ISH Beijing 2018 - A great success!

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With almost 3,000 registered participants, Hypertension Beijing 2018, the 27th Scientific Meeting of the International Society of Hypertension (ISH), held in cooperation with the Chinese Hypertension League (CHL) and the Asian Pacific Hypertension Society (APSH), was a great success. The scientific programme comprised 99 sessions with a total of 657 oral presentations, among these three plenary sessions with five keynote speakers, 55 parallel sessions, 13 breakfast workshops, and 28 additional free oral sessions.

From a total of 1,610 abstracts submitted, 1,591 abstracts were accepted as oral presentations or moderated poster presentations, which speaks for the high quality of submissions throughout. The faculty was truly international: 323 faculty members came from 43 countries. Counting the abstract submissions by countries and regions, China was by far the leading nation, followed by Japan, India, Australia, Ukraine and South Korea. Among the African countries, Nigeria and Cameroon took the lead, in Europe the UK and Italy, and from the Americas the US and Brazil.

In a well-orchestrated closing ceremony, a respectable number of awards were presented: beside the traditional ISH awards for New Investigators and established, meritorious Hypertension Researchers, there were 10 Young Investigator Awards of the APSH and 37 Hypertension Beijing 2018 Oral and Poster Presentations Awards. Altogether, the high scientific quality of the congress with its balance between basic and clinical science as well as public health and population science, with its incorporation of participants from all continents, was unanimously acknowledged, perfectly fitting the mission and scope of ISH as the global scientific society to reduce the world-wide burden of hypertension.

Closing ceremony awards:

Pictured Left: Best Oral Presentation Award

Pictured Right: Best Poster Presentation Award

Continued overleaf
Our Chinese hosts, Professors Zhaosu Wu, Jiguang Wang and Yuqing Zhang together with their colleagues from the Local Organizing Committee (LOC) spared no effort to make the congress as enjoyable as possible. Throughout the Presidential Dinner, Chinese history through all the dynasties from medieval times on was presented in a marvellous, breath-taking traditional Peking Opera-like show, and the dramaturgy of the opening and closing ceremonies was impressive.

The Chinese branch of the organizing congress agency K.I.T. (led by Chunjing Yang) also substantially contributed to the success of the event. In preparation for the congress, they spent innumerable hours, days and nights taking care of the smaller and bigger organizational and logistical problems which always accompany congresses of such magnitude. One of the major problems turned out to be the acquisition of visas to enter the Peoples’ Republic of China from certain countries. At one point, there were more than one-hundred applicants who failed to secure such visas. In some cases, the joint efforts of the LOC and others could assist in securing such visas, however, unfortunately for others, the required documents could not be sent out in time. This meant that several colleagues, who desperately wanted to join the congress, regrettably had to stay at home.

Another problem related to the acquisition of sponsorship for the congress. All those who have organised Hypertension meetings during the last decade have experienced an ever-increasing difficulty with respect to fundraising, mainly due to the withdrawal of the pharmaceutical industry from hypertension research, development, and marketing. In addition, most of the negotiations had to be done with the Chinese subsidiaries of the globally acting companies or directly with local Chinese companies. Despite these difficulties, the LOC, together with the fundraiser from K.I.T, Johannes Müller-Diesing, managed to secure a reasonable budget for the organisation of the meeting.

We all had a great time, enjoying the scientific part of the congress as well as the social programme. Meeting old friends, making new acquaintances, having lively discussions and debates, and being so nicely greeted by the excellent hospitality of our Chinese colleagues and friends.

Finally, I would like to thank all the members of the ISH Beijing 2018 Committee, Neil Poulter, Maciej Tomaszewski, Cheol-Ho Kim, Lars H. Lindholm, Dylan Burger, Jiguang Wang, Alta Schutte, Masa Horiuchi, Ruan Kruger, and Trefor Morgan for their commitment and continuous support, and my special thanks go to Helen Horsfield from the ISH Secretariat in London for tirelessly managing us and the congress as a whole.

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