"ΑΡΙΣΤΕΙΑ"

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"Molecular Basis of Human Disease"
University of Crete, School of Medicine
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Inside this issue:

Editorial: The ABCs of interdisciplinary communication

By Dimitrios Boumpas and Dimitris Kardassis

Our graduate program has brought together people from various backgrounds (clinicians, basic scientists, physician scientists) lecturing to students and faculty on the best and most exciting aspects of current biomedical research and state of the art technologies. At the same time, we are often called to submit grants that may not be reviewed by people within the area of expertise especially if the work is interdisciplinary. Here are some guiding principles that may improve clarity in communicating science, modeled after an editorial that M. Gottesman, the Deputy of NIH Intramural Research, published in *The NIH Catalyst*.

1. Effective Introduction: Never assume that a general audience or a reviewer knows the nature or he/she is interested in the biological question that stimulates you. Explain in simple terms why you found this question so interesting and important. What is the biological significance of your research topic? Is there an underlying clinical relevance worth emphasizing?

2. Develop a story: The best lectures or grants tell a story with a logical thread flowing throughout. Demonstrate how you are going to solve a long-standing problem that you have already presented in the Introduction. What are the objectives and the specific aims? How are they connected to each other? What is the rationale of your approach? Merely pulling out a series of disconnected experiments or busy slides will certainly frustrate your audience or reviewer and will most certainly fail to impress them.

3. Be simple but not simplistic: Even the brightest people and much more those that are not experts in the field appreciate crystal clear explanations and rationales. At the same time, avoid being simplistic: do not leave out complex concepts or experiments that are important to support your argument. Include them but discuss them in the simplest possible terms. Otherwise you run into the risk of leaving logical gaps that will compromise the end result.

4. Use effective visual and other aids: Figures, slides, short videos, diagrams help people understand complex concepts. Do not overload them with "tons" of data or information.

5. Key points: Think of important take home messages that the audience or the reader can take

home. What is unique or novel about your work? Do not hesitate to repeat them throughout your talk or grant.

6. Put yourself into the listener's-reviewer's shoes: What would you like to hear or read? It may be helpful to think of a scientific communication as the offering of an elegant dinner. People do not like surprises: a) they like to know what is in "the menu" (here is the place for an effective introduction or outline); and b) they expect to be served the "main course" in a digestible and non-overwhelming fashion. Make sure that your dessert (i.e. the conclusions) enhance the qualities of the main course leaving them with a feeling of distinct pleasure and joy!

We hope that the members of our program would find these tips useful and will be motivated to add additional ones.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

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A Symposium to honor Professor Emeritus Vassilis I. Zannis

by Dimitris Kardassis

The symposium to honor Professor Emeritus Vassilis I. Zannis was organized on October 16, 2009 by the Department of Biochemistry of the Medical School in the Audutorium of Graduate Studies. It started with introductory remarks of the Dean of the Medical School Assoc. Prof. of Surgery Odysseas Zoras who funded the event and Professor of Biochemistry Christos Stournaras, who took the initiative and organized the symposium.

Vassilis Zannis with colleagues and former students at the symposium

Front row (left to right): Prof. A. Plaitakis, Prof. M. Krieger (MIT), Prof. A. Kafatos, Assoc. Prof. D. Kardassis, Assoc. Prof. K. Kypreos, Prof. V. Zannis, Prof. C. Stournaras, Prof. A. Tybjaerg-Hansen, Dr A. Chroni

Back row (left to right): Dr S. Georgopoulos, Dr. E. Hatzivassiliou, Assist. Prof. G. Goulielmos, Prof. A Gravanis, Assoc. Prof. T. Thedoropoulos, Prof. K. Thermos, Dr. I Talianidis, Prof. J. Kirsch, Prof. P. Cardot

Invited speakers were Professor of Biochemistry Jack F. Kirsch of the University of California at Berkeley, who was the PhD thesis advisor of Dr. Zannis, close collaborators from the US and Europe (Prof. Monty Krieger of MIT, Anne Tybjaerg-Hansen of Copenhagen University Hospital) and former students and postdoctoral fellows who have built their academic careers in Europe and Greece (Prof. Philippe Cardot of the Université Pierre & Marie Curie, Paris; Ioannis Talianidis of Fleming Institute in Athens; Dimitris Kardassis of the University of Crete Medical School; Angelika Chroni of Demokritos Institute in Athens; and Kyriakos Kypreos of the University of Patras Medical School).

