



NEWSLETTER

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Gesellschaft für Arzneipflanzenforschung · Society for Medicinal Plant Research

<http://www.ga-online.org>

Editorial

Since several years the GA is featured by a constant growth. Many members from many countries with manifold working areas and scientific specialities join the society. It may be interesting for most members to get more information on the scientific activities of the colleagues. In order of networking within the GA I wish to integrate a column in the following newsletters entitled "Working areas and current theses". Every member may feel free to send me relevant reference on a shortly published Ph.D. thesis, master thesis or "habilitation" thesis to get it published within the newsletter and to inform other members what is going on in his/her labs. This possibility of describing working areas was also approved by the GA Board.

The relevant information should be mailed to my address (a.hensel@hswzfh.ch) using the following style (only this kind will be accepted, other styles are not published):

Ph.D. thesis, date:
Title of the thesis (plant species in italics):
Name of the author:
Promoter:
Address:

For example: Ph.D. thesis, 7 Mar 01: The isochorismate pathway as a route to 2,3-dihydroxybenzoic acid in *Catharanthus roseus* cell cultures. By J.M.J. Retno Andayani; promoters: Prof. Dr R. Verpoorte and Prof. Dr J.J.C. Scheffer, Division Pharmacognosy, LACDR, Leiden University, The Netherlands.

So, lets start this project and I hope we will get a useful instrument of mutual information.

Andreas Hensel

GA Members' Meeting 2001

During the 49th Annual Meeting of our Society that will take place in Erlangen from 2 till 6 September 2001, a regular Members' Meeting will be held. That meeting will take place on **Monday, 3 Sept 2001**, at 6.30 p.m.

Location: "Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg", "Biologikum", lecture room A

This announcement in our Newsletter must be considered the official invitation to the Members' Meeting (in accordance with the GA bylaws), as this Newsletter is sent to all members of our Society.

Preliminary Agenda

1. Passing of the Agenda
2. Minutes of the Members' Meeting held in Amsterdam on Thursday, 29 Jul 99; these minutes have been published in the GA Newsletter 1999, no 2 (published Dec 00)
3. Minutes of the Members' Meeting held in Zürich on Tuesday, 5 Sept 00; these minutes have been published in the GA Newsletter 2000, no 1 (published Dec 00)
4. Annual reports:
 - report of the president
 - report(s) of the vice-president(s)

- report of the secretary
 - report of the treasurer, report of the auditor(s)
 - discharge of the treasurer
5. Membership fee:
 - proposal to include Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Iceland under the countries that are excepted from a reduced (50%) membership fee
 6. Report of the Editor-in-Chief of *Planta Medica*
 7. Reports of the Permanent Committees
 8. Future Annual Congresses, and Workshops
 9. Election of the Board of Directors
 - election of the president
 - election of the two vice-presidents
 - election of the treasurer
 - election of the secretary
 - election of the members of the Advisory Board
 10. Miscellaneous

On behalf of the Executive Council,
J.J.C. Scheffer, GA President

GA Elections 2001

Only GA members are entitled to vote. Supporting members are requested to transfer their vote to an authorized representative, in writing to the GA secretary, no later than 15 Aug 01. Absent members may **not** be represented by proxy during the casting of ballots (par. 11.5 of the bylaws).

Nominations of candidates for the Board of Directors (Executive Council and Advisory Board) should be made in writing to the GA President, no later than 15 Aug 01; the nomination must include a written statement of consent by the candidate.

GA Membership Fee for Students

In the previous Newsletter, December 2000 no. 1, a message was published about the membership fees for the years 2000 and 2001. To avoid misunderstandings, additional information with regard to the students' fee is given here.

The reduced fee for students (DM 25.- / 12.50 Euro) is only valid during the first three years of their membership. Thereafter the student will receive an invoice for the regular membership fee. Students can apply for a prolonged reduction of the fee on the condition that they send a copy of their student identity card to the Treasurer of the Society.

Egon Stahl-Award 2002 in Gold

Two years ago, the first Egon Stahl-Award in Gold was awarded during the Joint Meeting held in Amsterdam, 26-31 July 1999. According to the Standing Rules in question (published in the GA membership list and on the GA homepage), the award can be awarded every third year. Therefore, I kindly invite the regular members of our Society to submit nominations for the Egon Stahl-Award in Gold before 1 March 2002, taking into account the standing rules (also published below). Nominations that were received earlier, and that fulfil the requirements, will also be considered.

