Profile

The Hellenic Society of Hypertension was founded in 1973. Its goals are to make the public aware of the problem and of the consequences of hypertension, to provide physicians with up-to-date information on the disease and to promote better treatment of and research into hypertension. These aims are pursued by publishing leaflets, monographs and bulletins which are delivered to all physicians in the country, by organising scientific meetings and by providing the public media (press, radio and television) with informative features concerning hypertension. The Society also encourages the undertaking of experimental, clinical and epidemiological studies, as well as fostering cooperation with foreign hypertension units and with other national hypertension societies. Nearly 50 physicians of various specialities are registered as members of the Society.

Since 1978 a quarterly bulletin has been published which is delivered to all physicians in the country. It includes translations of current topics published in international journals and review articles written by senior members of the Society. Every 2 years a Panhellenic Congress of Hypertension takes place, and several meetings are held in different cities of Greece every year. Since both Greek and foreign researchers participate in these meetings, we gain the opportunity to learn about recent progress in hypertension research at the national and international level.

In the future a Greek Journal of Hypertension will be published by the Society, and meetings will be held in common with the Italian League against Hypertension. to be continued on page 2

WHL News

- An "In Focus" statement on Alcohol Consumption was discussed during a symposium on the occasion of the Council Conference in Leuven, Belgium, March 11, 1990. Dr. L. J. Beilin, Perth, Australia, is preparing the manuscript.

An "In Focus" paper of the WHL on Physical Activity and Hypertension was adopted at this conference and will be published soon.

- A seminar on "Protooncogenes and cardiovascular diseases" organised by the Chinese Hypertension League and the Laboratory of Cardiopulmonary Endocrinology of the Beijing Medical University was held in Beijing in January 1990 with about 200 clinical experts and basic research scientists participating. The possible role of oncogenes in the genesis of cardiovascular diseases was discussed.

- A Hypertension and Lipid Trial (HALT) will begin this year in Australia developed by the Blood Pressure Committee of the National Heart Foundation of Australia. It is a double-blind, randomised, placebo-controlled, parallel group multicentre study of five years and should answer important questions about the effect on coronary heart disease prognosis of reducing hypercholesterolaemia in hypertensive patients.

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Concerning research, there are certain difficulties. Firstly, funds are lacking. Secondly, specialised and independent hypertension units are lacking. Nevertheless, because of the growing interest in hypertension in Greece, the Hellenic Society of Hypertension tries to organise and combine the efforts of isolated researchers. Two recent measures undertaken were the establishment of awards to researchers and the organisation of multi-centre co-operative studies in Greece.

Prof. Ach. Tourkantonis
President, Hellenic Society of Hypertension
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Farewell Address

The World Hypertension League (WHL) was founded in Geneva in 1984, and I accepted to serve on the board as the first president together with Dr. Claude Lenfant as vice-president and Dr. Tom Strasser as secretary general. In the beginning, we had only a few member leagues, but the number has been increasing since, currently being 28.

It is my firm conviction that such a WHL is perhaps more important for smaller countries and developing countries. The national leagues of these countries often have a limited number of members and lack the critical mass necessary for good national meetings. Therefore, the WHL has stimulated joint meetings between national leagues, and such meetings have been very rewarding. In addition, we are very sensitive to the problem of hypertension in developing countries; for example, we organised in collaboration with the Senegal league a symposium on hypertension in Africa which was indeed a great success.

We have been working in close collaboration not only with the national hypertension leagues but also with the WHO, the International Society of Hypertension (ISH) and the European Society of Hypertension (ESH). To establish good relationships with the ISH, we asked that organisation to nominate two representatives to our board: at present, Prof. Safar from Paris and Prof. Rodicio from Madrid attend the board meetings of the WHL. I find this collaboration extremely important. The ESH was founded in Milan in 1989, and Prof. Birkenhager was elected its first president. A profile of the ESH was published in the WHL Newsletter no. 9.

The WHL board served for a first period of 3 years and was re-elected for a second 3-year term in 1987. I am convinced that 6 years as president are enough, and that we need a new president now. Therefore, I am happy that Prof. Ganten has been elected, as I feel that the league needs some fresh blood and new ideas. On the other hand, it seems better if not the entire board is replaced at once, and I am pleased that Dr. Lenfant is prepared to serve as vice-president for another term. The most active member of the board was certainly Dr. Strasser, who was appointed for another 5-year period.

I would like to thank all those with whom I have had the privilege of collaborating during these 6 years. Also, my contacts with the presidents of different national leagues have been extremely enjoyable both from a social and a scientific point of view. Major research programmes have been developed with countries such as Zaire and recently also with China. I hope it will be possible to develop similar programmes with other countries.

To the new board I would like to express two recommendations:
1. To work in close contact with the national hypertension leagues, especially in those countries where there is a major need for such collaboration.
2. To work in close contact with the ISH and regional societies of hypertension, not only in order to prevent competition but also to help the hypertension patient from our separate points of view.