In his opening remarks, Dr. Zannis thanked the organizers the speakers and the participants, reiterated the goals and the achievements of the Medical School and the Department of Biochemistry of the University of Crete and made a slide presentation of his life and his scientific career.

Born in Kourounia Chios, the early role models that guided his path were his parents Markella and Yiannis, his primary school

teachers Panagiotis Kompiliris and Kostas Loukopoulos, his sister Argyro and his cousin Kostas Michalakis who got a PhD from Columbia University in 1956. From early in life he had big dreams, drive to succeed and passion to help others succeed.

Influenced by the maritime tradition of Chios during the first three years of high school, he initially pursued a career in the merchant marine. He entered first with a scholarship and graduated first from the merchant marine college in Aspropyrgos in 1961 and received his diploma from King Paul A'. He travelled to the USA, Holland, France, Italy, Japan and obtained valuable real life experience. Although he never regretted his early career decision, he realized soon that most of his aspirations could be achieved only on land.

Vassilis Zannis receiving his diploma by King Paul A' (Apropyrgos, July 1961)

When he returned for his military service, he also took the entrance exams and was admitted to the Department of Chemistry of the university of Athens. The delays in laboratory training for the first two years, allowed him, while serving in the coast guard (mostly in Syros) to pass the theoretical courses. He completed the four year program on time and graduated with the highest grade of his class in December 1968. With the guidance of his professors Dimitris Galanos, Manolis Voudouris & Vassilis Kapoulas he applied and was accepted with scholarship to the PhD program in the Department of Biochemistry at U.C. Berkeley.

His wife Eleni Zanni, who was a classmate in the Chemistry Department in Athens, was admitted in the PhD program in nutrition. She joined him in Berkeley in 1972 where their two children Yiannis and Markella were born. In the ensuing five years, Eleni managed to obtain a Master's degree in Food Science, a PhD in Nutrition, give birth and take care of their two children. Vassilis obtained his PhD in 1975 and did seven years postdoctoral fellowship at the UC San Francisco Medical School, MIT and Harvard Medical School.

Berkeley July 1972: Spraul Plaza with Eleni

His early applications to the medical schools of Ioannina and Patras in 1977 and to the Department of Biology of Crete in 1982 were met with failure.

Success came finally at a rapid pace in the early 80's. He became Assistant Professor at Harvard Medical School in 1982, Associate Professor and Director of Molecular Genetics at Boston University in 1984. At the same time he was elected as Professor of the Medical School in Crete. Meanwhile the application of his wife Eleni for the position of Assistant Professor in nutrition in Crete was lost in the mail and this complicated their return to Greece. Having the support of dean Aram Chobanian of Boston University (who visited Crete in July 2002) and the director of IMBB Fotis Kafatos he decided to fight in two fronts. The fight faced obstacles before it produced positive results. The applications to EU brought in an average of €100,000/year and this helped to buy laboratory equipment and recruit I. Talianidis and D. Kardassis who soon became independent investigators. In 2001 the exchange program of Medical students between B.U. and Crete was formalized by Deans Nikos Gourtsoyiannis and Aram Chobanian. The same year the MD/PhD program under the leadership of Dimitris Boumpas and support from the Ministry of Education became a reality.

This was the lifelong trip of Dr. Zannis. As he explained, the motives were not financial and during the initial 10 years of his service he subsidized his travel and living expenses in Crete. Other considerations kept him in Crete. The Medical School of Crete, he felt was young and needed support and guidance to survive and flourish. Very important also were the ties with his family in Greece, the

talented students and the friends and colleagues in Crete who shared the same vision. The vision was, with consensus and mutual respect, to establish a quality culture and thus to create a first rate Medical School in order to serve Crete, Greece and the broader region of middle east and the Mediterranean. Staying in Crete also allowed him to pay back his dues to his parents, his teachers, his role models and the country that gave him free education.

Dr. Zannis expressed his gratitude for the understanding and sacrifices of his wife Eleni and his children John and Markella who paid the price for his prolonged absences from home. The time I spent in Crete, he said, was taken away from them.