J.J.C. Scheffer

Egon Stahl-Award in Gold

The Egon Stahl-Award in Gold is the highest scientific honour of the Society of Medicinal Plant Research (GA). It can be awarded every third year beginning in the year 1999.

The Egon Stahl-Award in Gold acknowledges the outstanding scientific lifetime work of a research scientist who has been closely attached to Pharmaceutical Biology (Pharmacognosy, Chemistry of Natural Products), in its whole range, through his scientific work.

The price will be awarded during the annual congress of the GA in such a way that a special ceremony can be held. The candidate will have the opportunity to present a scientific contribution.

Nominations can be made by all regular members of the GA. Nominations of oneself cannot be considered.

The Egon Stahl-Award in Gold must be announced in suitable journals at least 6 months before the deadline for nominations. Nominations must be submitted to the President of the GA by the 1st of March of the year in which the award is to be given.

The following must be enclosed with the nomination:

- a detailed acknowledgement of the scientific works
- names of further experts who could be consulted.

The President, the vice-Presidents, the Treasurer and the Secretary of the GA will give expert advice about the nominations submitted and make a selection. The President is free to consult further experts. The Egon Stahl-Award in Gold is endowed with DM 10,000.- a donation from Bionorica GmbH. The donation was made with the intention of further scientific aims deserving aid.

Future GA Meetings**49th Annual Congress in Erlangen, September 2001**

The 49th annual congress of our Society will be held in a few weeks, namely from 2 till 6 September. The organizing Committee, chaired by Prof. Dr Kreis and Dr Abel, has planned a very interesting programme. Detailed information is given on a special homepage. All recent data about our next annual congress are also available via the internet:

www.biologie.uni-erlangen.de/pharmbiol/kongresse.html;
some topics will be mentioned here.

If the number of posters will allow, the posters will be on display during the entire meeting. The best posters will be awarded on Thursday, 6 September. Four poster awards will be available: two for the best posters as to their scientific contents, and two for the best posters as to the presentation (clear presentation of data, layout).

As to the registration fee: on registration after 31 July 2001, the registration fee will increase by DM 50.-.

The information - given in the second announcement - that the get-together party on Wednesday, 5 September, is intended for those in their twenties, not for those born in the twenties, should not be taken too literally!

50th Annual Congress in Barcelona, September 2002

In contrast to the "tradition" of last years, the Annual Congress 2002 will not take place in the first week of September, but it will be held from 8 September (registration and get-together party) till 12 September (botanical excursion).

In view of the above, the International Symposium on Essential Oils (ISEO) that usually takes place after our annual congress, will be held from 4 till 7 Sept 02, in Lisbon.

Other Meetings

Mexico City, Mexico, November 4-10, 2001

24th International Symposium on Natural Products "Current Trends in Natural Products"

<http://www.iqumica.unam.mx/24thSymp.html>

Contact: Prof. Carlos Cespedes, Researcher Chemistry Institute, UNAM

Mexico D.F., Mexico

Phone: +525-6224452/3

Fax : +525-6162203/17

St. Petersburg-Petershof, Russia, July 5-7, 2001

5th International Congress "Actual problems of creation of new medicinal preparations of natural origin"

<http://private.peterlink.ru/adaptation/Congress.html>

Contact: Interregional Fund "Adaptation"

47/5 Piskarevsky ave., 195067, St-Petersburg, Russia

Phone/Fax +7(812) 543-13-74, 543-96-94, 545-22-30

E-mail: adaptation@peterlink.ru

Wädenswil, Switzerland, October 9-10, 2001

The use of microscopic analysis in routine quality control - practical training course for quality control people as well as for lecturer in academics.

http://www.hswzfh.ch/nachdiplom/nachdip_a.htm

Wädenswil, Switzerland, May 14-15, 2002

Biotech 2002: 6th International Conference on Biotechnology - Biotechnology in Pharmacy. Workshop: "From the protein to the product"

Contact: Dr R. Eibl, University of Applied Science, Wädenswil

Phone/Fax: ++41 789 9713, ++41 789 9950

E-mail: r.eibl@hswzfh.ch

Meeting Reports of Selected Symposia in the Year 2001

LOF Symposium 2001, Brussels, Belgium, February 16, 2001

The 25th LOF Symposium was organized by the Laboratory of Pharmacognosy of the "Vrije Universiteit Brussel", under the auspices of the Society for Medicinal Plant Research and the Belgian Fund for Scientific Research ("FWO").