Prof. A. Amery
Past President, WHL
WHL Materials

Methods and Goals of Patient Education in Hypertension

Forty participants, members of the German League against Hypertension, and a number of invited guests discussed present-day concepts and methods of educating hypertensive patients at a seminar, held in Berlin on December 15–17, 1989. F. W. Lohmann reviewed the goals of patient education. H. D. Faulhaber gave an account of hypertension and risk factor control programmes in the German Democratic Republic. H. Jeske dealt with the methodology and didactics of group education and U. Kontner with strategies of education of adults. U. Grüninger analysed patient-physician interactions in the course of the educational process by establishing a conceptual model of what is happening in and with the patient, essentially a “black box”. H. D. Basler presented his experience with group seminars for teaching patients how to cope with stress. S. Gleichmann and D. Klaus described the intensive activities of the German League in organising meetings between physicians and patients. H. M. Hüfler, a general practitioner, reported on personal experience in holding educational meetings with his patients. P. T. Sawicki spoke about the education of hypertensive diabetic patients and H. W. Hense about the role of nurses.

The workshop was comprehensive and provided good insight into up-to-date methods of educating hypertensive patients. It also gave a good picture of the intensive activities in this domain in the FRG. The proceedings will be published shortly (in German) by Springer Verlag, Heidelberg.

Letters to the Editor

An editorial by T. Strasser in the June 1989 issue of the WHL Newsletter raises the interesting question as to whether hypertension should be considered a medical discipline. The question is a very important one since in the USA hypertension has not been given its fair share of resources within the academic medical community. Why has hypertension not received such attention? Without explicitly stating it, Strasser alludes to the most relevant answer, namely, that those clinicians and researchers, clinical and preclinical, who would rightly carry such a title have themselves failed to find a common meeting ground.

Some argue that the basic dilemma for hypertension, in contrast to other diseases, is that it has many potential contributing factors, all of which can be associated with a single organ system. Institutions therefore tend to house their hypertension faculty either in renal or cardiology divisions of medicine or permit endocrinology to be home to “hypertensionologists”. One contributing factor is that clinical hypertension has few billable clinical procedures but requires extensive and costly patient contact time.

I agree with Strasser that hypertension must have an identity of its own. To resolve this dilemma, I offer the following proposal from a basic scientist: hypertension should be housed in the Department of Pharmacology. Hypertension, perhaps more than any other disorder, requires consideration of all aspects of the principles of pharmacology. Further-

“High blood pressure is not contagious, but it is the no. 1 cause of death.” — Poster from the German National Blood Pressure Programme. Artist Competition 1987.

... to be continued on page 4
more, being a disorder of regulation, it requires integration of many organ systems along with principles of endocrinology and neurosciences. In many institutions pharmacology fails to have a well-defined clinical role. Hypertension would bring to pharmacology an important clinical function. Finally, housing hypertensionologists in pharmacology departments also recognizes the critically important role played by the pharmaceutical industry in basic and in clinical hypertension research.

To strengthen hypertension as a medical discipline, departments of pharmacology could offer joint appointments to both preclinical and clinical faculty and specialists already contributing to the field of hypertension.

Morton P. Printz, Ph. D.
Dept. of Pharmacology, University of California, San Diego, USA

The editorial board always welcomes suggestions for the improvement of the WHL Newsletter. For this reason, we had circulated a questionnaire to the WHL member leagues. There was a good resonance, and the editorial office herewith wants to thank for the constructive contributions. Most respondents are satisfied with the Newsletter’s contents. However, more news on scientific results, more detailed information on discussions of major topics within the WHL and more information on materials of the individual member leagues were requested. A detailed report will be given in one of our next issues.

The WHL-Newsletter is published bimonthly by the World Hypertension League.

Board: D. Ganten (Heidelberg), President; C. Lenfant (Bethesda), Vice President; A. Amery (Leuven), Past President; T. Strasser (Geneva), Secretary General; J. L. Rodicio (Madrid); M. Safar (Paris), members.

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Calendar

13th Scientific Meeting of the International Society of Hypertension
June 24—29, 1990
Montréal, Canada
Information: Secretariat
c/o JPdL Multi Management Inc.
1410 Stanley, Suite 609
Montréal, Quebec, Canada H3A 1P8

7th German-American Epidemiology Summer School
June 17—30, 1990
Bochum, FRG
Information: Ms. C. Ewe
Abteilung für Sozialmedizin und Epidemiologie, Ruhr-Universität
Postfach 10 21 48, 4630 Bochum 1, FRG

Coronary and Cerebrovascular Effects of Antihypertensive Drugs
July 8—10, 1990
Nancy, France
Information: Mme Claude Mettavant
Dept. de Cardiologie, Hôpital Central
CO no 34, Nancy Cedex, France

1st Irvine H. Page International Hypertension Research Symposium/The National Hypertension Association (NHA) and Council Meeting for High Blood Pressure Research by the American Heart Association
September 11—15, 1990
Baltimore, Maryland, USA
Information: National Hypertension Association (High Blood Pressure)
324 East 30th Street,
New York , NY 10016, USA

Journées de l’Hypertension Arterielle
December 13—14, 1990
Paris, France
Information: CONVERGENCES-HTA 90
120, avenue Gambetta
75020 Paris, France

International Symposium on Multiple Risk Factors in Cardiovascular Disease
December 10—12, 1990
Washington DC, USA
Information: Giovanni Lorenzini
Medical Foundation
c/o Dr. Marjorie G. Hornig, Ph. D.
Baylor College of Medicine
Room 826 E, One Baylor Plaza
Houston, Texas 77030, USA