

Canadian Hematology Society
Société Canadienne d'Hématologie



BULLETIN
JUNE 2008

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www.canadianhematologysociety.org

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

This is my first report to the membership since you gave me the honour of electing me as CHS President in 2007. Like many of you, I have always maintained a sense of loyalty to CHS (even paying my dues MOST years!) even while wondering whether the organization served a useful purpose. We are all members of ASH and other professional societies which enhance our scholarly and academic careers through the journals they sponsor, the meetings and symposia they hold, and the opportunities they provide for networking and collaboration with colleagues in our often arcane areas of subspecialty concentration. Within the context of a rich and bewildering array of national and international organizations devoted to the scholarly analysis of every aspect of benign and malignant hematology, one might ask whether the CHS is a quaint anachronism. My answer to this rhetorical question is an unequivocal “no”, and the remarkable attendance at our annual Award Night and dinner in Atlanta last December demonstrates that the Canadian hematology community as a whole agrees with me. We hematologists across Canada are bonded to one another; we are the protégées of our senior colleagues

(President's Report con't on next page)

Editor Dr. Gail Rock, Executive Vice President

Executive 2007 – 2009

President: Dr. Jerry Teitel, Toronto

Vice President: Dr. Tom Nevill, Vancouver

Secretary-Treasurer: Dr. Stephen Couban, Halifax

Past-President: Dr. Pierre Laneuville, Montreal

and the mentors of our trainees. These links last a lifetime, and they provide a source of stability throughout our careers. We regularly turn to one another for advice and assistance in looking after our patients, in carrying out our research projects, and in advocating within our universities, our local and provincial health authorities, and the RCPSC. How enduring are these loyalties? Anecdotally, I can personally relate conversations with three colleagues within the last year who have gone on to distinguished academic careers in the United States and Europe, and who all asserted some version of the following statement: “I will definitely come back to Canada at some point in my career; the only question is when and where”. I will bet that many of you can relate similar conversations.

So we need not analyze why we value the CHS and why we remain loyal to it. It is our shared interests, experiences, challenges, goals and values as hematologists in Canada that make us a community. As a member of your community, I am asking you to take the following concrete actions:

- Pay your dues to CHS; it is the best bargain you will see all year.
- If you plan on attending ASH this year, keep your calendar clear on Sunday evening for the CHS Annual General Meeting, Award Night and dinner. We will be asking our pharmaceutical colleagues to help support this event, and to refrain from scheduling any conflicting events.
- Encourage your trainees to submit their ASH abstracts to our award program as well. Those whose abstracts are top-ranked will receive awards of \$5,000, and will have a prestigious addition to their CVs.
- Let our office know about any hematologists who may not be CHS members (cag@ca.inter.net). We try to be thorough about contacting newly qualified hematologists and hematological pathologists through their training programs, but we may miss some who enter the community through other avenues such as immigration.
- When the term of the current Executive members expires in 2009, give serious consideration to running for a leadership position in the CHS. I guarantee that serving as an Officer of the CHS will give you the same feeling of satisfaction and pride that it is giving me.
- As your Executive Committee, Tom, Stephen, Pierre, Gail and I invite and welcome any suggestions or observations you may have about CHS, and we would especially welcome your interest in becoming involved in the Society.

Dr. Jerry Teitel

teitelj@smh.toronto.on.ca

From the President, Canadian Bone Marrow Transplant Group

I would like to bring members of the CHS up to date on activities of the CBMTG and plans for the coming couple of years.

Our bi-annual meeting in Montreal in April was a success. The chairs, Sandra Cohen and Ahmed Galal and the scientific committee organized a great three-day event with excellent presentations from national and international speakers in both basic science and clinical areas. I think we all had the opportunity to learn much, interact with colleagues in the stem cell transplant area from across the country and enjoy the wonderful Montreal hospitality. This is a meeting for transplant-interested individuals with many backgrounds and fosters a multi-disciplinary interaction that is unique to many transplant meetings. We look forward to joint meetings with other organizations over the next year and to the next CBMTG meeting in Vancouver in 2008 to be chaired by Keith Humphries and Tom Nevill.