The theme of the meeting was "Isolation, Biological Activity and Structure Elucidation of Saponins". In five lectures, recognized authorities in the field highlighted these various aspects of saponin research in the presence of more than 140 Belgian, Dutch, French and German participants. The presence of more than 50% young researchers showed the growing interest for pharmacognostic topics. Prof. Dr G. Reznicek (Vienna, Austria) gave a complete overview of the analytical chromatographic methods (TLC, HPTLC, HPLC) that are used in separating saponins. Mobile phases, columns and detection systems for optimal separation and identification were highlighted.

Dr S. Apers (Antwerp, Belgium) illustrated the use of these techniques by showing the isolation, structure elucidation and biological activities of new triterpenoid saponins from *Maesa lanceolata*. Dr A. Osbourn (Norwich, UK) gave an overview of saponins in plant defence, especially on their anti-fungal properties.

Dr A.D. Muir (Saskatoon, Canada) focused on atmospheric pressure chemical ionization (APCI) and electrospray ionization (ESI) in order to obtain reliable information from the mass spectra of unknown compounds in a plant extract that has been subjected to relatively little purification prior to analysis.

Finally, Dr C. Terreaux (Lausanne, Switzerland), who replaced his head of the department, Prof. K. Hostettmann, which became ill one day before the symposium, gave an overview of all biological and pharmacological properties of most of the saponins known until now. He focused especially on their molluscicidal, immunoadjuvant and cholesterol-lowering effects.

A. Forières

Workshop on use of animal cell culture systems within phytopharmaceutical research, Berlin, Germany, June 15, 2001

The workshop with about 60 participants from Germany, Switzerland and Austria took place in the historical Senatssaal of the

Humboldt University. Organized with the support of the GA and the European Tissue Culture Society (ETCS), the role of tissue culture systems in modern testing of phytopharmaceutical preparations and natural products should be discussed. Prof. Dr. Scheffer, President of the GA, and Prof. Dr. Hülser, President of the ETCS opened the workshop. The meeting started with two plenary lectures about "Cell culture assay as methods for replace and reduction of animal experiments" (Dr. Liebsch, ZEBET Berlin) and "Cytotoxicity test in vitro: Limits and relevance of results" (Prof. Miltenburger, Darmstadt); in 17 short reports a broad spectrum of tissue culture methods and assays in the phytopharmaceutical and phytopharmacological research was introduced. One of the main topics was the use of cell assays for determination of cytotoxicity. The discussion of many participants about the use of different methods for cytotoxicity testing resulted in the opinion, that theoretical as well as practical aspects of the determination of cytotoxicity are a field with many open questions. Also the development of new cell systems for the testing of biological activities was discussed at the meeting. Interesting assay systems were introduced and new results in the application of such models were reported. Because of their biological relevance cellular models are very often used in the bio-guided isolation of natural products. But the cell assays have limitations and need a validated "good practice in cell culture methods" – requirements that are not anywhere known and/or applied. The general consensus was that standardization and validation of such cellular models are prerequisites for successful use in testing of natural products or phytopharmaceutical preparations which will be recognised by regulatory authorities.

In detail, biological effects of phytoestrogens, flavonoids, sesquiterpene lactones, phenolic compounds, green tea extracts, phenol coumarins and mycotoxins on different cellular systems were reported and during the sessions and the coffee breaks intensively discussed.

Summarizing, this first meeting about the use of cell culture assays in phytopharmaceutical research was necessary to find out common interests, a next workshop concerning specific problems of cytotoxicity assays should be planned.

Programs of the workshop can be supplied by
matthias.f.melzig@rz.hu-berlin.de.

M.F. Melzig

New Books

Mikroskopische Drogenmonographien der deutschsprachigen Arzneibücher

Hohmann B, Reher G, Stahl-Biskup E (2001) Wissenschaftliche Verlagsgesellschaft, Stuttgart.

