



Schizophrenia International Research

Society News

March 2009

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President's Letter

John Kane, M.D.



We are very pleased with the progress that the Society has made in a relatively brief period of time. After the 2008 Venice meeting, the Society had 723 full and student members, and we are currently in the process of renewing memberships for 2009. Additionally, the Society will soon be launching an initiative to expand membership.

The first scientific meeting sponsored by the Society was held in June in Venice, Italy. The meeting was attended by 1447 scientific attendees from 43 countries and was felt to be an excellent meeting.

The Society has contracted with a highly experienced management team (Parthenon Management Group) which is the same group that has done an exceptional job managing the American College of Neuropsychopharmacology.

We are in the process of renewing agreements with the two journals representing the field: *Schizophrenia Bulletin* and *Schizophrenia Research*. We have also entered into a close working relationship with the International Congress on Schizophrenia Research which will hold its biennial meeting in late-March or early-April of the alternating years as the Society's meeting.

As you will read elsewhere in the newsletter, we have had a series of workshops with representatives from many Asian countries to discuss opportunities for collaboration in meeting their and the Society's goals for schizophrenia research worldwide.

I am very proud to be playing a leadership role in this organization and want to express my gratitude to my fellow elected officers and members of the Executive Board, as well as the International Advisory Council for their efforts on behalf of the Society.

Venice 2008 The first scientific meeting sponsored by the Society was held June 21-25, 2008 in Venice, Italy. The conference focused on issues for new drug development and the status of new basic and clinical translational research on timely and controversial topics, such as genetics and brain imaging.



SIRS Engages Parthenon Management Group

Ronnie Wilkins

As the president of Parthenon Management Group (PMG), I am delighted and honored that SIRS has chosen our organization as its management team. PMG is a young company, formed to offer association management services to professional scientific societies. I would like to tell you a little about our philosophy and our background.



- Our goal is excellence. We want to do our job with the same level of excellence as you do your outstanding scientific research.
- Our style is to listen carefully to the members, to the officers and board members, and to non-members who attend the meeting; to gather data through surveys and evaluations; and to do our best to provide the service that you tell us you want.
- Our approach to our job is simple. We will be honest, truthful, and transparent in our work. We will be careful not to promise what we cannot deliver, and we will do what we promise. We will work hard.

My background includes having spent some 25 years in the field of vocational and medical rehabilitation, with the last 10 years being a founder and chief operating officer of an outpatient rehabilitation company. For almost 10 years I have served as the Executive Director of the American College of Neuropsychopharmacology (ACNP). I hold a Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) degree and am a Certified Association Executive (CAE).

Sarah Timm is the Director of Operations for PMG. Sarah is a Certified Meeting Planner (CMP) and will soon sit for the CAE exam as well. She worked as a full time meeting planner for some 10 years before joining the ACNP staff as Director of Meetings and Member Services, and then becoming its Deputy Director.

We are grateful to the SIRS Executive Board for giving us this opportunity, and we are excited about the task before us. Please feel free to contact us in the SIRS Executive Office at any time. You may send an email to info@SchizophreniaResearchSociety.org or call (00+1) 615-324-2370. To reach me personally, send an email to rwilkins@SchizophreniaResearchSociety.org or call (00+1) 615-324-2375.

Workshop on International Schizophrenia Research

John Kane & Lynn DeLisi

The Workshop on International Schizophrenia Research sponsored by the Schizophrenia International Research Society was held October 25th and 26th in Hong Kong. The meeting was organized by the officers of the society, and attendants included scientists from China, Japan, Malaysia, Taiwan, India, Austria and the United States. Many of the scientists were representatives from other Asian-based schizophrenia research societies. John Kane, President of the Schizophrenia International Research Society, described the society, its goals, activities, and how the group of Asian scientists could work with the society to make progress in the field. Each delegate and organizer described the state of schizophrenia research in his/her country, their current research focus, and what problems they were encountering in accomplishing their research and education goals, as well as communicating research findings to clinicians and the public. From these discussions, several issues emerged. These issues seem to be the same no matter the geographic region of the world.