Dr. Zannis concluded with the following advice to his students:

- *Have a dream, have a role model*

- *Never give up*

- *Enjoy your journey*

- *Help others you encounter along the way*

and memorable quotes:

«Εγώ τον σπόρο μου έσπειρα και το έθνος θα τον θερίσει μια μέρα (Ρ. Φερραίος) »

- *«Για να γυρίσει ο ήλιος θέλει δουλειά πολλή (Ο. Ελύτης)»*

- *«Η Ελλάδα πρέπει να ζήσει και θα ζήσει (Χ. Τρικούπης)»*

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Meet Our Faculty

by Dimitris Kardassis

Despina Sanoudou

Despina Sanoudou, PhD, joined our graduate program from the beginnings of its operation in 2003 and she has been teaching the basic principles, the applications and the technological advances in the fields of genomics/microarrays and cytogenetics research to our first year graduate students ever since.

Despina received a BSc degree in Molecular Biology from the University of Hertfordshire, and a PhD in Genetics from the Department of Pathology of the University of Cambridge. She worked for 3 years as a post-doctoral fellow at the Departments of Medicine and Pediatrics at Children's Hospital in Boston. Meantime, she was trained at Brigham and Women's Hospital, Mass General Hospital and Genzyme Inc. in molecular diagnostics and genetic counseling and was certified by the American Board of Medical Genetics in Clinical Molecular Genetics in 2002. In 2003, she was appointed Instructor at the Department of Pediatrics of Harvard Medical School. In September 2003 she moved to Greece as team leader (Researcher, Instructor level), at the Department of Molecular Biology of the Biomedical Research Foundation of the Academy of Athens, and in 2007 she was promoted to Assistant Professor Level. Last year, Despina was elected Assistant Professor in Pharmacogenomics at the Department of Pharmacology of the University of Athens Medical School.

Her current work is concentrating on deciphering the molecular mechanisms implicated in cardiovascular and neuromuscular disease pathogenesis (e.g. Sanoudou et al PNAS 2003, Al-Qusairi et al PNAS 2009), discovering new therapeutic targets (e.g. Papalouka et al MCB 2009) and characterizing the molecular mode of action of existing drugs (e.g. Sanoudou et al Pharmacogenomics Journal 2009). Towards these goals a wide variety of basic molecular biology and imaging techniques are applied, together with high-throughput genomics technologies and advanced bioinformatics.

Still at a young age, Despina has already received numerous awards for her contributions in research including the 1st Annual Prize for Excellence in Research from the Hellenic Cardiological Society in 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009, the UNESCO-L'Oreal Award for "Best Young Female Scientist in Greece" in 2007 and the European Society of Human Genetics National Award in 2008.

Her work was published in prestigious journals including PNAS, MCB, Annals of Neurology, JBC, Pharmacogenomics Journal and others. She is in the editorial board of Current Pharmaceutical Design and the Central European

Journal of Medicine, and on the board of directors of multiple scientific societies (e.g. Panhellenic Bioscientists Union, Hellenic Proteomics society etc). Furthermore, she serves as an expert evaluator of grant proposals for the EU (FP6 and FP6 programs) and the Association Francaise Contre les Myopathies, and as a reviewer for 12 different international scientific journals.

In 2004 Despina initiated and is directing the first high school Outreach Program in Greece which is aiming at bringing high school students closer to the academic research community. During the first 5 years of its operation, the Program has hosted over 1,000 high school students from numerous different cities. For this work, she has received two awards, namely from the American Society of Human Genetics and the Panhellenic Bioscientists Union.

In her free time Despina is an active volunteer of the Red Cross organization.

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Research Activities

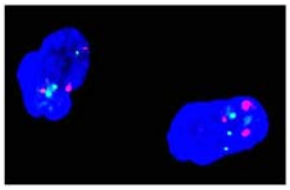
by Aris Eliopoulos and Helen Papadaki

New insights in the mode of action of Rituximab in patients with rheumatoid arthritis.