Identification and purity testing of herbal materials according morphological and anatomical characteristics. The book includes all herbal drugs monographed by Ph. Eur., DAB, ÖAB, Helv., DAC using 182 individual monographs and over 500 drawings on 640 pages.

Anniversaries

Professor Dr Max Wichtl 75 years old

At October 6th, 2000 Prof. Mag. pharm. Dr Max Wichtl celebrated his 75 th birthday.

This birthday, three quarters of a century, of course calls for congratulation, reflection and review: After his graduation (studies of chemistry and botany) he started his career with the Austrian Commission on Pharmacopeia, later after finishing his pharmaceutical studies he joined the Institute of Pharmacognosy at the University of Vienna as an assistant professor. In this function he motivated many students for thinking, reflecting and summarizing ("Studying means looking critically at a topic"). His habilitation in the field of pharmacognosy took place in 1965, in 1973 he was appointed associate university professor; apart from scientific publications (focused on cardiac glycosides) he gained inter-

national fame through his book "Pharmacognostic Chemical Analysis" (1971).

Being appointed full professor of pharmaceutical biology in Marburg/Lahn Wichtl had the opportunity to realise his own ideas of lecture and research as head of institute. Thus he was able to carry on traditional Viennese pharmacognosy in Germany in a modern way. A great number of his publications were written during his time in Marburg. His qualities as an academic teacher are reflected in more than 40 PhD theses which came out under his headship. Besides, he is also well-known as a lecturer at further education courses. His excellent professional reputation together with an obliging, if necessary decisive personality led him into a great number of functions where he did not only represent his own field with absolute competence but also kept an eye on the entire field of pharmacy and its scientific and practical aspects. To give you a few examples, let me mention: dean of the school of pharmacy and food chemistry in Marburg/Lahn, head of the study group on herbal medicinal products in the APV, chairman of the Pharmaceutic Biological Committee of the German Commission on Pharmacopeia, member of the scientific advisory board of the former BGA (Bundesgesundheitsamt), co-editor of the commentary to the German Pharmacopeia, and many more.

His birthday is also an occasion of gratitude for the Society for Medicinal Plant Research towards Max Wichtl, its honorary member. Thank you for your untiring long activity as counsellor (1983-1987), as vice president (1987-1989, 1993 – 1997) and as president (1983-1987) of the Society! In all his functions and positions within the Society for Medicinal Plant Research his "Viennese charm" and "Prussian sense of duty" are as much appreciated as his professional qualities. He has contributed significantly to the re-orientation of the Society for Medicinal Plant Research.

Academic lecturer, researcher and functionary Max Wichtl owes his international fame not least to his book "Herbal Drugs and Herbal Medicinal Products". This work has been translated into various languages and has become a valuable helper in pharmaceutical practice even beyond the borders of Central Europe.

Max Wichtl and his wife have taken residence close to Vienna, after M.W. having been retired. Never losing his aims out of sight he is now working on a commentary to the German Pharmacopeia and a new edition of "Herbal Drugs and Herbal Medicinal Products" after having completed another book "Digitalis". Even his close friends wonder how he manages to still undertake personal entertainment activities – as a critical opera-goer and expert in the genre he takes every opportunity to attend a good performance be it in Vienna or Salzburg or Germany. Moreover, his love of foreign cultures and especially his passion for plants repeatedly lure him into far-away places and the mountain tops of the Alps. The Society for Medicinal Plant Research – his friends, colleagues and students – wish Max Wichtl all the best on the occasion of his birthday and a lot of joy with pharmacognosy and music.

Many happy returns, ad multos annos.

Brigitte Kopp

Dr Albert Hofmann 95 years old

The GA likes to cordially congratulate Dr Albert Hofmann, Burg, Switzerland, who celebrated his 95 th birthday on 11 January of this year. Dr Hofmann was appointed honorary member of our Society, in 1977, for his unique contributions to medicinal plant research. Above all, Dr Hofmann is well-known thanks to his discovery of LSD. In addition, he is famous for his contributions to the isolation, structure elucidation and synthesis of naturally occurring, biologically active compounds. The GA wishes him and his wife much vigour for the time to come.

J.J.C. Scheffer