

Beijing Physiology 2008 - One World One Dream

The motto for the Beijing Olympics rang true for the physiologists who gathered in Beijing from October 19-22. The meeting represented the efforts of five physiological societies to create a new format for international meetings in which each society contributed to the scientific program and provided financial support for its own participation. The APS provided partial travel support for 25 invited speakers and made 31 travel awards to junior scientists presenting their work at the meeting.

The participating societies in Beijing Physiology 2008 included the Chinese Association of Physiological Sciences, The Physiological Society (UK), the American Physiological Society, the Canadian Physiological Society, and the Australian Physiological Society. In addition, the meeting was co-sponsored by the International Union of Physiological Sciences (IUPS), the Federation of the Asian and Oceanian Physiological Societies (FAOPS), and the National Natural Science Foundation of China.

The goal of the joint conference was to provide opportunities for scientific and cultural exchanges and collaborative interactions among physiological scientists of various countries. With the rapid progress of modern biological sciences, it has become clear that physiological research should be conducted in ways that address issues of translational medicine and the application of physiological discovery to the treatment of disease. Therefore, the theme of Beijing Physiology 2008 was “Physiology in Medicine: Bridging Bench and Bedside”.

Beijing Physiology 2008 was a truly successful endeavor. Held at Xijiao Hotel and Conference Center, the meeting attracted 605 delegates (see Table 1). There were 407 full delegates (Mainland China 157; Australia 11; Canada 27; UK 58; USA 88; 66 were from other countries and regions) and 198 students (Mainland China 145; Australia 3; Canada 15; UK 11; USA 6; 18 were from the other countries and regions). Among the 605 participants, 303 were from the Mainland China, and 302 were from the foreign countries and regions: Australia 14; Canada: 42; UK 69; USA 94; 84 were from the other countries and regions. There were representatives at the meeting from 35 countries. A total of 592 abstracts were received for the meeting. Among the abstracts, there were three from invited plenary lectures, 80 from invited symposium speakers, 7 from young physiologists' symposium speakers, 21 free oral speakers and 482 posters as determined by the Scientific Organizing Committee of the conference. In addition, there were 27 exhibitions during the conference: 17 were from companies based in Mainland China and 10 from outside of China.

In advance of the scientific sessions, the APS and The Physiological Society (UK) conducted a workshop on **How to get your work published in English-language biomedical journals and trends in Western biomedical publishing**. The workshop was aimed at students, post-doctoral fellows and junior faculty and provided advice on how to tell a compelling scientific story and how to get ones research published. The speakers included Kim Barrett, David Nicholson, David Sheppard, Martin Frank, and Ian McGrath. The speakers addressed current trends in biomedical publishing and ethical practices of major English-language journals. In planning for BP 2008, it was felt that the Workshop was timely given the rapid acceleration of scientific productivity in China and the desire of many Chinese authors to publish in Western journals. The day included a

practical workshop element, providing an opportunity for groups to work with a facilitator on specific exercises related to publishing. A number of US and UK speakers participated in the meeting as facilitators, providing advice to the approximately 120 Chinese scientists and students in attendance.

For Western scientists attending BP 2008, Sunday night was the start of their orientation to Chinese hospitality. The meeting organizers arranged for a wonderful Welcome Reception with samplings of Chinese foods. On Monday morning, Professor Xian Wang, Secretary-General of the Chinese Association of Physiological Sciences (CAPS), Peking University, opened the session and welcomed the meeting participants. Her greeting was followed by one from Professor Ming Fan, President of the Conference and of CAPS. Representatives of each of the participating societies then followed with their own welcoming comments. The comments of Irving Zucker, APS President, are included in the shaded box accompanying this report.

