



The Secretary General
International Union of Basic and Clinical
Pharmacology

16 October 2009

Dear Dr Sam Enna

REPORT OF IOSP SCHOOL FOR AFRICA 2009 IN SOUTH AFRICA

Please read this report together with two attached documents, namely (1) the IOSP School Programme Manual and (2) the Evaluation Form Report.

Background

The IOSP (*Integrative and Organ Systems Pharmacology*) Committee of IUPHAR, under the chairmanship of Prof David Bylund, received a grant from the International Council of Sciences (ICSU) of €30,000 to hold three workshops on experimental pharmacology in Africa during the 2009/10 calendar year. At a meeting of the IOSP committee, held during the IUPHAR EXCO meeting 2009 and African Summit in Cairo, Egypt (February 2009) it was decided to hold the first of the three workshops in South Africa.

The first workshop in South Africa was held as a pre-conference satellite meeting (18-22 Sep 2009) of the 5th ICPPS congress (23-26 Sep 2009) in Potchefstroom, South Africa, thereby allowing delegates to attend also the congress as added benefit. Accordingly it was hosted by the North-West University in Potchefstroom, who was also the host of the 5th ICPPS congress. Additional financial support for the workshop in South Africa was obtained from the North-West University, the South African National Research Foundation and the South African Society for Basic and Clinical Pharmacology.

The Workshop (Scope, Delegates, Speakers)

The IOSP School focussed on IOSP techniques in central nervous system (CNS) drug discovery, and involved pharmacologists from Kenya and Nigeria.

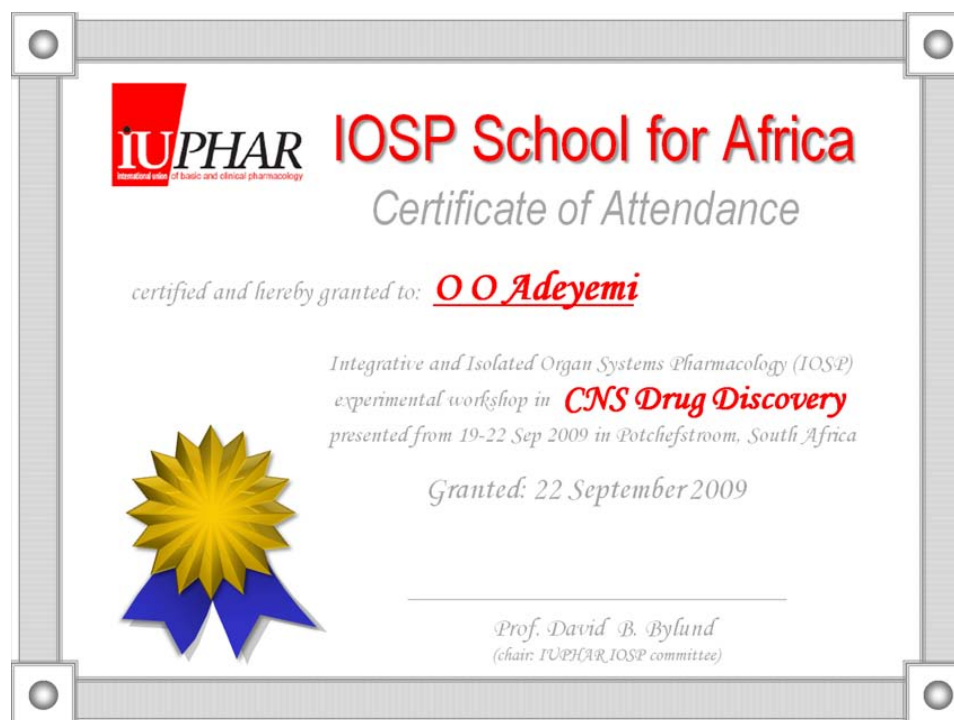
Given the budget limitations, the decision was to initially focus on two African countries, thereby to form local support networks and also to assist Kenya in their preparations to host the third workshop in May 2010. Also, Kenya was the first country to form a national learned society of pharmacology early in 2009, as a result of the 'Pharmacology for Africa' initiative. Nigeria, on the other hand, has been major role player in the West-African Society of Pharmacology for several years.

The IOSP School was hosted by the North-West University, with Prof. Christiaan Brink as chair of the organising committee. The programme that stretched over a period of four days, included lectures and practicals, and covered topics including animal models for CNS drug testing, ethics, report writing and data handling and research of traditional medicine (see manual with programme). In addition, a laboratory animal technician from Kenya, who was included amongst the delegates, also paid additional visits to the Lab Animal Centre in Potchefstroom, to learn more about SOPs, standards for accreditation, and general centre management. Importantly, there was a healthy mix of junior and senior pharmacologists amongst the delegates, so that a “train-the-trainer” approach was applicable for maximal sustainable impact.

