

# The International Union of Physiological Sciences IUPS Editorial V

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## The International Union of Physiological Sciences IUPS Editorial V

In our last IUPS editorial (1), we promised to report on the outcome of the IUPS Council and International Scientific Program Committee (ISPC) meetings held in December 2007 in Kyoto. Here we shall first describe the progress with regard to the generation of the scientific program for the 2009 IUPS Congress in Kyoto and thereafter deal with some of the decisions made by the IUPS Council.

In one of our 2006 IUPS editorials (2), we described the composition of the ISPC and listed the first 10 Invited Lecturers selected at the 1st ISPC meeting held in Osaka in 2006. One of the important tasks for the 2nd ISPC meeting was to complete the list of Invited Lecturers and, as part of this exercise, compose the program of Named Lectures. The most important event at any IUPS Congress is the Wallace Fenn Lecture. The ISPC decided to ask Erwin Neher to deliver this lecture, and we are delighted to report here that Erwin accepted our invitation and has indicated that he will speak about "Biophysical dissection of neurotransmitter release." Erwin Neher is of course one of the world's most distinguished physiologists, winner of the 1991 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine, and has also served IUPS extremely well as Vice President from 1993 to 1997 and as Chair of the 2001 Nominating Committee. The ISPC decided to repeat the successful idea, established at the 2005 San Diego Congress, that the serving IUPS President should give a lecture named as the IUPS President's Lecture. In San Diego, Allen Cowley gave an outstanding and very well attended lecture, and in 2009 in Kyoto Akimichi Kaneko will deliver his Presidential Lecture on "Neural mechanisms of lateral inhibition in vision: proton-mediated feedback from horizontal cells to cones in the retina." Bruce McEwen (USA) will give the Ernst Knobil Lecture; Sten Grillner (Sweden), the T.P. Feng Lecture; Brian Barnes (USA), the Knut Schmidt-Nielsen Lecture; Rene Bindels (The Netherlands), the Robert Pitts Lecture; and Tobias Wang (Denmark), the August Krogh Lecture. The other Invited Lecturers selected at the 2nd ISPC meeting were Nadia Rosenthal (Italy), Shigetada Nakanishi (Japan), Stefan Broer

(Australia), Yoshinori Fujiyoshi (Japan), Michel Lazdunski (France), Ramon Latorre (Chile), Fernando Nottebohm (USA), James Hudspeth (USA), and Yoram Rudy (USA).

As usual for IUPS Congresses, the symposia make up the bulk of the program and can in many ways be regarded as the core element. At the 2009 Congress, there will be two kinds of symposia: regular IUPS symposia and whole-day/Physiological Society of Japan symposia. In both cases, they are grouped according to the IUPS Commission/Committee structure. It is of course impossible here in this short editorial to list all the symposia and all the invited speakers. However, the whole Congress Program is available on the Congress website (<http://www.iups2009.com/>). It is worth mentioning here that the ISPC and the local scientific program committee (LSPC) had great difficulties making the final selection of invited speakers. Fortunately, physiology is a rich field with a large number of outstanding investigators, and it is simply physically—and financially—impossible to invite more than a small percentage of these excellent colleagues. As a consequence, and as has been the case for all previous IUPS Congresses, the program committees are very aware that, unfortunately, many prominent physiologists could not be invited to speak in Kyoto in 2009. The task of selecting speakers at international physiological congresses has always been troublesome, but it is clear that with time this task has become progressively more difficult, simply because there are many more active scientists now than there were in the past.

Currently scheduled for presentation in Kyoto next year are 44 regular IUPS symposia, each lasting 2.5 hours. Each symposium has a chair and a co-chair and typically four to five invited speakers. This plan leaves room for a couple of voluntary oral communications, selected from the submitted abstracts, in the particular field covered by each symposium. As mentioned in our last editorial (1), the chair of the ISPC, Professor Yoshihisa Kurachi, received a very large number of proposals for symposia from the international physiological community. Although it was gratifying to see this great

interest in generating the Congress program, the substantial surplus of proposals inevitably meant that many good suggestions could not be used. Since the IUPS Congress is linked to the Annual Meeting of the Physiological Society of Japan, the Congress will benefit enormously from a series of whole-day symposia covering all the different Commission fields. Although these symposia were generated by The Physiological Society of Japan and not by the ISPC, there has of course been a considerable degree of coordination to ensure that the regular IUPS symposia and the whole-day/Physiological Society of Japan symposia do not overlap with regard to scientific topics or speakers but rather complement each other. It is also important to emphasize that the symposia organized by The Physiological Society of Japan have international speakers and are co-chaired internationally. In view of the substantial surplus of potential excellent speakers, the general rule has been that nobody should be invited to speak in more than one symposium.

