



ICIEM 2003

IXth International Congress of Inborn Errors of Metabolism

Final Report

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**REPORT OF THE IXTH INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS ON INBORN
ERRORS OF METABOLISM
Brisbane, 2nd to 6th September 2003
Organised by the ASIEM**

The Congress bid

Before the ICIEM meeting in Cambridge, the Queensland ASIEM members, led by Drs Jim McGill, Frank Bowling, and David McGuire, had put together a bid to hold the 2003 meeting. The bid was presented by Bridget Wilcken in Cambridge, on behalf of the Australian Society, and there was also a proposal from the Japanese Society. We were very lucky to win the vote, and to be asked therefore to host the 2003 meeting.

Due to unforeseen and unavoidable rearrangements in the metabolic service in Queensland, it was decided in July 2001 that the organising committee would be the ASIEM committee of the moment, with most of the main organisers being in Sydney. Thus we made a somewhat late start. However, fortunately much of the groundwork had been laid by Queensland, including booking of the venue, and discussions with a professional conference organiser, ICMS Pty Ltd. The conference organisers were officially contracted in August 2001.

The Venue

The Brisbane Convention Centre was known to all of the organisers, and was considered highly suitable. Attractive features were the design, with a lot of natural light at all levels, location beside the Brisbane River and parklands, and the meeting rooms available. The main convention hall had a flexibility to enable it to cater for any variation on the number of delegates we could expect, and there were more than sufficient break-out rooms to encompass the sort of programme we were considering. There was adjacent accommodation. A site visit took place in November 2001, to decide just which parts of the convention centre we would need, and a further site visit occurred in early August 2003, to finalise arrangements and discuss audio-visual requirements.

The Scientific Programme

John Christodoulou agreed to chair the scientific programme committee. Initial discussions between Bridget Wilcken and Garry Brown (Oxford) in April 2001 resulted in the committee deciding on the main theme of the meeting – the structural and functional consequences of gene defects in inborn errors of metabolism. We wrote to the members of the International Advisory Committee, the presidents of the supporting societies (SSIEM, SIMD, JSIMD) the South American Society, and the presidents of the previous International Congresses, asking for suggestions about topics and speakers, and we incorporated as many of these as possible, to create a

coherent meeting. The scientific programme committee was kept very small, and this certainly made for efficiency.

An initial outline of the programme was made during October 2002, and by December 2002 most of the main speakers had been invited. We eventually had 23 invited speakers. We aimed for a reasonable Australasian content, and 8 invited speakers were “locals”. One plenary session (on mitochondrial disorders) was concurrent with a plenary session devoted to dietetics. Speakers received free registration and accommodation, but we were concerned about finances and offered speakers a fixed sum to cover only a little more than economy airfare. This seemed acceptable to all, and no complaints were made to us. A program for dieticians was incorporated into the scientific program, rather than have a separate dieticians’ conference. This allowed greater interaction between clinicians, scientists and dieticians, as well as being easier administratively.

We adopted the previous model of having plenary sessions in the mornings, a total of 14 concurrent workshops in three afternoons, and a total of 14 concurrent free communication sessions over 4 afternoons. In addition, a few free papers were included in the plenary sessions. The workshop chairmen were invited late, and for the most part were chosen from people already registered for the conference. They received free registration and accommodation for 4 nights, but no airfare consideration. They were given all abstracts related to their topic, and were responsible for setting the scene by introducing the topic, and organising the workshop content.

As expected, we had much angst about concurrent sessions, and attempted to arrange them in such a way that interests would not overlap too much at any one time. Inevitably, people found that there were sessions they would have liked to attend but couldn’t. There is no way around this problem, but we decided on fewer individual topics for workshops, to minimise overlap. Interestingly, we suggested a workshop topic of pharmacogenetics, but this had to be cancelled as there were no submissions for the topic.

Posters and poster sessions

Posters were displayed in 4 adjoining areas of the venue with the main area also housing the commercial exhibition. All refreshments and lunches were served in these areas and we considered the layout spacious and effective. The posters were grouped according to topic area and attended sessions were held on each of the three lunch times with topics chosen on each day to spread delegates throughout the available space rather than avoid any obvious clashes of content.

Satellite meetings

There were two satellite meetings held in Sydney, before the main conference. These were: Tandem Mass Spectrometry in Newborn Screening, held at the Children’s Hospital at Westmead, which attracted 106 registrants, and New Developments in Urea Cycle Disorders, held at Manly (98 delegates).

Second announcement and call for abstracts

The second announcement was sent by courier and mail at the end of February 2003. In retrospect this was a little too late. Despite the use of couriers for bulk transport there were problems for several countries with very long delivery times. Another problem which came to light later was that instructions included about the need for visas, and the likely time this would take were not displayed prominently enough.