The anti-CD20 monoclonal antibody Rituximab has been used in patients with rheumatoid arthritis (RA) since 2001 in the setting of clinical trials and was officially approved in 2006 for the treatment of these patients. The beneficial effect of Rituximab has supported the option that B cells play a key role in the pathophysiology of the disease. Magda Nakou and colleagues from the Department of Rheumatology, Clinical Immunology and Allergy of our University in collaboration with the Laboratory of Hematology have investigated the effect of Rituximab in peripheral blood (PB) and bone marrow (BM) B-cell and T-cell populations in active RA patients at baseline and at month-3 using flow cytometry. Consistent with their consideration that the BM may represent an immunologically privileged site where activated autoantibody-producing B cells may survive for prolonged periods, the authors showed that in contrast to PB, BM CD19+ B cells were only partially depleted after Rituximab treatment. The treatment decreased the activated CD19+/HLA-DR+ subsets both in PB and in BM but had no effect on the number of activated T cells. Response to Rituximab was associated with a significant decrease in PB and BM CD19+/CD27+ memory B cells representing probably the key-mechanism of action of the treatment. The mechanism(s) underlying the maintenance of B cells in the BM is an interesting field for further research as it may elucidate not only the basis of Rituximab responses but also still undefined pathophysiologic mechanisms associated with the disease *[Nakou et al., Arthritis Res Ther. 2009;11(4):R131]*.

Characterization of bone marrow mesenchymal stem cells in patients with myelodysplastic syndromes.

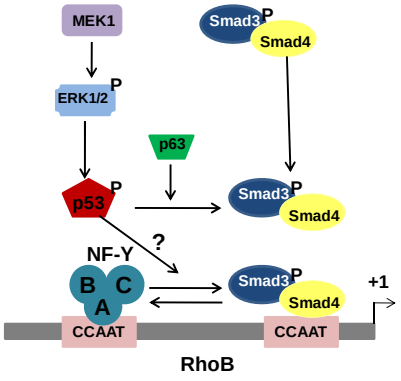
Defective hematopoiesis supporting capacity of bone marrow (BM) stroma has been implicated in the pathophysiology of myelodysplastic syndromes (MDS). Mirjam Klaus and colleagues from the Hematology Research Laboratory of our University under the supervision of Dr Helen Papadaki, explored whether the BM stroma progenitors, namely the mesenchymal stem cells (MSCs), are primarily affected in MDS by evaluating the reserves, the functional properties as well as the cytogenetic characteristics, in comparison to BM hematopoietic cells, in patients with de novo MDS. They showed that MSCs did not show any aberrations in the production of pro-inflammatory or growth-promoting cytokines and did not harbor the cytogenetic abnormalities present in hematopoietic cells. However, occasional patient and normal MSC cultures developed irrelevant chromosomal alterations (trisomy 5 and 7) with uncertain pathophysiologic significance. Compared to controls, patient MSCs displayed impaired proliferative and clonogenic potential through passages that might represent a nonspecific abnormality associated with the chronic inflammatory process present in patients' BM. These data suggest that BM MSCs from MDS patients do not belong to the abnormal clone and do not represent the main cellular source contributing to the inflammatory marrow



microenvironment. *[Klaus et al., Stem Cells Dev. 2009 In Press].*

Regulation of RhoB by TGFβ: new light into a dark tunnel.

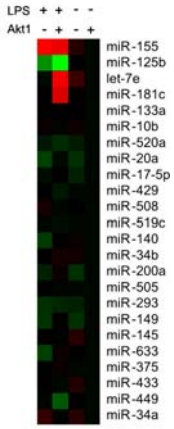
A paper by Dimitris Kardassis and Christos Stournaras' groups that has been accepted for publication in the *FASEB Journal*, identifies the mechanism of transcriptional induction of the small GTPase RhoB gene by the transforming growth factor β (TGF-β) signaling pathway.



