The Princeton Conference, the premier academic research conference in the field of cerebrovascular diseases, was first held in 1954. The conference meets biennially and was from the beginning conceived as a forum that brings together leaders in the field of stroke research to review current scientific work and to formulate new directions in research and therapy. The conference was first held at the Nassau Inn in Princeton, NJ, and the first 11 conferences were held in Princeton. In an effort to lower costs, recent conferences have been held in the hometown of the principal organizers: Miami, Raleigh-Durham, Detroit, Boston, Memphis, St. Louis, San Francisco, San Diego, Baltimore, and Portland. The 26th Conference took place March 27 to 30, 2008, in Houston, Tex. The conference attendees were 162 invited clinical and laboratory researchers in cerebrovascular disease with a special effort to include promising clinical and basic junior scientists.

Three novel aims distinguished this conference from previous Princeton Conferences:

Specific Aim 1: To foster evaluation and completion of the priorities of the Stroke Progress Review Group (SPRG) by focusing the topics of the Princeton Conference on the consensus priorities of the SPRG. The SPRG had its 5-year update on progress and priorities in late 2006. Much progress had been made since the SPRG initiative in 2001, and specific areas for investigation during the next 5 years were identified. The SPRG provides a consensus for where stroke research is at present and where it should go over the next several years, and therefore it was a useful construct for the Princeton Conference agenda.

Specific Aim 2: To foster a true “translational” focus by including both laboratory and clinical perspectives in each discussion. In designing the program, the 15 focused areas of the SPRG were collapsed into 10 individual topical areas that each had both laboratory and clinical research components containing recent advances and unresolved laboratory and clinical research questions.

Specific Aim 3: To stimulate discussion and evaluation of current stroke research activities, and challenge existing assumptions, by presenting the topics in a “controversies” format. Rather than have a series of lectures that regurgitated what was already known, we stimulated discussion to identify the specific areas of most active research, those that might be deemphasized, and areas where uncertainty exists. We chose moderators, questions, speakers, and invited participants who were likely to stimulate an interactive symposium with substantial time allocated for moderated general participant discussion. For the first time, we invited posters that were peer-reviewed and displayed throughout the 2 days to complement the oral sessions.

The 26th Princeton Conference was organized by James C. Grotta MD, assisted by Jarek Aronowski, PhD, and Sean Savitz, MD. It was coordinated by the University of Texas Office of Continuing Medical Education (Deanna Tessenyi), and the External Scientific Advisory Committee members were Lewis Morgenstern, MD; Mike Moskowitz, MD; Steven Levine, MD; Claiborne Johnston, MD; Randy Nudo, PhD; Jeff Saver, MD; Constantino Iadecola, MD; Jonathan Rosand, MD; and Richard Traystman, PhD. The conference was held at the newly refurbished ZaZa Hotel located midway between downtown and the Texas Medical Center, within view of the city’s world-class medical institutions, and adjacent to Rice University in the city’s museum district. The National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, the Mischer Neuroscience Center at Memorial Hermann Hospital, and the University of Texas Medical School at Houston all provided significant financial support.

In addition to the program that will be summarized in the subsequent pages, there was a keynote address by Cheng Chi Lee, PhD, recipient of a National Institutes of Health Pioneer Award for his work with 5’AMP, and there was an introduction by James Willerson, MD, former president of the UT Health Science Center, on Stem Cell Therapy—Lessons From Cardiology.

The 27th Princeton Conference will be held in 2010 in Boston with Karen Furie, MD, as organizer.

KEY WORDS: stroke care | Princeton Conference
26th Princeton Conference on Cerebrovascular Disease. Preface
James C. Grotta

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