Abstracts

Submission: Abstracts were submitted only electronically. We directed the abstracts from the conference web-site to a dedicated e-mail address and all abstracts were forwarded to Neil Hamilton in the UK in preparation for the publishing of the JIMD Supplement.

A total of 447 abstracts was received. We are aware of only one submission where e-mail failed and the abstract was never received. Although an autogenerated e-mailed reply was sent confirming receipt within 24 hours, our intention to do this was not included in the abstract instructions and should have been. In that way anyone not receiving a reply would have known to re-send or contact the organisers.

Several abstracts were sent back to authors for revision due to failure to follow formatting instructions and these plus other duplicates led to a database of over 550 individual submissions being generated by Neil Hamilton. Over half the abstracts were received up to 5 days after the closing date of 25th April, but a combination of a Friday closing date, Australia being several hours ahead of much of the world, and public holiday in Australia on the Monday meant this did not cause too much inconvenience. However, abstracts received after the end of April were not accepted.

Authors were asked to select a topic area but several chose more than one and others none at all so these were assigned by Kevin Carpenter. All submitted abstracts in each topic group were transferred electronically to two reviewers for each topic, who were asked to score each abstract out of 15. Scores were collated and reviewed at a meeting of the programme committee held on 30th May.

Only one abstract was rejected outright due to it being far from our subject area. A number of others which scored marginally due to English errors were edited by BW and referred back to the authors to confirm they were happy with the suggested changes. In total 125 were allocated oral presentations and 321 posters, of which 47 were also given the opportunity to present at one of the workshop sessions.

Acceptance letters were sent out from Sydney on 13th June 2003 but it soon became clear that delays in international mail were likely to mean some authors would get their letter after the early bird registration closing. Therefore an e-mail was sent to all corresponding authors in late June advising them of the delays.

For oral and workshop abstracts, presenting authors were checked against the registration database and we e-mailed any not registered to check if co-authors were actually doing the presentations.

Ten abstracts were withdrawn prior to the meeting, 6 of these within the last 3 weeks before the congress, making constant last minute changes to the program and abstract book. In addition 35 posters were not displayed and one oral presenter did not e-mail to indicate non-attendance until after the congress started.

The abstracts received fell into the categories shown:

Topic	Total	Oral	Poster
Screening	30	4	26
Hyperphenylalaninaemia and biopterin	39	13	26
Organic acids	50	7	43
Other amino acid disorders	43	17	26
Fatty acid oxidation	26	9	17
Mitochondrial disorders	43	16	27
Carbohydrate disorders	15	6	9
CGD	3	2	1
Purines and pyrimidines	10	2	8
Quality assurance	4	4	0
Lysosomal disorders	81	20	61
Peroxisomal disorders	14	4	10
Metal disorders	6	1	5
DNA studies	19	8	11
Methods	14	3	11
Dietetic treatment	23	4	19
Neurotransmitter disorders	5	3	2
Sterol and lipid disorders	3	0	3
Other disorders	14	0	14
Miscellaneous	4	2	2
Total	446	125	321

Programme book

We decided to incorporate the pdf files of the JIMD supplement provided by Kluwer into the programme book giving a single source for the timetable, plenary abstracts, social functions and sponsors information. The design and local production of this was undertaken by one of the local organising committee and seemed to work reasonably well although at over 290 pages it was a little weighty. We also produced a pocket programme for delegates.

Registrations

Registrations were accepted electronically or by fax or post. Unfortunately several people experienced problems. In the main, we felt that there was not sufficient flexibility with our conference organiser's data-base, nor was there good enough communication between their head office in Melbourne and the office in Sydney, and this resulted in very late acknowledgments and much frustration for a small number of people, although for most, things went smoothly. Several delegates had trouble obtaining visas, some for quite complex reasons, and this resulted in several of the 10 cancellations.

Overall there were 677 registrants, from 48 countries. This was rather fewer than we had hoped for. The main influences on the somewhat lower registration seemed to be, firstly, the distance and cost of travel – something we Antipodeans are used to, but which clearly was a barrier to many, and then the SARS epidemic, which was at its height immediately before registrations were due, resulting in a reluctance to travel through Asia.

The breakdown by region is shown in the table, with a comparison with numbers at the previous ICIEM in Cambridge. The main deficit was in delegates from Europe, which is probably understandable for both of the above reasons.

Region	Delegates	Delegates	Percentage	Cambridge 2000	Cambridge %
Europe		206	30	625	61
UK	68				
N. America		154	23	213	21
Middle East		15	2		
Asia		121	18	123	12
Japan	72				
S'th+Central America		12	2	24	2
Africa		1		11	1
Australasia		168	25	32	3
TOTAL		677	100	1028	100

Audio visual

The audio-visual arrangements in Brisbane were exceptionally good. There were enough staff to man the speaker's preparation room comfortably, as well as to keep an eye on all concurrent sessions, and it was a tribute to the Brisbane Convention Centre that nothing whatever went wrong at any time. This is a big plus at a conference.

