17th International Conference of the Inflammation Research Association: Meeting Preview

September 9-13, 2012

The Sagamore Resort, Bolton Landing, NY, USA

Introduction

The 17th International Conference of the Inflammation Research Association (IRA) is being held at the Sagamore Resort located on beautiful Lake George in Bolton Landing, New York. This meeting combines excellent science in a relaxed setting and consistently brings together researchers from across the globe conducting state of the art studies with the common thread being a quest for a better understanding of inflammation biology and a mission to develop novel therapies to treat various life-threatening inflammatory diseases. Information will be disseminated through a combination of Symposia, Minisymposia, Poster Presentations, and “Lunch & Learns”.

Meeting Highlights

On Sunday evening, the meeting begins with a keynote address entitled “Concepts of Driver Cytokines for T-Cell Mediated Skin Diseases” to be delivered by Dr. James Krueger of The Rockefeller University, an expert in the immunobiology of inflammatory skin diseases such as psoriasis.

The Monday morning symposium “New Technologies, Approaches, and Models in Inflammation Research” will discuss the application of novel technologies to address issues such as target selectivity, use of biomarkers in preclinical and clinical drug development, predictability of “humanized” animal models, and real-time use of imaging to monitor inflammation. Minisymposia I (with a focus on trauma and infection-induced inflammation) will take place on Monday afternoon along with the oral presentation portion of the C. Gordon Van Arman Scholarship Competition for young investigators. Monday evening will feature the first of two Poster Sessions, which is a competition for the poster with the “highest scientific impact” sponsored by Novo Nordisk. Dr. Van Arman was a co-founder of the IRA with a distinguished pharmaceutical career as an industrial scientist who believed strongly in the dissemination of information regarding inflammation biology and drug development in an informal setting to researchers at all levels.

Under the sponsorship of the guest society, the Society for Leukocyte Biology, a Tuesday morning symposium consisting of academic speakers from Stanford, the University of Cincinnati, Johns Hopkins University, and the University of Utah, will consider the broader and constantly changing role (i.e., not necessarily strictly inflammatory) of mast cells, eosinophils, basophils, and platelets, as homeostatic
cells with a possible role in development and innate and adaptive immunity. Tuesday afternoon will feature a free afternoon of recreation pursuits.

The Tuesday evening symposium will center on better understanding the contribution of chronic inflammation in fibrotic disease (primarily pulmonary). The role of the pro-inflammatory immunoregulatory protein, semaphorin 7A, in pulmonary fibrosis will be discussed by Erica Herzog from Yale University. Karl Kossen from InterMune will present preclinical and clinical data on the effect of the small molecule, orally active antifibrotic and anti-inflammatory agent, pirfenidone, in idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis. Cory Hogaboam of the University of Michigan will summarize work conducted in his laboratory to further understand and define the role of TNF-related apoptotic-inducing ligand (TRAIL) in the ability of bone marrow-derived myeloid cells expressing CD11b and GR1 antigens to reduce bleomycin-induced pulmonary fibrosis. The final speaker, Thomas Wynn of NIAID, will provide an update on the current development of effective therapeutics to treat fibrosis.

Wednesday morning will feature a symposium exploring emerging approaches to the pharmacological modulation of inflammatory bowel disease pathobiology by use of probiotics, melanin-concentrating hormone receptor antagonists, and butyrophilin superfamily molecules as well as modulation of mucosal barrier integrity and epithelial innate immunity of the gastrointestinal tract by IL-22.

Poster Session II, again featuring the competition for the poster with the “highest scientific impact” sponsored by Novo Nordisk, as well as Minisymposia II (with a focus on new drug inhibitors) will take place on Wednesday afternoon along with the poster presentation portion of the C. Gordon Van Arman Scholarship Competition for young investigators.

The final symposia will take place Thursday morning. The first symposium will focus on the development of kinase inhibitors as anti-inflammatory agents from researchers at NIAID/NIH, Pfizer, and Bristol-Myers Squibb. The meeting will wrap up with a symposium summarizing clinical trial results of studies examining the following anti-inflammatory treatments: 1) GM-CSF antagonists for rheumatoid arthritis, 2) IL-13 inhibitors for asthma (using personalized diagnostics), and 3) selective JAK1 inhibitors for rheumatoid arthritis.