

The 5th International Academy of Autoimmunity

Warsaw, Poland
December 13–15, 2019

The 5th International Academy of Autoimmunity 2019 was held in Warsaw on December 13–15, 2019. At this event – unique for our country, as well as for the whole of Central and Eastern Europe – the latest scientific research and current knowledge in the field of basic and clinical immunology were presented by researchers from the USA, Israel, Italy, Hungary, and Poland.

The conference was organized by the world-renowned experts in the field of immunology: Prof. Yehuda Shoenfeld from Zabłudowicz Centre for Autoimmune Diseases, Sheba Medical Centre (Affiliated to Tel-Aviv University), Past Incumbent of the Laura Schwarz-Kipp Chair for Research of Autoimmune Diseases, head of the Mosaic of Autoimmunity Project of Saint Petersburg University, and Prof. Abul K. Abbas from the University of California in San Francisco – on a partnership with the National Institute of Geriatrics, Rheumatology and Rehabilitation (NIGRiR), which was represented by Dr Marek Tombarkiewicz, its director, and Dr Maria Maślińska, deputy-head of the Early Arthritis Clinic.

Polish representatives at the conference included Prof. Piotr Głuszko (head of the Rheumatology Clinic of the NIGRiR), Prof. Jacek Witkowski (president of the Polish Society of Experimental and Clinical Immunology, head of the Department of Physiopathology of the Medical University of Gdańsk), Prof. Lidia Rudnicka (president of the Polish Dermatological Society, head of the Dermatology Clinic of the Medical University of Warsaw), Dr Justyna Roszkiewicz (Department of Paediatric Rheumatology of the Medical University of Lodz), and Prof. Eugeniusz Kucharz and Prof. Przemysław Kotyla (Department of Internal Medicine, Rheumatology and Clinical Immunology of the Medical University of Silesia in Katowice).

The event was held under the honorary patronage of Minister of Health Prof. Łukasz Szumowski. The substantive patronage was given by: the national consultant in the field of rheumatology Prof. Marek Brzosko, the Polish Neurological Society, the Polish Society of Experimental and Clinical Immunology, the Polish Society for Rheumatology, and the Polish Dermatological Society.

The 5th International Academy of Autoimmunity was a three-day lecture conference devoted to autoimmune diseases and mechanisms of immunization. Issues of modern cancer immunotherapy, its achievements, and its challenges were also presented.

The inaugural lecture, given by Prof. Yehuda Shoenfeld, was entitled „Mosaics of Autoimmunity” and concerned the most important discoveries and issues in the field of autoimmunity. Participants were also able to enjoy the presentation on current problems of immunology presented by Prof. Abul Abbas, the author of internationally recognized immunology textbooks. Professor Abbas also discussed the current state of knowledge concerning the abilities of modern immunology to create new therapies for autoimmune diseases in the fields of rheumatology, oncology, and neurology.

During a three-day session, lectures concerning fibromyalgia, multiple sclerosis, Sjögren’s syndrome, and the problem of multi-morbidity in autoimmune diseases were presented. Professor Roberto Giacomelli discussed several topics, including Sjögren’s syndrome, Still’s disease, and the use of bone marrow transplants in autoimmune diseases. Professor Joab Chapman – a recognized neurologist – together with Dr Efrat Shavit, presented contemporary problems of multiple sclerosis treatment and a novel approach to the problem of psychoses, exploring the role of autoimmune phenomena. Professor Howard Amital presented the current state of knowledge and research on fibromyalgia, as well as drugs from the JAK kinase inhibitors group. The use of biosimilars and the problem of drug switching between medications with similar active properties were also discussed – this hot topic being a subject of a lecture by Prof. Zoltan Szekanecz from Hungary. Another interesting topic raised during the conference, this time by Prof. Paweł Płudowski, was the problem of vitamin D deficiency and supplementation, an important cofactor in autoimmune inflammatory processes. The importance of infection primarily with the Epstein-Barr virus and the role of microbiome in Sjögren’s syndrome was discussed by Dr Maria Maślińska. Doctor

Nicola Bizzaro discussed topics concerning diagnostics in autoimmune diseases, the sensitivity and specificity of laboratory tests, and the need for cooperation between a clinician and the medical lab staff.

The event was attended by over 200 specialists from around the world, representing various fields of medicine and related sciences – both experienced scientists and young adepts of medical art, who are just beginning the career of clinician or researcher.

It was an event of particular importance for Polish science, enabling participants to learn about recent achievements in the field of autoimmunity, exchange their knowledge and experience, while establishing valuable contacts with other members of the scientific community.

The 5th International Academy of Autoimmunity was held in the Conference Room of the Radisson Collection Hotel, at 24 Grzybowska St. in Warsaw. The organizers provided simultaneous translation of all lectures covered by the program.

The organizers and co-organizers would like to thank all lecturers, invited guests, and other persons involved in the organization of the conference – both from the National Institute of Geriatrics, Rheumatology and Rehabilitation itself and from other scientific institutions and societies, who supported this event with passion and commitment. We hope for further fruitful cooperation in the field of science in the future.

Maria Maślińska



Photo 1. Dr Maria Maślińska, Prof. Yehuda Shoenfeld, Dr Marek Tombarkiewicz, and Prof. Piotr Głuszko.



Photo 2. Our volunteers Dr Zuzanna Łukasik and Dr Tomasz Wysocki.



Photo 3. Some of the conference participants.