

Hellenic Bioscientific Association in the USA

www.hba-usa.org

Newsletter

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Establishment of the Association

The Hellenic Bioscientific Association in the USA was established in 2005 with an aim to facilitate the networking and scientific interaction among the Greek bioscientists in the USA as well as the USA based bioscientists and those that conduct bioscientific research in Greece.

The major aims of this effort are:

1. Strong scientific interaction among the Greek bioscientists in the USA.
2. The organization of an annual scientific meeting in which scientists from USA and Greece will exchange



scientific information.

3. The establishment of an exchange program for exceptional undergraduate and graduate students of Greek Universities, in the context of cooperation between American and Greek Universities.

4. Direct communication and interaction with the major scientific societies in USA and Greece.

5. Improved communication channel among bioscientists on new scientific

*To promote
interaction among the
Greek
Bioscientists in the
USA
and abroad*

developments.

6. Direct information about positions which are available in USA and Greece.

Cypriot Ministry of Health

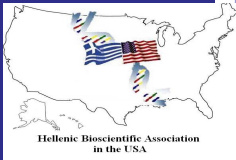
World Hellenic Biomedical Association

Global Hellenic Medical Network

September 27 - 29, 2008

Pafos, Cyprus

The HBA-USA is organizing a session about Metabolic Syndrome for the coming meeting of the World Hellenic Biomedical Association in Cyprus. Please, refer to the next page for session details and also to our website for information about this meeting.



Organizing Committee

Konstantinos Drosatos

Stephanos Pavlides

Thomas Thomou

Iordanes Karagiannides

Anastasia Kalea

George Kodovazenitis

Evangelos Ntrivalas

Cyriot Ministry of Health

World Hellenic Biomedical Association

Global Hellenic Medical Network

September 27 - 29, 2008

The HBA-USA organizes a session about **Metabolic Syndrome** for the above meeting. The agenda of the session is as following:

Chairman: Constantine Londos, DDS, PhD, Chief of the Membrane Regulation Section, National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, Bethesda, MD, USA

Speakers:

- **Efstathios Papavasiliou, MD**, Associate Professor, Director of the Department of Endocrinology, University of Crete Medical School, Heraklion, Greece
“The metabolic syndrome: Can man outsmart evolution? Lessons from clinical observations”
- **Constantine Londos, DDS, PhD**, Chief of the Membrane Regulation Section, National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, Bethesda, MD, USA
“Ectopic lipids and the metabolic syndrome”
- **Michael P. Lisanti, MD, PhD**, Professor, Thomas Jefferson University, Editor-in-Chief of the American Journal of Pathology, Philadelphia, PA, USA
“Metabolic syndrome - Clinical and translational implications for caveolae and the caveolin genes”
- **Emmanuel N. Pothos, PhD**, Assistant Professor, Tufts University School of Medicine, Boston, MA, USA
“Neurobiological correlates of the obesity epidemic”

Important information for participants

The HBA-USA wishes to inform you that, upon arrangements, Cyprus Airways is pleased to offer for the above meeting the following:

- (A) 50% discount on all published applicable fares on the sector Athens – Larnaca – Athens for the speakers and organizers of the seminar, totally 6 (six) persons.
The reservation/issuance and payments of tickets must be made directly to the Cyprus Airways Office in Athens.
- (B) 15% discount on all published applicable fares for the participants of the seminar (about 150 – 200).
The reservation/issuance and payments of tickets must be made directly to the Cyprus Airways Offices in each country, presenting the Registration Receipt of the participation to the Seminar.

The delegates may visit Cyprus Airways web site www.cyprusairways.com to obtain the contact addresses and telephone numbers of the respective Cyprus Airways Offices.

For both (A) and (B) above, the airport taxes and any other applicable taxes / surcharges are not included in the above offer, and must be paid in full at the time of issuance of the tickets. The transportation of the passengers is subject to seat availability on Cyprus Airways direct flights and aircraft at the time of firm reservation.

The HBA-USA, in an effort to highlight the scientific achievements of its members, will take an interview from a scientist who has recently published his/her work in a top scientific journal. In this issue, the interview is with Dr. Theoharides, who has recently published his work in NEJM (*Mast cells and pancreatic cancer. N Eng J Med 2008. 24;358(17):1860-1*)



Theoharis Theoharides, M.D., Ph.D.

Professor of Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics, Tufts University School of Medicine, Boston, MA

Q: Dr Theoharides, could you please give us a brief introduction of your academic profile?

A: Professor of Pharmacology, Internal Medicine and Biochemistry; Director, Molecular Immunopharmacology and Drug Discovery Laboratory, Tufts University School of Medicine, Tufts Medical Center; Clinical Pharmacologist, Massachusetts Drug Formulary Commission (1986-2010)

Q: Can you brief us on the major aspects of the disease that is described in your recent review in the NEJM?

A: Pancreatic cancer is one of the most lethal cancers with median survival of 6-9 months with no effective therapy. In this particular article, I discuss findings of an experimental study in which those authors could not induce pancreatic islet cancer in mice that are genetically deficient in mast cells. I then go on to discuss how mast cells accumulate around pancreatic cancers and are recruited by the cancer cells ("hitzacked") by the cancer cells to release **selectively** molecules that are angiogenic, growth promoting and permitting metastases.