RhoB is a small GTPase that regulates actin organization and vesicle transport. Genetic analysis in mice indicates that RhoB is dispensable for normal cell physiology, but that it has a suppressor or negative modifier function in stress-associated processes, including cancer. The paper by Vasilaki *et al.* shows that RhoB is a direct transcriptional target of TGF-β, a cytokine which triggers a bewildering diversity of responses, depending on the genetic makeup and environment of the target cell. The authors show that TGF-β up-regulates RhoB through the MEK/ERK-dependent recruitment of Smad3 to a novel, nonclassical, Smad binding element in the proximal RhoB promoter. Interestingly, they also find that this pathway cross-talks with the tumor suppressor p53. What is the significance of the powerful effects of TGF-β on RhoB? Silencing of RhoB gene expression *via* siRNA or utilization of a dominant negative form of RhoB was found to significantly inhibit TGFβ-induced migration of keratinocytes and prostate cancer cells, thus identifying a mechanism by which TGFβ may exert its oncogenic activities. [*Vasilaki et al., FASEB J. 2010, in press]*

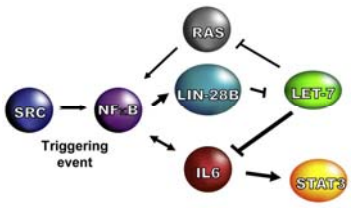
A macrophage cell's mir-vana.

MicroRNAs are single-stranded, non-coding RNA molecules of 21-24 nucleotides in length which regulate gene expression. A paper by Christos Tsatsanis' group published in *Immunity*, shows that certain microRNAs are regulated by lipopolysaccharide (LPS) target genes that contribute to the inflammatory phenotype. The authors have found that the protein kinase Akt1, which is activated by LPS, positively regulates microRNAs let-7e and miR-181c but negatively regulates miR-155 and miR-125b. In silico analyses and transfection studies revealed that let-7e repressed Toll-like receptor 4 (TLR4), a sensor of the bacterial product LPS, whereas miR-155 repressed SOCS1. TLR4 and SOCS1 are critical for LPS-driven signalling that regulate endotoxin sensitivity and tolerance. As a result, Akt1(-/-) macrophages exhibited increased responsiveness to LPS in culture and Akt1(-/-) mice did not develop endotoxin tolerance in vivo. These results reveal a new role for Akt1 in regulating the response of macrophages to LPS by controlling miRNA expression. [*Androulidaki et al Immunity 21:220-31, 2009].*



Transformation locked in a loop.

During neoplastic transformation, cells can promote their own growth by activating proto-oncogenes. A publication by our programme member Dimitrios Iliopoulos in the prestigious journal *Cell* now shows that signaling via oncogenes activates an inflammatory response that is critically involved in malignant transformation. The authors show that activation of the Src oncoprotein engages the NF-κB pathway resulting in the activation of the transcription factor LIN28B. LIN28 plays a key role in suppressing the expression of let-7, a microRNA that controls expression of interleukin-6 (IL-6).



Iliopoulos et al. demonstrate that the upregulation of IL-6 via the Src-dependent suppression of let-7 leads to STAT3 activation, an event critical for cell transformation. A positive feedback loop is generated through IL-6 which can itself activate NF-κB. Confirming this

model, the authors report that inhibition of any of the components of the feedback loop reverses the transformed phenotype. Importantly, even a transient oncogenic signal is sufficient to induce neoplastic transformation. These data thus reveal a novel epigenetic switch involving intrinsic (NF-κB, let-7) and extrinsic (IL-6) pathways that link inflammation to oncogene-induced cell transformation. *[Iliopoulos et al., Cell 139: 1-14, 2009].*

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Research grants

by Dimitris Kardassis

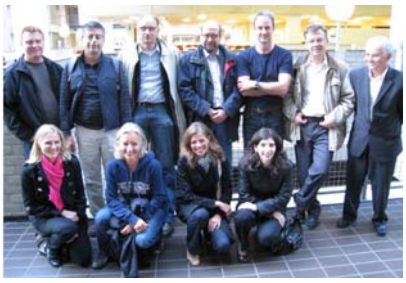
* **Dr Dimitris Kardassis**, Associate Professor of Biochemistry and Faculty member of IMBB-FORTH received funding from COST to coordinate a new Action entitled *"HDL: From biological understanding to Clinical Exploitation"*. COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology) is an intergovernmental framework allowing the coordination of nationally-funded research on a European level. COST is supported by the EU framework and European Science Foundation (ESF).