Stephen Couban our Past-President has just completed two years of stellar dedication to the organization and stays on as a major part of the soul of the CBMTG. On behalf of the membership, I wish to acknowledge his contributions.

Our major regular part of CBMTG life is our Clinical Trials Group which under the direction of Ronan Foley, the now President-Elect of the CBMTG has flourished. We have a major NIH-funded study looking at PBSCs versus G-CSF stimulated bone marrow, and are participating in a European-based look at reduced-intensity allografts as part of AML therapy older patients as well as a US-based (NMDP) study looking at graft source in unrelated donor allografts. Smaller local studies are being looked at as well.

Our goals over the next couple of years will be to try to build on the inter-disciplinary base of the CBMTG by encouraging more participation by non-physicians, greater communication between members of special interest groups and among groups, a revitalization of our website with more information including Canadian statistics, venues for discussion and education, possibly an on-line resource for clinicians, sharing of talks, presentations and rounds, expansion of our corporate connections, assistance as centers across the country go through FACT accreditation and probable government standardization, and clinical/research collaboration. We also look to greater collaboration with other organizations dedicated to associated aspects of hematology and oncology across Canada and internationally.

Dr. Jeff Tipton, President
Canadian Bone Marrow Transplant Group



Annual CHS Abstract Competition:

Canadian Hematology Society
2008 Research & Education Awards Presentation
Will be Held at the ASH Annual General Meeting
Sunday December 7th, 2008

This program will recognize young Canadian researchers and reward excellence in original research in all fields of benign and malignant hematology. Up to seven awards will be selected by the Research & Education Committee of the Canadian Hematology Society, selected from papers intended for presentation at ASH. Each award will be in the amount of \$5,000.00 to support the recipient's continuing medical education and training. Deadline for submission is October 31, 2008.

The award categories are:

1. 3 PhD and Postdoctoral
2. 3 Residents and Fellows
3. 1 Junior Faculty Member

Please include the following with your submission:

1. 1 letter of reference from your research supervisor
2. 6 copies of your ASH Abstract
3. 1 copy, fax or email of your ASH Abstract approval letter
4. 1 copy, fax or email of the completed 2008 Research Awards Program Application

Please forward the above to:

Canadian Hematology Society
c/o Research Awards Program
199 – 435 St. Laurent Blvd.
Ottawa, ON K1K 2Z8
Tel: 613-748-9613
Fax: 613-748-6392
Email: cag@ca.inter.net



Canadian Hematology Society
2008 Research Awards Program Application

Applicant's Personal Information:

Full Name: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Fax Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Degree (M.D., Ph.D., Etc): _____

Institution Name: _____

Institution Address: _____

Mailing Address (If Different from above): _____

Applicant's Position at Institution: _____

Approximate Percentage of Time Spent on Research: _____

AWARDS AND AWARD CATEGORIES: PLEASE CHECK ONLY ONE

Up to seven awards will be selected by the Research & Education Committee of the Canadian Hematology Society. The award categories are:

1. 3 PhD and Postdoctoral []
2. 3 Residents and Fellows []
3. 1 Junior Faculty Member []

Each award will consist of an unrestricted educational grant in the amount of \$5,000.00 to support the recipient's continuing medical education and training.

Information on Applicant's Research:

Title of Abstract: _____

Date of acceptance at ASH for 2008 Meeting: _____

PLEASE COMPLETE THIS BOXED SECTION IF YOU ARE APPLYING FOR CATEGORIES 1 AND 2 ONLY

Name of Research Supervisor: _____

Title of Research Supervisor: _____

Telephone Number of Research Supervisor: _____

Email Address of Research Supervisor: _____

Please note, only one abstract will be accepted per individual.

