

Report on the Summer Schools on Stress: From Hans Selye's Original Concept to Recent Advances

June 13-17, 2016 - Osijek, Croatia

On the 80th anniversary of the first description of biologic stress by Hans Selye (Nature, 1936), the 2016 event was held at the Strossmayer University School of Medicine in Osijek, Croatia. The Local Organizing Committee, under the leadership of Prof. Marija Heffer & Mgr. Marta Balog, created a very original illustration for the cover of this year program:



These educational & research conferences are sponsored by the IUPHAR GI Section since one of the main stress-related diseases are gastrointestinal structural & functional disorders, with huge pharmacologic implications. The course directors are the last three PhD students (out of the 40) of Hans Selye, the 'father of biologic stress', i.e., Profs. Arpad Somogyi (Berlin/Brussels), Sandor Szabo (Irvine, CA) & Yvette Tache (Los Angeles, CA). After the first symposium at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in Budapest, Hungary in 2013, the subsequent week-long summer conferences were held in Zagreb, Croatia (2014) & Grenoble, France (2015).

This year event was held in the old, but renovated historic building of the Rectorate of this rapidly growing university in Eastern Croatia that suffered in the former Yugoslavia in the shadow of universities of Zagreb & Belgrade. It was attended by about 60 students & young investigators (mostly PhD & medical students) from Croatia, Serbia, Hungary & Slovakia, Ukraine & Russia. The program included, as in previous years, invited lectures by the course directors & core international faculty like Profs. Bruno Bonaz (France), Ludmila Filaretova (Russia), Klara Gyires (Hungary), Martina Rojnic Kuzman (Croatia), Predrag Sikiric (Croatia), Jackie Wood (USA), Oksana Zayachkivska (Ukraine). There were also longer presentations by experts from other local & regional universities in Croatia, Serbia, Austria, Hungary & Slovakia. The topics covered the origins of stress concept & the seminal discoveries of Hans Selye; distress vs. eustress & transtress – similarities in the adrenal glands, big difference in the brain; the neuroendocrine mechanisms of stress; physiologic & pharmacologic actions of

glucocorticoids; stress & structural GI diseases, e.g., gastro-duodenal ulcers, IBD; stress & functional GI disorders, e.g., motility disorders, IBS; PTSD & other organ systems involved in biologic stress; management strategies for stress -pharmacologic interventions and/or life style changes. This year we also very interesting lectures by a veterinary expert (Dr. Jelena Suran, Zagreb) on “stress in animals & plants” as well as by a neuropsychiatrist (Dr. Janos Filakovszky, Vienna/Komarno) on “stress in workplace”. In addition to these 30-min interactive presentations, there was a successful poster & short, 10-min oral presentations session, based on the submitted abstracts from mostly young participants (e.g., medical & PhD students) as well as several ‘open forum’ discussions. As in previous years, we had an educational, historic sight-seeing tour of Osijek, pointing out the statutes two Nobel Prize winners in chemistry (i.e., Prof. Leopold Ruzicka & Vladimir Prelog) who were born or studied in Osijek.

The 2017 (when Hans Selye would have been 110 years old) “Summer School on Stress: From Hans Selye’s original concept to recent advances” will be held in Komarno, Slovakia where Selye grew up, went to elementary & high school (gymnasium) & his father had a private clinic. The local organizer is the relatively new “Selye Janos Egyetem/Universitat” in Komarno. The dates are June 26-30, 2017 & new conference website will be soon open for early registration, participation & submission of abstracts: www.stresseducation.org