Issues:

- Difficulty recruiting young people into research
- Difficulty performing research in clinical settings
- Access to medical information
- Difficulty doing follow-up studies
- Need fewer congresses with more financial support
“Congress tourism” is discouraged
- Competition
- Challenges with knowledge transfer
- Lack of impact on clinical care
- International collaborations are difficult because each country has different health care systems
- Researchers from industry find their work is considered biased and they have difficulty publishing. Yet the clinical research methodology practiced by industry is excellent
- Need for established trust with industry

Workshop on International Schizophrenia Research (continued from page 2)

- Industry scientists find that research may be focused on marketing needs
- Research methodologies differ across countries
- Research funding is very competitive and limited
- Language may be limiting, particularly for publications
- Need for diagnostic improvement and standardization
- Longitudinal studies are important and far too few
- Lack of integration of basic research into the clinic
- Need better education of lay public

The next portion of the meeting was dedicated to determining how the society can address these issues and move progress in the field of schizophrenia research forward. Several strategies were discussed and the officers have agreed to move forward in developing regional conferences with training performed by society members with specific expertise. These conferences can address many of the above mentioned issues, including recruiting young, talented scientists to the experience through travel awards. The meeting participants all agreed that the society should be a center for international information exchange. The website of the society should be expanded in the coming years to offer educational resources such as web-based training courses and research tools with references, as well as listings of world-wide fellowship training programs and posting of job opportunities. The group also agreed it is crucial for the society to play a role in educating and mentoring the next generation of schizophrenia researchers through the development of an online mentorship program and through the exchange of visiting professorships. By working together as one society and bringing in members of the multiple Asian schizophrenia research societies with a confluence of interest, research can reach across continents and improve the lives of our patients and their families.

2nd Biennial Schizophrenia International Research Conference in Florence, Italy

The 2nd Biennial Schizophrenia International Research Conference will be held in Florence, Italy, April 10-14, 2010. The first conference in 2008 was a major success for the field attracting close to 1500 researchers from 43 countries. We believe the 2010 meeting will draw even more first class researchers in the field of schizophrenia.

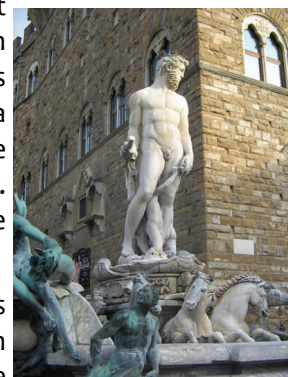


In 2005, senior schizophrenia researchers determined there is a need for a non-profit international conference focused on schizophrenia research for the community of researchers across all 7 continents world-wide. There is no other such conference that is based on input from researchers in so many different cultural settings from several different aspects of research on schizophrenia to discuss the important issues in an open non-commercial oriented venue. This conference allows researchers to openly discuss the latest findings in the field, come to a consensus about the latest controversies, and train young people in the current methodologies in 3 major areas: treatment trials, brain imaging, and genetics. Ultimately, the goal is to develop new pharmacological treatments for cures and more effective treatment of schizophrenia world-wide.

The 2nd Biennial Conference of the society will be a 5-day meeting that will focus on issues for new drug development and the status of new basic and clinical translational research on timely topics for moving forward in 2010. There will be multiple plenary sessions, panels, symposia and poster presentations submitted by international researchers. The call for proposals will be sent out in the coming months. Keep an eye on the website www.schizophreniaconference.org for further updates on the 2010 meeting. We look forward to seeing you in Florence, Italy in 2010 !



The Organizers



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Upcoming Meetings

9th World Congress of Biological Psychiatry

June 28 – July 2, 2009, Paris, France

www.wfsbp-congress.org

XVII World Congress of Psychiatric Genetics

November 4-8, 2009, San Diego, California, USA

www.ispg2009.org

Schizophrenia International Research Society Conference

April 10 -14, 2010, Florence, Italy

www.schizophreniaconference.org

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