Prof. David Bylund provided own travel funding as international expert speaker, while six additional expert speakers were attracted from South Africa. In addition, two laboratory animal technicians of the North-West University offered training in animal handling and experimental techniques. One of the speakers was a bright South African final-year Ph.D. student, thereby creating an opportunity for capacity building. Five delegates from Kenya and three from Nigeria attended the workshop, while postgraduate students of South Africa also attended some of the novel components of the workshop.

Certificate

All delegates who attended the full workshop received an IUPHAR-endorsed certificate of attendance. A sample copy of the certificate is provided below:



Feedback

Feedback from delegates indicated that the workshop has been extremely valuable to establish new networks and to learn new knowledge and skills. An evaluation form was completed on the last day of the workshop and completed anonymously. The

results of the evaluation are provided in the document attached. As stipulated in the final conclusions, the ratings of all criteria were very good and no serious deficiencies were identified. From comments and discussions it was identified as recommendation that it may be important to assist African pharmacologists with the implementation of newly gained knowledge and skills by engaging in discussions with authorities at national and institutional level.

After return home, delegates were also requested to provide brief comments on how they benefitted from the workshop. Excerpts of some of the feedback received from delegates include the following:

- *“...very rewarding experience for my academic career and pursuit...My exposure to various CNS experimental models has broaden my expertise in this area of research and will definitely come handy in my research and teaching efforts back home in Nigeria. I will certainly be passing across the knowledge gained through teaching and collaborative research in my university and beyond. Another benefit that I have derived from the IOSP School is the opportunity to network with scientists from Kenya, South Africa and beyond, especially with the opportunity to also attend the 5th International Congress on Pharmaceutical and Pharmacological Sciences (ICPPS) Doors for research and teaching collaboration have surely been opened...”*
- *“...the practical aspects of the training boosted my confidence in handling rats. ... I was taught an easy technique for giving drugs orally ... I was happy to involved in the open field apparatus and forced swimming tests. Unfortunately, I have been teaching about these tests but have never seen them demonstrated. We are in the process of setting up these tests in our laboratory...”*
- *“I am very glad that our laboratory technologist was able to attend the training. I have been trying in the past to get the technical staff in my department to understand the importance of biosafety and use of standard operating procedures. Incorporating technical staff in the training is excellent because ...(now) he is able to understand the importance of running our pharmacology unit professionally”*
- *“The IOSP school made me appreciate the simplicity of conducting sound research of high quality. The practical bit of the school especially the FST and subsequent report writing was an eye opener in my area of interest...”*
- *“I particularly found the school very interesting as I got more understanding of some of the experimental procedures we use in central nervous system Pharmacology here in the University of Lagos. Presently, I have started applying and teaching some of the principles taught in the experimental designs of CNS Pharmacology investigations, animal handling, data collection and analysis as well as laboratory report and manuscript writing”*

Group Photo

The group photo below was taken on the last day of the workshop. Unfortunately many of the presenters were not present.



Delegates from Kenya & Nigeria attending the IOSP School for Africa 2009 in Potchefstroom, South Africa, as well as some of the South African Students and presenters.

Names, back row from left: James Akindele (Nigeria), Nico Liebenberg (SA), Prof Brian Harvey (SA), Daniel Karume (Kenya), Dr Peter Mwangi (Kenya), Prof Tiaan Brink (SA), Prof Linda Brand (SA), Dr Charles Githinji (Kenya), Riaan Reay (SA).

Names, front row from left: Prof Funmi Adeyemi (Nigeria), Flora Aigbe (Nigeria), Prof David Bylund (USA), Dr Jesca Okwara (Kenya), Dr Faith Okalebo (Kenya).

Concluding Remarks

I believe that the IOSP School has made a difference, leaving a legacy for the younger generation of pharmacologists. It has contributed to capacity building and laid a foundation for future IOSP Schools in Africa. Its continuation with a 2nd workshop in Egypt (November 2009) and a 3rd in Kenya (May 2010) will ensure continued capacity building and that the skills acquired are reproduced.

I also wish to thank IUPHAR for their support and efforts to promote pharmacology in Africa, and in particular for their support of the IOSP Schools for Africa. In particular Dr David Bylund and Dr Sam Enna, and actually other members of the executive committee of IUPHAR, have been instrumental in taking this initiative forward. Without such interest, support and vision this would not be possible.

Yours sincerely

Prof Christian B Brink
(Vice-President)