

CMSCenterPiece

The 2008 CMSC Annual Meeting Newsletter

Denver, CO

Edited by June Halper and James Simsarian, MD • May 29, 2008

At noon on Wednesday, Dr. Corey Ford kicked off the 2008 CMSC Annual Meeting and encouraged all participants to Learn! Enjoy! Network! Diane Lowden, President of the IOMSN, and Dr. Carlos Oehninger, President of LACTRIMS, welcomed participants on behalf of their organizations. Executive Director June Halper then highlighted the multidisciplinary teams of health care professionals who support people with MS. Speaking of the continuing need to support and train young clinician researchers, Dr. James Simsarian, President of the Foundation of the CMSC, encouraged all participants to wear the blue buttons. Their message-- "I'm changing the face of MS"— serves as an individual and group message of hope.

Donald Paty Lecture

In a lecture that honors one of CMSC's founders, Dr. Jock Murray reviewed the twists and turns in the history of MS diagnosis over Wednesday's lunch. Although historical cases of conditions resembling MS had been identified as early as 1400, Charcot's description in 1868 is the first recognized. Over the last century and a half, clinicians have refined these definitions and researchers have developed diagnostic and prognostic tests and surrogate markers for this disease. Though science has progressed rapidly, particularly in the last 30 years, MS is still a clinical diagnosis, supported and confirmed by laboratory tests.

The June Halper MS Fellowship Award, a new three-year education grant, will support medical students working in the laboratories of CMSC members. Sponsored by Bayer HealthCare Pharmaceuticals, the scholarship honors the beaming CMSC Executive Director.



Five important papers in MS

On Wednesday afternoon, Dr. Michael Kaufman of the Carolinas Medical Center highlighted five research articles with clinical relevance to MS.

- **Further evidence that Epstein Barr virus (EBV) could cause MS.** Researchers found expressed EBV proteins in areas of inflammation and antibodies for those proteins in brains from 22 individuals who had MS.
- **An unknown peptide in MS attracts peripheral T cells to multiple and diffuse sites**

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within the CNS—Researchers looked at individual cells from four autopsied MS patients—all had unique T-cell receptors, suggesting that each brain had unique T-cell clones. We currently don't have good evidence of what antigen is attracting T-cells in MS.

- **REGARD head-to-head trial of subcutaneous IFN β -1a versus glatiramer acetate shows a need to revise clinical trial assumptions.**-- For relapsing-remitting MS, this trial shows clinical equivalence of these two drugs: MRI data favor IFN β -1a while atrophy data favor glatiramer acetate. However, the mixed results suggest that trials that target more limited groups could help tease out more specific results.
- **A new hypothesis for the role of α B-crystallin heat-shock protein (CRYAB)**—A study using a mouse model of MS—murine EAE—found that these mice that also lacked CRYAB had more serious disease than other mice with EAE. Because immune response to CRYAB is common in active plaques of people with MS, treatment with CRYAB might be a new research target for therapies.
- **Daclizumab as add-on therapy for RRMS failing IFN therapy**—The CHOICE study, a three-armed clinical trial, showed that the drug daclizumab may work with IFN β to improve outcomes for patients. Further studies will be needed to explore the potential for combination therapies using these two drugs.

Thursday highlights

- 8 am—CMSC/ACTRIMS Lecture: “MRI and Our Understanding of MS,” Dr. Jerry Wolinsky, Capitol Ballroom
- 1pm: Two afternoon workshops deal with important MS related issues
 - “Statistics and Analyses: How Do I Read This Stuff?,” Gary Cutter Ph.D. and Stacey Cofield, Ph.D. (Mineral E).
 - “Caregiver Burden,” Mary Beth Quig, Ph.D. and Carol Saunders, MSCN
- 4:30 pm—Symposium: “Strategies for Optimal Disease Management, Adherence, and Outcomes in MS Patients” (Capitol 5-7), sponsored by Bayer.
- 6:30 pm—Book launch of Esclerosis Múltiple—at the FCMSC booth
- 7:30 pm---Dessert Symposium: “The Multidisciplinary Team in Multiple Sclerosis: Harnessing the Array of Diagnostic and Therapeutic Tools to Improve Quality of Life,” (Capitol 1-3), sponsored by EMD Serono.