

## **9<sup>th</sup> International Congress on Autoimmunity** *26–30 March 2014, Nice*

### **9. Międzynarodowy Kongres nt. Autoimmunologii** *26–30 marca 2014 r., Nicea*

On 26–30 March 2014, the 9<sup>th</sup> International Congress on Autoimmunity was held in Nice – organized and presided over by Professor Yehuda Shoenfeld of the Sheba Medical Center and Tel-Aviv University Sackler Faculty of Medicine (Israel). The Congress brought together medical professionals from around the world interested in the current developments in immunology and autoimmunity. Notably, Poland was represented in the international consultative committee by Professor Piotr Wiland, who also hosted one of the sessions.

Participants of the Congress included specialists from many fields: immunologists, neurologists, rheumatologists, both researchers and clinicians.

Multiple sessions were devoted to new and constantly improved diagnostic methods devised for specific diseases and focused on the search for new biomarkers useful in defining the immune response.

One of the noticeable topics of discussion concerned pathogenetic pathways, particularly in the context of the ongoing search for new biological therapies; results of experiments conducted with such therapies were also shared.

A lot of attention was paid to the use of immunoglobulins and transplantation of stem cells as a treatment used in extreme situations. Professor Dominique Farge Bancel (France) presented her team's experiences with the hematopoietic stem cell transplantation, suggesting that in the case of disease such as scleroderma, this therapy should be undertaken early on in the course of the disease, to increase the chances of its efficiency and to limit the number of complications.

The field of gynecology was also represented at the Congress, with Professor Catherina de Carolis (Italy) presenting an interesting lecture on the HELLP syndrome (hemolysis, elevated liver enzyme levels, and low platelet levels), which can be considered not only as a complication, but also as a new autoimmune entity.

A separate panel was devoted to vaccinations and the development of autoimmune diseases, with discussions being held on a number of related phenomena, in particular the ASIA syndrome (autoimmune syndrome induced by adjuvants).

Some of the topics discussed at the Congress aroused not only keen interest, but also quite a few smiles on participants' faces – such as a surprising lecture depicting a seemingly important role of helminthes in the treatment of autoimmune diseases (“Peptides – to harness the absence (helminthes) to treat the epidemic (autoimmune) diseases” by Professor Yehuda Shoenfeld).

The above description of the Congress presents a view of a clinician, a person seeking practical answers and thus selecting subjects of interest. The account presented by a diagnostician, researcher or immunologist might be quite different, which proves that the Congress devoted to a wide range of autoimmune phenomena, presents multiple possibilities to acquire new knowledge and is extremely useful to specialists of all fields.

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