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## **A new tool in education: report of the 1st European Transplant Fellow Workshop**

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In contrast to the USA, there is no certified training or centralized registration of young clinicians specializing in clinical organ transplantation in Europe. To improve communication and to facilitate the exchange of experience among European transplant fellows, the University Hospital Groningen in The Netherlands and Fujisawa Holland BV have initiated a European Transplant Fellow Workshop (ETFW). The concept of this workshop is based on similar successful workshops in the USA. In collaboration with Fujisawa as the major sponsor, and with the Wenckenbach Institute Groningen, the 1st ETFW was organized in Groningen on October 21–22, 2000 under the auspices of the European Society for Organ Transplantation (ESOT). Nineteen European transplant fellows under 40 years currently being trained in the field of organ transplantation, either as physicians, surgeons, or who are junior staff members of one of the European transplant centers, participated in this workshop. The primary goals of this workshop were to provide a podium on which to discuss new and current topics in transplantation with established and internationally recognized leaders, and to lend an opportunity to meet peers, make contacts and establish networks to enhance future collaborations and (multicenter) research.

The first ETFW was organized as a trial. Program directors of centers in Belgium, Germany, The Netherlands and the Scandinavian countries were invited to propose and support the attendance of a transplant fellow or junior staff member. Candidates were requested to submit an abstract summarizing original research work in the field of transplantation to be presented at the workshop. Selection and acceptance of candidates was based on their abstract and curriculum vitae, from which it had to be evident that the candidate was pursuing a career in clinical organ transplantation. All costs (including traveling and housing) were covered by an educational grant from Fujisawa.

The number of attendees was limited in order to enhance active participation and to stimulate communication between attendees and the program faculty. The selected participants came from Belgium (3), Germany (8), The Netherlands (5), Norway (1) and Sweden (2). Established and leading clinicians in the field of organ transplantation were present to give interactive presentations on various subjects of transplantation and to discuss the presentations given by the fellows. Prof. P.A. Clavien from Zürich, Switzerland, an expert in the field of ischemia / reperfusion (I/R) injury of the liver, gave a lecture on the mechanisms of hepatic I/R injury and the role of ischemic preconditioning. Prof. J. Fishman from Boston, USA, a leading expert on infectious diseases in transplant patients, directed a highly interactive session with clinical case discussions. Dr. A.S.H. Gouw, pathologist from Groningen specialized in liver pathology, introduced the participants to the histopathology of the liver in a hands-on course in microscopy. A similar session on kidney pathology was successfully directed by Dr. V. Nickenleit, pathologist in Basel, Switzerland, specialized in renal pathology. For these two hands-on sessions, Zeiss in The Netherlands generously provided twenty binocular microscopes. Prof. L. Paul from Leiden, The Netherlands, nephrologist and an expert in the field of chronic rejection after kidney transplanta-

**Fig. 1** Participants and some of the faculty speakers at the 1st European Transplant Fellow Workshop in Groningen



tion, gave an excellent overview of the current knowledge and hypotheses on chronic kidney allograft rejection. Finally, Dr. T. van Gelder, an expert nephrologist/immunologist from Rotterdam, Netherlands discussed the role of monoclonal antibodies in immunosuppression. The abstract presentations of the fellows were evaluated by the program faculty at the workshop and discussed with the attendees after their presentations. Attention was given to the scientific content as well as to the presentation itself. An award for the best abstract and presentation by a fellow was provided by ESOT and included a certificate and cheque of € 500.-. The winner of this award was Dr. Kathleen E.J. de Greef from Antwerp, Belgium, who gave an excellent presentation on her research work on immunosuppressive drugs and acute ischemia/reperfusion injury of the kidney.

Judging by the personal reactions and the results of a questionnaire completed at the end of the workshop, this first ETFW was well received and successful. The goals set at the initiation of this workshop were all at-

tained. In contrast with large international scientific meetings, this workshop provided young clinicians with a special interest in transplantation the opportunity to discuss their scientific and clinical experiences with peers and with leading experts in their respective fields in a pleasant and low-threshold atmosphere.

Based on this trial, the initiators and ESOT have decided to continue to organize this workshop as an annual event. The workshop will remain under the auspices of ESOT, and a different European transplant center will be invited to participate in the organization each year. The location of the workshop will also change every year, depending on the center involved in its organization. We are very pleased to announce that the 2nd European Transplant Fellow Workshop will be organized in the Fall of 2001 in Zürich, Switzerland, in collaboration with the University Hospital of Zürich (P. A. Clavien and Z. Kadry). Detailed information and application forms for this 2nd workshop will be sent out soon.