The main objective of this 4-year new multidisciplinary and collaborative COST Action (2010-2013) is the formation of a scientific network dedicated to the study of HDL, to the identification of targets for novel HDL-based therapies and to the discovery of biomarkers which can be used for diagnostics, prevention and therapy of cardiovascular disease. This Action (acronym: HDL*net*) will bring together leading European investigators working on epidemiology, clinical aspects, genetics, structure, function, metabolism and regulation of HDL in order to foster multidisciplinary and collaborative HDL research.

The results of the two stage selection process were officially announced on December 2nd, 2009 by the Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) of COST.

A total of 18 investigators from 10 different European countries have already expressed interest in participating in this program.

* *Annual meeting of the HDLomics consortium:* On May 7-8, 2009 the researchers participating in the HDLomics consortium (fp6-HEALTH: LSHM-CT-2006-037631) met for the last time in Amsterdam (Academic Medical Center) to discuss the progress made during the last year, the closing of the program (December 2009) and to make plans for future proposals in the context of fp7. All participants agreed that it was a successful program which resulted in many joint publications and new collaborations. Almost all HDLomics scientists participate in the new COST Action *HDLnet* that will be coordinated by Dr Kardassis (see previous section) and thus the collaboration is expected to continue for the coming years.



Annual HDLomics meeting in Amsterdam, May 7-8 2009

Back row (left to right): Dr Jesper Schou (Copenhagen), Dr Spyros Georgopoulos (Athens), Dr A. Von Eckardstein (Coordinator, Zurich), Dr Jaap Twisk (Amsterdam), Dr J.A Kuivenhoven (Amsterdam), D. Kardassis and V. Zannis (Heraklion).

Front row (left to right): Dr C. Lundegaard (Copenhagen), Dr A. Tybjaerg-Hansen (Copenhagen), Dr R. Frikke-Schmidt (Copenhagen), Dr A. Chroni (Athens)

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Awards and distinctions

by Christos Tsatsanis

- Dr. Nektarios Tavernarakis, Researcher at the Institute of Molecular Biology and Biotechnology, FORTH, Heraklion, Crete, has been elected member of the European Molecular Biology Organization (EMBO).

- Two faculty members of our graduate program were awarded the 2009 L'ORÉAL-UNESCO "For Women in Science" national award. Dr Angeliki Chroni, Senior Researcher at the Institute of Biology of the National Center for Scientific Research "Demokritos" and Dr Georgina

Xanthou, Researcher at the Biomedical Research Foundation of the Academy of Athens (BRFAA) received this award, aiming to support distinguished young Greek women scientists.

Angeliki Chroni and Georgina Xanthou (second and third from left) receiving their prizes (foto from www.myself.gr)

- The Team of the Haemopoiesis Research Lab at the University of Crete Medical School has been awarded with the "Arkagathos Goutas Award" award of the Hellenic Society of Haematology during the Annual Conference, November 2009, for a full-length research paper investigating the functional, molecular and cytogenetic characteristics of bone marrow mesenchymal stem cells in patients with Myelodysplastic Syndromes.

- Charis Pontikoglou, graduate of the Biology Department and Medical School of the University of Crete and presently post-Doctoral researcher in the "Etablissment Français du Sang, Tours Cedex-France" working on mesenchymal stem cells, has been elected Lecturer in Hematology at the Faculty of Medicine, University of Crete. He will be an active member of the Haemopoiesis Research Lab participating in the training of our graduate students.

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Graduate Program News

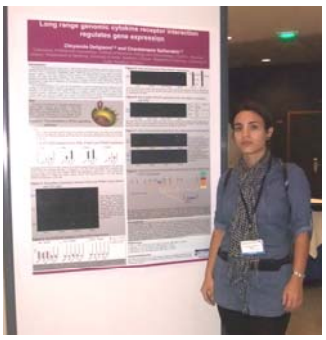
Meetings

***** The Joint Annual Meeting of the International Cytokine Society, the International Society for Interferon and Cytokine Research and the Society of Leukocyte Biology was held on October 17-21, 2009 in Lisbon, Portugal. The Conference combined the biomedical expertise and energies of these major societies to provide a comprehensive update of recent insights into basic and clinical aspects of Cytokines in Cancer, Inflammation and Infectious Diseases. The overall theme of this Conference was **Cellular and Cytokine Interactions in Health and Disease**, and it was chosen to emphasize the integration of basic, pre-clinical, pharmaceutical and clinical research in the areas of cancer, immune modulation, inflammation and infectious diseases.