To Be Completed by Research Supervisor

*I attest that (Applicant): _____
has made a significant contribution to the research abstract submitted herein.*

Signature

Date

Please Include the Following Along With This Application:

2. 6 copies of your ASH Abstract
3. 1 copy, fax or email of your ASH Abstract approval letter
4. 1 copy, fax or email of the completed 2008 Research Awards Program Application

Please Forward the Above To:

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Application Deadline: October 31, 2008

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE OF THE CANADIAN HEMATOLOGY SOCIETY (CHS)

The Canadian Hematology Society (CHS) is still going strong with 256 active members, 4 associate members and 6 emeritus members from all across the country and the world. We want more!

The proof for the need for our society and of its solid footing in the hematology world is evident by the number of requests we receive for membership applications from individuals around the world. In fact, we recently received an application form from an individual in Pakistan and a request for a membership application form from an individual in Brooklyn, NY. If you know of anyone who would like to become a member of our great society, you will find an application for membership form included in this newsletter that you may pass along. Or, they can contact the office directly at 613-748-9613 or email cag@ca.inter.net and we would be happy to send the application to the applicant.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank those of you who have paid their 2008 annual \$50.00 in dues. Your dedication and commitment to the society is greatly appreciated. Unfortunately, the collection of dues has not gone as well as we would have hoped. This is a gentle reminder to the approximately 73% of our membership who have not yet sent their cheque, please do so at your earliest convenience. Also, please send your contact information so we can make sure it is correct in our database. Thank you!

MEMBERSHIP REGULATIONS

Active Members shall be physicians engaged in the practice of clinical or laboratory hematology in Canada or Canadian physicians engaged in such practice, or persons with university degrees making continuing contributions to research in physiology or pathology in hematology in Canada. In appropriate cases, the requirement for a university degree or other qualifications may be waived if in the opinion of the Executive Committee the candidate is making significant continuing contributions to science.

Non-members may be invited to become Honorary Members of the Corporation by virtue of their outstanding contributions to any discipline which is of importance to hematology.

Active Members may request transfer to the status of Emeritus Member at the age of 65 or for other adequate reasons.

Only Active Members shall vote, hold office and pay dues. Honorary and Emeritus Members shall have the privileges of the Corporation except for voting, holding office and paying dues.

Fellows-in-training may apply to be Associate Members of the Society and will not be required to pay dues until completion of training.

Annual Dues, which only Active Members must pay, are \$50.00 per year.

UPDATE ON CANADIAN APHERESIS GROUP (CAG)

THE CANADIAN APHERESIS GROUP (CAG) held its Annual General Meeting on May 2nd to May 4th, 2008 in the nation's capital of Ottawa. The focus of the meeting was on the problems and solutions of Thrombotic Thrombocytopenic Purpura (TTP). Some of the noted speakers included; Dr. R. Foley who addressed "A Canadian Phase II Study Evaluating the Efficacy of Rituximab in the Management of Patients with Relapsed /Refractory TTP-HUS" and Dr. G. Rock who provided data regarding the TTP 5 and TTP 6 studies. The Octapharma group, sponsor of our TTP 6 trial comparing CSP to a Universal (blood group non-specific plasma), provided information on the March 2008 decision to end the trial after only 8 patients were entered (see below). There was an interesting presentation about one TTP fatality given as a case report by Dr. D. Arnold. The meeting, which was attended by doctors and nurses from across the country, had several new ideas for our next steps in addressing treatment of this disease.

TTP-6 What Recourse Do We Have?

