

The ATA in Vancouver, Canada, 2004

THIS ISSUE PRESENTS THE ABSTRACTS from the ATA's annual meeting being held in Vancouver this September. The meeting continues its dual focus on basic and clinical aspects of thyroidology. Areas of emphasis of the meeting include technology and its impact on thyroid research, the effects of thyroid hormone on the brain and the heart, a translational symposium on environmental toxicology and the thyroid, and a particularly important section on the impact of iodine nutrition on the thyroid. This last session, which will be moderated by Dr. Lewis Braverman, is dedicated to the memory of John T. Dunn, who unfortunately passed from us in the past year.

As in past years, the award lectures promise to be a particular highlight of the meeting. The 2004 Sidney H. Ingbar Distinguished Lectureship will be given by Dr. Sandra McLachlan on "An Odyssey in Thyroid Autoimmunity." The Clinical Keynote Address will be given by Dr. Theo Visser, on "Thyroid Hormone Transport into Cells." Finally, the Paul Starr Award Lecture will be given by Dr. Paul Walfish on "Evolving Strategies in the Detection and Management of Thyroid Carcinoma: Past and Future Perspectives."

The impact of technology of thyroid research is examined in several sessions; one session examines thyroid nodules and cancers with a panel of molecular markers and a second reviews the use of expression arrays in evaluating thyroid disease. It is remarkable that many of the molecular techniques that have evolved over the past twenty years are now in standard use, not just in research but in clinical diagnosis and management. We believe that these advances will make help improve the diagnosis of thyroid disorders and aid in the monitoring of thyroid hormone therapy.

Clinical symposia at the meeting will focus on a number of areas where new and exciting data exist to guide clinical decision making for patients with thyroid disease. These areas include the evaluation of thyroid cancer, the spectrum of autoimmune thyroiditis, and iodine nutrition. In addition, several CME symposia have been designed to address

emerging data in the treatment of hypothyroidism and thyroid cancer, maternal and fetal thyroid health, and the use of T₃. Finally, in response to numerous requests from past meeting attendees, there will be two case-based symposia, one on unusual thyroid function tests, and one on difficult thyroid management issues.

In terms of the abstracts that will be presented at the meeting, the overall number of submissions increased substantially from last year and the quality of the accepted abstracts was uniformly very high. In the basic program, several important areas will be emphasized. These include molecule markers of thyroid cancer that affect both diagnosis and prognosis. Studies in autoimmunity suggests a role for new receptors associated with the immune system in the pathogenesis of immune mediated thyroid disease, as well as further work on the differentiation of stimulating and inhibiting antibodies to the TSH receptor. Other basic abstracts focus on the action of thyroid hormone in the nervous system and the regulation of other enzyme and hormonal systems by deiodinases. The final area that appears to be of great interest is the pendrin protein and its affects on thyroid function. Together, these studies document tremendous interest in the molecular and biochemical abnormalities that lead to thyroid disease.

The clinical abstracts highlight a number of important areas in diverse aspects of thyroid disease. These include new markers for thyroid malignancy, preliminary data on radio- and chemotherapy for advanced thyroid cancer, the effects of thyroid disease during pregnancy, and the relationship between thyroid disease and cardiovascular risk.

We are looking forward to a stimulating and productive meeting, and we invite all of our ATA colleagues to join us in beautiful Vancouver, British Columbia.

—James Baker, M.D.
—Mary Samuels, M.D.