 15 young investigators as symposium chairs or co-chairs. The local organizing committee also added six small group workshops to further engage early career trainees as well as established investigators. Three

workshops focused on science-as-a-career and topics, including: 1) Transitioning from trainee-to-academic; 2) Interacting with industry; and 3) Publishing high impact research. Three further workshops focused on emerging methodology that included: 1) An introduction to fMRI; 2) An introduction to multi-photon imaging; and 3) Using gene-altering technology.

Special thanks is extended to the local organizing committee chaired by Dr. Shayn Peirce-Cottler (University of Virginia & President of the Microcirculatory Society) and Dr. Donald Welsh (University of Western Ontario). Our conference management team was comprised of Ms. Suzanne Brett Welsh (Secretariat, University of Western Ontario), Dr. William Cupples (Professor, Simon Fraser University, Vancouver), and A111; their dedicated planning efforts led to a seamless program. The conference was supported by 35 sponsors and special consideration is due the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, the Canadian Institute for Health Research, the Microcirculatory Society, the Robarts Research Institute, Schulich School of Medicine (University of Western Ontario), Danish Myotechnology, MBF Bioscience, the Totman Foundation (University of Vermont), Monash University, and lastly the journal "Microcirculation".

Abbreviations:

WCM2018	World Congress of Microcirculation 2018
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