The TTP-6 study (UNI 108), which was originated by the Canadian Apheresis Group with 8 American centres participating, ended in March 2008. The company supporting the study, Octapharm, Vienna, has withdrawn support for the study because of restrictions imposed by the FDA. The study was designed as a non-inferiority study to compare cryosupernatant plasma to Uniplas, a non blood group specific plasma, in the treatment of TTP. An added advantage of the study was to better define pathophysiology since at least 50% of patients have now been shown to have normal ADAMTS-13 activity. Original approval for the protocol, [which was designed by a group of expert physicians from the United States and Canada] was given by the FDA and Health Canada in 2006. A total of 112 patients were to be entered. The primary end point was the log change of platelet count by one month – a point at which we usually would see response. Our studies have all defined a complete response as platelet count reaches $\geq 150 \times 10^9/L$ on 2 consecutive days, LDH lowers to within 1.25 times the upper limit of the normal range and resolution of previous neurologic symptoms and no new neurologic symptoms.

At the start, the FDA examiner required that a blinded observer be involved to categorize the patient for response although this was to be determined solely based on absolute platelet numbers as obtained from the laboratory. While we felt this requirement to be unwarranted and to increase the medical resources required, it was agreed to in order to facilitate the study.

Subsequently, one of the first eight patients died. This is the usual finding with treated TTP which has, at best, an 85% survival. However, the examiner put the study on hold on October 25, 2007 until November 7, 2007. Then, she required adjustments to the protocol with a change in end point to clinical response at 1 month. Based on this, it was calculated that a total of 198 patients rather than 112 had to be entered. However our definition of any response is based on platelet count. The reviewer also required that additional tests including cardiac troponin and Ca ++ levels be added. These are not done in the normal treatment of TTP.

The increased costs and duration of the trial imposed by the examiners were not acceptable to the company (Octapharm) who were supporting the trial. Further, they were concerned with patient recruitment which, as in many trials, was initially as investigators to take the protocol through ethics. Therefore, the three years of work put into initiating this important study, which would make it possible for TTP patients to receive pathogen inactivated plasma as does every other plasma exchange patient (who receives albumin), was lost. Further, the termination of yet another TTP study may make it difficult to approach IRB's in the future for studies in TTP.

Now, we are trying to figure out what to do next – with one bright light. A study using (free) Rituximab in TTP is being started with Dr. R. Foley as PI. For further details contact him at (905) 527-4322 ext 42328 or the Canadian Apheresis Group's Office at 613-748-9613.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- June 12-15, 2008** **European Hematology Association (EHA), Copenhagen, Denmark**
- June 19-22, 2008** **13th Congress of the European Hematology Association (EHA), Lisbon, Portugal**
- September 12-13, 2008** **ASH State-of-the-Art Symposium, Chicago, IL.**
- September 16-19, 2008** **Congress of the Interdisciplinary European Society for Haemapheresis and Haemotherapy (ESFH), joint with German Society for Transfusion Medicine and Immunhaematology (DGTI) and in Cooperation with the French Society of Transfusion Medicine (SFTS), Dusseldorf, Germany**
- September 18-19, 2008** **The Second Eastern Canadian Symposium on Hemostasis, St. John's, Newfoundland**
- The Second Eastern Canadian Symposium on Hemostasis will be held in St. John's, Newfoundland on September 18th and 19th, 2008. Over 20 well-known faculty who are recognized nationally and/or internationally for excellence in their work in the field of hemostasis will present on their basic science, laboratory and clinical research at a combined clinical and scientific meeting. The objective will be to hold a "state of the art" conference on hemostasis in St. John's. The target audience will be all healthcare professionals especially physicians, nurses, laboratory technologists, pharmacists and postgraduate students. Patient advocates who volunteer as representatives of the Newfoundland and Labrador Blood Disorders Education Network, or the Newfoundland and Labrador chapter of the Canadian Hemophilia Society, Young Adults with Cancer or other approved patient advocacy groups are also invited.
- October 4-7, 2008** **AABB Annual Meeting & TXPO 2008, Montreal, Quebec**
- December 6 – 9, 2008** **ASH 2008 Annual Meeting, San Francisco, CA**
- March 24-27, 2009** **12th WAA World Congress & the 7th ISFA Congress, Buenos Aires, Argentina**
- May 20-23, 2009** **ASFA 2009, San Diego, CA**