Lunches, coffee breaks, evening social programme

In order to minimise queuing, lunches were plated in advance. This seemed an excellent half-way between a cardboard box/paper bag lunch and a buffet style, and on the whole it worked well. Shortages which occurred on the last day were dealt with expeditiously. Lunches and tea and coffee were served in the exhibition hall which was convenient for delegates and popular with exhibitors.

There was a welcome reception on the first evening, with wine and “finger” food. The main night out was a bus trip to Seaworld, a marine park on the Gold Coast. There delegates were able to see a particularly good dolphin show, exciting demonstrations of waterskiing, and were given an excellent meal, served out of doors, buffet style, from multiple stalls. There was very vigorous dancing, and several rides were open for delegates, some quite terrifying. This was a popular (115 extra tickets sold) and very successful evening. Everyone enjoyed it greatly, even those who were almost, but not quite, stranded by a bus-breakdown on the return journey. The Thursday night was free and delegates could take advantage of the surrounding riverside parklands, where there were many venues for informal dining.

The conference dinner was held in the City Hall, to which delegates could walk. We catered for 450, and this was adequate. It is difficult to make large conference dinners attractive. We feel this worked well, and some of the contributing features included having only one short speech acknowledging those who had contributed most to the meeting’s success, and making sure that loud music did not occur until quite late on, so that delegates could talk easily during the meal, and dance later. The actual dining hall had a very good, interesting and intimate atmosphere, a tribute to the Queensland social committee who chose it.

The conference closed at lunch-time, and a barbecue lunch on the conference centre terraces was the final event. The committee felt that the closing barbecue added greatly to the excellent atmosphere and Australian flavour of the conference.

Sponsorship and exhibition

Dianne Webster approached many potential sponsors at the Prague SSIEM meeting in 2001, to ascertain what arrangements they would find important if they were to sponsor the 2003 ICIEM. Points raised included having the exhibition space where the delegates would actually be eg for refreshments etc, having one “free” evening for companies to put on a dinner for selected customers, that small bookable meeting rooms would be available for meeting with customers, and an opportunity for lunch-time seminars. Based on this we developed packages for platinum, gold, silver and bronze sponsors. Sponsors were invited by formal letter from either Dianne Webster or Kevin Carpenter, and the packages offered are shown in appendix 1. We invited and achieved one platinum and four gold sponsors and in addition recruited 3 silver and nine bronze sponsors. The total sponsorship raised for the main Congress was A\$290,680.

Finances

The aim was to make only a small profit, and to this end we kept expenditure down as far as possible, particularly when registrations were fewer than we had hoped. By standards of previous conferences our registration fee, which included lunches, teas, and all social events except the Congress dinner, was very reasonable. We received good sponsorship, and we feel that our Conference Organisers, ICMS, obtained good value for money and good discounts from caterers, printers, and so forth. Until the last minute, the profit was forecast by ICMS to be quite modest, but the final figures showed quite a large profit. We have returned seed-funding to the previous organising

society, and will be offering in turn some funding to the Japanese society to run the next Congress. We have made a payment to our “parent” society, The Human Genetics Society of Australasia, who would have underwritten losses if necessary. With the remainder, we shall be using our windfall to fund scientists, dieticians, and junior medical staff to attend overseas Inborn Error conferences. These groups have great difficulty in obtaining institutional funding for any overseas conference, and of course travel from Australasia to anywhere else is quite expensive.

Balance Sheet:

Income:		A\$ 916,446
Including:		
Participants:	A\$ 464,857	
Sponsorship and exhibition	A\$ 343,221	
Expenditure:		A\$ 784,629
Including:		
Invited speakers	A\$ 77,078	
Venue hire	A\$ 260,170	
Entertainment	A\$ 102,085	
Secretariat (PCO)	A\$ 115,535	
Net balance:		A\$ 131,817

The accounts have been audited under the auspices of the Human Genetics society of Australasia.

SPONSORSHIP PACKAGES

This will be only the second International Congress to be fully supported by the international societies in the USA (SIMD), Europe (SSIEM), Japan (JSIMD) and Australasia (ASIEM). This means each of the societies will forgoe their local conference in 2003 in support of the ICIEM.

The previous Congress held in CambridgeUK in 2000 attracted 1028 delegates from 57 countries and we would hope to attract at least 800 to the Brisbane meeting.

Details of the meeting will be widely advertised to all members of the sponsoring societies and other interested parties.

A special edition of the Journal of Inherited Metabolic Disease will be published containing all accepted abstracts for the meeting.