Finally, the Congress will feature a number of tutorials and workshops covering, like the symposia, a wide range of topics. We believe that the comprehensive program will provide an excellent overview of the latest advances over the whole range of the physiological sciences and that the speakers selected represent the highest quality of contemporary physiology.

IUPS has been very lucky in having had outstanding ISPC chairpersons who have been able and willing to spend the very considerable amounts of time and energy needed to steer the development of Congress programmes toward satisfactory solutions. Walter Boron did a most excellent job for the extremely successful 2005 San Diego Congress, and Yoshihisa Kurachi has done an equally and truly superb job for the 2009 Kyoto Congress. Both chairpersons were initially selected as chairs of their respective LSPC and subsequently chosen by IUPS as ISPC chairs. It clearly makes sense, also in the future, to maintain this degree of coordination between local and international program selectors. The IUPS Council, at its meeting in Kyoto in December 2007, therefore decided to formalize the arrangement whereby the ISPC chair has to be selected from the LSPC. It was also decided to formalize the arrangement, which has been in operation for both the San Diego and Kyoto

Congresses, whereby there has to be a Vice Chair of the ISPC, who is selected by the IUPS Council.

A really outstanding scientific program is obviously a prerequisite for a successful Congress, but it would not be meaningful to have created a great event without a large international audience. It is inevitably the case that financial resources are a factor limiting attendance, particularly so for potential participants from developing countries. The IUPS Council traditionally allocates a budget to enable the participation of young investigators from such countries who would like to present their recent work to the international community. This time, Council decided to spend at least US\$ 50,000 and maximally 100,000 for this purpose.

After the December 2007 meeting, the IUPS Council took the opportunity to visit the 2009 Congress site, namely Kyoto's International Conference Center (ICC Kyoto). This is the place where the famous Kyoto protocol was signed, and it is indeed an immensely attractive and elegant venue (<http://www.icckyo.or.jp/en/index.html>), which impressed all Council Members. Council was in no doubt that the Kyoto ICC would provide a truly excellent frame for the 2009 Congress.

As noted in our last editorial (1), a major part of the December 2007 Council Meeting

was devoted to discussion of the report from the Long-Range Planning Committee (LRPC). Council approved the general thrust of the report, and, after some relatively minor changes, the LRPC report has recently been formally approved by the IUPS Council and is now displayed on the IUPS website (<http://www.iups.org>). We plan to discuss the recommendations from the LRPC in a future IUPS editorial.

Since the LRPC will recommend that IUPS continues to organize international congresses every four years, a call for invitations to host the 38th IUPS Congress in 2017 has been issued and sent to all National Physiological Societies. The IUPS office in Paris should receive invitations before the end of January 2009. In accordance with the established practice, the decision about the location of the 2017 Congress will be made by the IUPS General Assembly at the 2009 Congress. The 2013 Congress is scheduled to take place in Birmingham, England, and this decision, made at the General Assembly in San Diego, will have to be formally confirmed in Kyoto next year.

Like all organizations, IUPS has to take care of reproducing itself. At the General Assembly, which occurs at every IUPS Congress, elections of a new Council and a new Executive Committee have to occur. The IUPS Constitution states that no Officer can

serve more than two consecutive terms. The same applies to ordinary Council Members, with the exception that such a member may serve up to three terms if subsequently elected as an Officer. At the 2009 IUPS Congress, an unusually large proportion of the Executive Committee will have completed their two terms of office, and it will be necessary to elect a new President, Secretary General, and Vice President. At the December 2007 Council Meeting, a Nominating Committee, which will present a slate to the 2009 General Assembly, was established with the following composition: Shu Chien, Allen Cowley, Akimichi Kaneko, Ole Petersen (Chair), Chumpol Pholpramool, and Irene Schulz. The Nominating Committee will meet in September 2008, and in this context a letter has been sent out to all IUPS member societies inviting nominations before the end of June 2008. We hope for a good response! ■

### References

1. Kaneko A, Petersen OH. The International Union of Physiological Sciences editorial IV. *Physiology* 22: 354, 2007.
2. Kaneko A, Petersen OH. The International Union of Physiological Sciences editorial II. *Physiology* 21: 228, 2006.