The topics covered included cytokine/interferon structure and function, gene regulation, signal transduction, regulation of cell survival, microenvironment, new cytokines, as well as the multiple roles of cytokines in immunology, inflammation, angiogenesis, host defense and tumor biology. A significant part of the conference was devoted to cytokine-based therapies in malignancy and other disorders as well as emerging therapies targeting cytokines in autoimmune, inflammatory and malignant diseases. This Conference - set in the beautiful historic city of Lisbon reflected the best of current cytokine research and provided a vital impulse for further development.

Graduate student **Chrysa Deligianni** was chosen to give an oral talk and received the second prize of the Society of Leukocyte Biology for her work. Her talk title was "Long Range Genomic Cytokine-Receptor Interaction Regulates Gene Expression".

Dr Babis Spilianakis was also an invited speaker at the conference and presented the work of the group entitled: "Interchromosomal Cytokine Gene regulation".



Chrysa Deligianni in front of her poster

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Visitors from abroad

This semester, our visitors from abroad who gave lectures in our graduate courses included:

* Dr Konstantin Kandror, Prof. of Biochemistry, Boston University Medical School,

* Dr Stephen Farmer, Prof. of Biochemistry, Boston University Medical School,

* Dr Paul Pilch, Prof. of Biochemistry, Boston University Medical School,

* Dr Diomedes Logothetis, Professor and Dean of Graduate Studies, Department of Physiology and Biophysics, Virginia Commonwealth University

* Dr Gavin Wilkinson, Professor of Medical Microbiology, Cardiff University, UK

Many thanks to all for their generous offer of their time.

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Loss of Kostas Sekeris

On September 15 2009, Konstantinos Sekeris died at the age of 76 while visiting the SOS village at Plagiari of Thessaloniki. Kostas Sekeris was Professor Emeritus of the Medical School of the University of Athens and a distinguished Biochemist. He had served as an *ad hoc* member of the External Evaluation Committee of our graduate program. More on the life and multiple contributions of K. Sekeris in the next issue of ARISTEIA.

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New gradute students (class of 2009)

Our new graduate students (class of 2009) are:
- Dimitris Kolyvakis (MD, University "G. D'Annunzio" Medical School, Italy)
-Aristea Batsali (BSc in Biology, University of Crete)
- Antonis Ioannou (MD, University of Crete Medical School)
- Aristea Sideri (MD, University of Crete Medical School)
- Olympia Gatzima (BSc in Biology, University of Thessaloniki)
- Andriana Lazaridou (MD, University of Thessaloniki Medical School)

Prof. V. Zannis with first year graduate students (from left to right): Olympia Gatzima, Aristea Sideri, Aristea Batsali, Adriana Lazaridou, Dimitris Kolyvakis and Antonis Ioannou

Graduation ceremonies

* The 2009 Winter graduation ceremonies (for MSc and PhD graduates) took place on Monday, December 14th 2009 at the Main Auditorium of the New Building for Graduate Studies and was attended by many faculty memebrs, students, students' families and friends.

From our Program, the following MSc and PhD students received their diplomas: Eleni Vergadi (MSc), Ioanna Tiniakou (MSc), Kalliopi Stratigi (MSc), Eleni Kontaki (MSc), Athanasia Zafeiri (MSc) and Vassiliki Zacharioudaki (PhD). We would like to congratulate all the students, their supervisors and their families for their work and sacrificies to accomplish this task and wish our students good luck and many more accomplishments in their careers.

PhD graduate Vasso Zacharioudaki receiving her doctorate diploma from the Dean of the Medical School Assoc. Prof. O. Zoras.

Assoc. Prof. D. Kardassis with MSc graduates (from left to right): Iioanna Tiniakou, Kalliopi Stratigi, Athanasia Zafeiri and Eleni Kontaki

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WISHES FOR MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY AND PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR

"The genesis of Christ"

Wall painting made by K. Michail born in Chionades, 25 June 1770*

Church of Avel Vissanis Pogoniou, Ioannina

** Chionades, a small mountain village at the Hellenic-Albanian border, was home to many distinguished folk-iconographs during the Turkish occupation*

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