The conference venue is the Plaza level of the Brisbane Conference Centre which offers state of the art facilities for scientific sessions and trade exhibitors.

The exclusive **Platinum** sponsorship package on offer ensures the highest profile and excellent exposure to delegates. It is priced at A\$50,000 and includes:

- Named sponsorship of your choice of ; Internet café, Welcome Reception, Congress Dinner, Specialist Dietitian's workshop or the Opening and Closing sessions.
- One full page black and white advertisement in the Congress Program.
- One full page black and white advertisement in Abstracts issue of Journal of Inherited Metabolic Disease (*Subject to confirmation of acceptability from the editorial team*)
- Acknowledgment of your company's support of the Congress with placement of name or logo on website (with hot link if desired), signage around venue and Powerpoint presentation to be displayed before all sessions in main meeting room. Platinum sponsor logo will be the largest or most prominent.
- Opportunity to display slides from a Powerpoint presentation of up to 2 minutes before a sponsored session or function. Prominent signage in the Internet Café if this option is chosen.
- Acknowledgment of your company's support of the Congress in registration brochure and all other printed material. Platinum sponsor logo will be the largest or most prominent.
- Exhibition space First choice of position for two 2x3m booths (or space equivalent) for duration of Congress.
- Inclusion of unlimited material in delegate bags.
- An opportunity to host a lunch time seminar.
- A hospitality room for your company's exclusive use for the duration of the conference.
- Eight full conference registrations including social functions.
- Delegate lists as requested.

The **Gold** sponsorship package ensures a very high profile and excellent exposure to delegates. A maximum of 4 Gold packages will be offered. It is priced at A\$30,000 and includes:

- Named sponsorship of your choice of ; Internet café, Welcome Reception, Congress Dinner, Specialist Dietitian's workshop or the Opening and Closing sessions. (subject to availability following Platinum sponsors choice).
- Half page black and white advertisement in the Congress Program.
- Half page black and white advertisement in Abstracts issue of Journal of Inherited Metabolic Disease (*Subject to confirmation of acceptability from the editorial team*)
- Acknowledgment of your company's support of the Congress with placement of name or logo on website (with hot link if desired), signage around venue and Powerpoint presentation to be displayed before all sessions in main meeting room.
- Opportunity to display slides from a Powerpoint presentation of up to 2 minutes before a sponsored session or function. Prominent signage in the Internet Café if this option is chosen.
- Acknowledgment of your company's support of the Congress in registration brochure and all other printed material.
- Exhibition space two 2x3m booths (or space equivalent) for duration of Congress.
- Inclusion of material in delegate bags (one item or 3x A4 sheets).
- An opportunity to host a lunch time seminar.
- A hospitality room for your company's exclusive use for the duration of the conference available on a first come first served basis.
- Six full conference registrations including social functions.
- Delegate lists at 3, 2 and 1 month before the conference.

The **Silver** sponsorship package ensures a excellent exposure to delegates at a very competitive price of A\$12,000 and includes:

- Named sponsorship of a plenary session.
- One quarter page black and white advertisement in the Congress Program.
- One quarter page black and white advertisement in Abstracts issue of Journal of Inherited Metabolic Disease (*Subject to confirmation of acceptability from the editorial team*)
- Acknowledgment of your company's support of the Congress with placement of name or logo on website (with hot link if desired) and on a Powerpoint presentation to be displayed before all unsponsored sessions in main meeting room.
- Opportunity to display slides from a Powerpoint presentation of up to 2 minutes before sponsored plenary session or function.
- Acknowledgment of your company's support of the Congress in registration brochure and all other printed material.
- Exhibition space One 2x3m booth (or space equivalent) for duration of Congress.
- Inclusion of 2xA4 flyers in delegate bags.
- Bookable access to a hospitality room during the conference.
- Four full conference registrations including social functions.
- Delegate registration information 3, 2 and 1 month from meeting.

The **Bronze** sponsorship package is tailored to the smaller company wishing to gain exposure to delegates. It is priced at A\$7,000 and includes:

- Acknowledgment in a sponsor list in the Congress Program.
- Acknowledgment in a sponsor list in Abstracts issue of Journal of Inherited Metabolic Disease (*Subject to confirmation of acceptability from the editorial team*)
- Acknowledgment of your company's support of the Congress with placement of name or logo on website (with hot link if desired), on list of sponsors in Powerpoint presentation to be displayed before all unsponsored sessions in main meeting room.
- Acknowledgment of your company's support of the Congress in registration brochure and all other printed material.
- Exhibition space One 2x3m booth (or space equivalent) for duration of Congress.
- Inclusion of one A4 flyer material in delegate bags.
- Bookable access to a hospitality room during the conference.
- Two full conference registrations including social functions.
- Delegate registration information 3, 2 and 1 month from meeting.