Q: Is your lab involved in research which is related to the scientific area described in your review?

A: We are actively investigating the mast cells in tumor microenvironment, the ability to cancer cells to induce selective release of procancer rather than anticancer molecules from mast cells, and the ability of a specific phosphoprotein we have cloned to regulate both cancer cell proliferation and mast cell secretion of procancer molecules. In addition, we have shown that mast cells regulate the permeability of the blood brain barrier and acute stress triggers mast cell activation, disrupts the BBB through brain mast cell release of vasoactive molecules and permits brain metastases (Theoharides et al. J. Neuroimmunol., 2008 in press).

Q: Are mast cells involved in the development of tumors other than pancreatic?

A: Yes, at least in breast and lung cancer, as well as in melanoma.

Q: Is there ongoing research in Pharmacology which you think could result in the development of mast cell-specific inhibitors and eventually in the inhibition of tumor development?

A: We have been studying some unique flavonoids (**Middleton E Jr, Kandaswami C, Theoharides TC. The effects of plant flavonoids on mammalian cells: implications for inflammation, heart disease, and cancer. Pharmacol Rev. 2000 Dec;52(4):673-751.- recently selected as a "Current Classic"** for the high numbers of citations) that we have shown recently can inhibit mast cell activation as well as induce expression of the phosphoprotein mentioned above. We hope that such natural molecules, formulated appropriately to permit high systemic or local levels) could be a novel, additional way to "catch many birds with one stone" because you should be able to inhibit angiogenesis at multiple levels, tumor growth at multiple levels, as well as the metastatic potential.

Q: Since you are one of our Advisory Board members from the very beginning of the establishment of this association, what would you advise our members who are at their early scientific steps so that they could launch promising careers?

A: To link up with a good, productive laboratory and focus on a promising area of research where they can make a significant contribution.

Q: What are the priorities that the Hellenic Bioscientific Association in the USA should set to achieve its major aims i.e. the enhancement of interaction among members of the Hellenic and Hellenic-American scientific community of the US, as well as the interaction with the Greek Universities?

A: Continue the great work you have been doing and maximize the chances younger colleagues could link up with existing laboratories (e.g. I will be looking for a postdoc for the area mentioned above at the beginning of 2009). Also publicize great interactive events such as the 3rd Hellenic Oncology Forum that took place at the beginning of this last July in Hania, Crete, where I was an invited speaker and included over a dozen world-wide known scientists in oncology, such as Dr. Canellos, and Pavlakis, but had hardly any pre-or postdoctorate fellows present whether from Greece or abroad.

Thank you very much.

SOCIAL EVENTS

LOS ANGELES, CA

With the occasion of Easter the HBA-USA members met in a social context at Los Angeles, CA in April 2008.

Special thanks to Dr Iordanes Karagiannides who set up the gathering and Mr. Peter Carabatsos who hosted the meeting at his place.



In the photo: Sotirios Tetradis, Iordanes Karagiannides, Georgia Fousteri, Stavroula Baritaki, Kostas Drosatos, Zoi Tabakaki



The HBA-USA welcomes new members

Triantafyllos Stylianopoulos, Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Medical School

Eva Kyritsis, The Brody School of Medicine

Christina Hajicharalambous, Drexel University

Constantinos Laskarides, Tufts University

Theodore Kolias, University of Michigan

Afroditi Petsakou, NYU

Thales Papagiannakopoulos, University of California, Santa Barbara

Akrivi Manola, Tufts University

Taxiarchis Kourelis, Tufts University

Top 10 publications list

The best 10 original papers published during the 2nd quarter of 2008 by Greek/Greek-American researchers, that have registered with the HBA-USA, have been posted on the association's website (www.hba-usa.org). This is an effort aiming to highlight the scientific production of the Greek researchers who are members of the Hellenic Bioscientific Association in the USA.

Visit our website to view these papers

AVAILABLE POSITIONS

- [1 lecturer position](#) in Bio-molecular interactions in signal transduction pathways (Democritus Research Institute, Athens-Greece)
- [3 positions](#) in Systems Biology multidisciplinary lab (National Technical University, Athens-Greece)
- [Assistant Professor or Instructor](#) position in Cell Biology (University of Ioannina, Greece)
- [Instructor](#) position in Physiology of Central Nervous System (University of Ioannina, Greece)
- [Instructor](#) position in Biochemical Engineering (University of Ioannina, Greece)
- [Post-doctoral position](#) in molecular basis of individual variability to pulmonary disease susceptibility (Penn State University College of Medicine, Hershey, PA)
- [Physician-Scientist/Basic Scientist](#) position in Host defense, Inflammation & Lung Disease (Penn State University College of Medicine, Hershey, PA)

Visit our website to find information about these positions



DUES FOR 2008

Please, remember to pay your dues for 2008. In order to make the Association stronger we need active support from our members!

Upcoming events

An event will be scheduled for late October in New York for welcoming new bioscience students coming from Greece to study in USA. Additionally, there will be information on research funding and transatlantic cooperation opportunities. Details will be announced.



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