

## ITMIG 2011 Annual Meeting Summary

The 2011 ITMIG meeting took place July 7 and 8 in Amsterdam. The conference center was a restored Dutch chapel, which is perhaps fitting for a meeting focused on the thymus, which has been viewed as “the seat of the soul”. The event was a resounding success logistically, scientifically, socially and collaboratively. There were 162 participants, involving basic science, epidemiology, health-care industry, immunology, medical oncology, neurology, palliative care, pathology, pulmonary medicine, radiology, radiation oncology, and surgery. People came from 25 countries ranging from Argentina to



Turkey and spanning Asia, Australia, Europe, Middle East, North and South America. The meeting was supported by generous donations from EACTS, ESTS, Foundation for Thymic Cancer Research, Baxter, Ethicon, Covidien, Medela, Atrium, Superdimension, Storz, Cryolife, and MundoMed. The entire meeting can be viewed as a webcast on the ITMIG website or by clicking the links:

[http://player.companywebcast.com/congresscare/20110707\\_1/en/player](http://player.companywebcast.com/congresscare/20110707_1/en/player) (July 7) and  
[http://player.companywebcast.com/congresscare/20110708\\_1/en/player](http://player.companywebcast.com/congresscare/20110708_1/en/player) (July 8).

The meeting began with an “expand your thinking” session, continuing the tradition of devoting a session to invited speakers on topics that challenge our usual way of thinking or introduce us to novel concepts and approaches that may have relevance to our mission. The first talk was given by Dr. Lieping Chen on “*The Relationship of Immunology and Cancer*”. Lieping is internationally recognized for his expertise as a cancer immunologist, and presented an overview of the current understanding of this area. Much progress has been made recently and new concepts such as modulation of immune tolerance have merged. Preliminary data show this extends to thymic malignancies, but relatively little work has been



done with this disease and the thymus offers a unique opportunity for research. Dr. Don Nguyen presented “*Cell Migration from the Primary Tumor to Metastatic Sites*”. Also a recognized leader in this field, he discussed how metastases do not develop simply from physical deposition of a cancer cell to another site, but is determined by altered tissue microenvironments, distinct physiologic restrictions, and specific molecular alterations.

An update of major ITMIG initiatives

included the Database, the HUBzero platform, the collaborative observational study, the International Staging Committee efforts, the ITMIG Pathology meeting and educational modules. Other sessions focused on novel treatments of stage IVa, a preliminary exploration of what we can learn from studying “outlier” cases, Imaging of the thymus, and a debate on what extent of thymectomy is needed. The meeting also included 16 oral presentations of



submitted papers and 33 posters. A file containing the full text of all of these abstracts (as well as the rest of the 2011 talks) is available on the ITMIG website. The Masaoka prize of 1000 € for the best oral paper went to Paula Erba for the paper “*Radioimmunotherapy with <sup>131</sup>I-L19SIP in thymoma: first clinical data*”. The Rosai prize of 250 € for the best poster was awarded to M. Sarah Kuruvilla for “*A Provincial Atlas for Thymic Malignancies: Understanding the Nature of the Distribution and Burden of disease*”.

*within the Largest Province in Canada*". The prizes were made possible by a gift from the VU University in Amsterdam, Netherlands.

A highlight of the meeting was a dinner cruise on the canals of Amsterdam. This provided a relaxed atmosphere for the development of friendships, potential collaborations and exchange of ideas that involved not only the different specialties of ITMIG but equally members of industry. This sort of



open free exchange and building of relationships is a core tenet of the culture of ITMIG. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> night a trip to the van Gogh museum was followed by dinner that included not only good food but servers and wait staff who performed a wide variety of songs and music in-between seeming endless servings of Dutch food. Thus the 2011 ITMIG meeting embodied the characteristics of an intellectually stimulating, scientifically productive and personally enjoyable event that are becoming a mark of ITMIG meetings. We look forward to seeing you in Fukuoka, Japan on November 25, 26, 2012 at the next one!