Denis Noble, University of Oxford, UK was the opening keynote speaker, presenting a talk titled “Principles of Systems Biology from a Physiologist’s Perspective.” The talk was based on an article resulting from the Paton Lecture he delivered to the Life Sciences 2007 meeting in Glasgow in July 2007. As Noble stated, the principles are derived from his book on systems Biology, *The Music of Life* (Noble, 2006) and the article arising from his Paton Lecture (Noble, 2008). Two additional plenary lectures were presented during the meeting. Shu Chien, UCSD, presented a lecture titled “Mechanotransduction and Vascular Biology” and Ming Fan, Institute of Basic Medical Sciences, Beijing, presented a lecture titled “Advances in Hypoxic Physiology in China.”

The 16 symposia offered at BP 2008 generally included speakers from at least 3 of the participating societies. In addition, the organizing committee put together three free oral sessions on Cardiovascular and Cellular Physiology, Regulation of Ion Channels, and Metabolism, Renal and Endocrinology. In addition, the meeting included one Young Physiologists’ Symposium. These four sessions were designed to encourage the participation of scientists submitting volunteered abstracts to the meeting. In addition, 482 abstracts were presented as posters.

The Banquet for BP 2008 was held on Tuesday evening and was a typical Chinese feast with multiple courses and numerous toasts. In addition, the local organizing committee arranged for entertainment at the banquet. The entertainment included dancers performing the Peacock Dance, a short performance of the Beijing Opera, martial arts dancers called Gongfu, and a performance by Chinese mask changer. In addition to the formal entertainment, a number of physiologists volunteered or were coerced to sing songs from their home country. While the amateur entertainment started with an offering from Tai Yao, past president of the CAPS, it ended with a duet of New York, New York sung by Kim Barrett, UCSD, and Hannah Carey, University of Wisconsin.

In closing the meeting on Wednesday afternoon, the representatives of the participating societies heaped praise on the Local Organizing Committee and our Chinese hosts for their hospitality and friendship and for offering the international community with a scientifically exciting meeting.

Summary of The Beijing Joint Conference of Physiological Sciences 2008

Regular Registration		Student		Total
Country	Account	Country	Account	
CHINA	158	China	145	303
AUSTRALIA	11	Australia	3	14
Canada	27	Canada	15	42
UK	58	UK	11	69
USA	88	USA	6	94
Five participating societies	341		180	522
AFGHANISTAN	1	Denmark	1	
BELGIUM	2	Germany	1	
BRUNEI	2	Japan	1	
CHILE	2	Mexico	2	
CHINESE TAIPEI	6	Norway	1	
CZECH REPUBLIC	1	Puerto Rico	3	
DENMARK	2	South Korea	6	
FRANCE	1	The Netherlands	3	
GERMANY	3			
HONG KONG-S.A.R.	5			
HUNGARY	1			
INDONESIA	1			
IRELAND	6			
ISRAEL	1			
JAPAN	1			
MALAYSIA	3			
MEXICO	1			
NORWAY	7			
POLAND	2			
PUERTO RICO	1			
QATAR	2			
RUSSIA	1			
SAUDI ARABIA	2			
SINGAPORE	4			
SOUTH KOREA	4			
TURKEY	1			
UKRAINE	1			
ST KITTS & NEVIS	1			
Other countries and regions	65		18	83
Total	407		198	605
From 35 Countries and Regions				
Exhibitors	Foreign	Mainland China	Total	
	10	17	27	

Welcome Comments from APS President Irving Zucker

Da Jia Hao! (Greetings to all)

Professor Fan, thank you for the kind introduction. On behalf of the American Physiological Society, I thank the local organizing committee for putting together what I am sure will be an outstanding scientific meeting and a very stimulating and interactive program. We hope that this meeting will foster long term collaborations between our countries. Just as sport and the Olympic games overshadow cultures and political ideologies, so does science. Scientific discovery and the discipline of physiology provides the added potential of contributing to the health and well being of billions of human beings and furthering our understanding of all forms of life.

Xie Xie (Thank you)

Yu Zu Da Hue Chen Gong (We hope for a highly successful meeting)

