

5th Annual Scientific Meeting NHF

11 October 2005, Amsterdam



On 11 October 2005, the Netherlands Heart Foundation (NHF) organised its 5th Annual Scientific Meeting. The title of the day was 'Onderzoek onbelangrijk?' (Research unimportant?) Almost 400 participants attended this year's meeting. Just as last year, the day was held in close cooperation with the Netherlands Society of Cardiology. In view of stimulating interaction between different fields within cardiovascular research, the NHF additionally asked the following scientific societies to contribute to its 5th Annual Scientific Meeting: the Dutch Atherosclerosis Society, the Dutch Hypertension Society, the Dutch Physiological Society – section Heart Function, the Society of Microcirculation and Vascular Biology, and the Dutch Society for Thrombosis and Haemostasis. The NHF was honoured to find these societies enthusiastic to participate.

The theme of the morning session was the NHF's dr E. Dekker programme. This stimulation programme contains fellowships for outstanding researchers (clinicians and non-clinicians) in the cardiovascular field (more information can be found at www.cavaris.nl).

The following lectures were held by present and former Dekker laureates:

- Professor J.F.C. Glatz (Maastricht University), Established Investigator 1990 and Heart Foundation Professor 2003: 'In search for the balance.'
In his presentations Professor Glatz described his research on fatty acid binding protein as an early marker for myocardial infarction. He elucidated how this fundamental research, funded by the NHF, has developed into the direction of diagnostic application.
- Professor A.A.M. Wilde (Academic Medical Centre), Clinical Established Investigator 1995: 'Genetics, arrhythmias and the Heart Foundation. Where do we come from and where do we stand?'
Professor Wilde's lecture clearly demonstrated how his Clinical Established Investigatorship contributed to the discovery of several genetic mutations which are responsible for arrhythmias. He also stated the NHF has been instrumental in the development of cardiogenetics in the Netherlands.
- Dr R. Krams (Erasmus Medical Centre), Established Investigator 2002: 'The effect of blood flow on atherosclerosis'
Dr Krams gave an insight into his ongoing research line on shear stress and its effect on the development of atherosclerosis. Furthermore he also presented his future plans.
- Professor M.B. Katan (Wageningen University), Established Investigator 1977 and Academy Professor of the Royal Academy of Arts and Sciences since 2005: 'Raffiniert ist der Herr Gott' ('God is subtle'), keynote lecture.

In his keynote lecture, Professor Katan focussed on several NHF projects carried out during the 1980s and 1990s. His research on the response of serum lipids to diet underlines how unpredictable outcomes of research can be. Furthermore he discussed the discovery that trans fatty acids and cafestol are positively associated with coronary heart disease. Finally he mentioned an ongoing NHF programme studying the effects of fish oil and α -linolenic acid on second heart attacks.

All presentations during the morning session clearly showed the importance of NHF funding by fellowships for the development of different fields within cardiovascular research.

After the morning session an interactive poster exhibition took place. More than 200 posters were presented by cardiovascular researchers. At least half of these posters resulted from projects supported by the NHF.

The parallel sessions in the afternoon were organised by the participating scientific societies. The Dekker laureates were highly represented among the lecturers.

After the parallel sessions a lively debate took place under the auspices of the Netherlands Society of Cardiology. The first thesis, 'An unhealthy life is a free choice', was supported by Professor D. Kromhout (Wageningen University). His opponent was Professor M.B. Katan. Next, Professor M.L. Simoons (Erasmus Medical Centre) made a plea for the second thesis: 'Dutch scientific research belongs to the top of the world'. His opponent was Dr Y.M. Pinto (Maastricht University).

At the end of the day several prizes were awarded:

- Dr C.A. Remme (Academic Medical Centre, Amsterdam) received a poster prize for her poster entitled 'Mice carrying the SCN5A mutation 1798insD, equivalent to human 1795insD, display bradycardia, conduction delay and QT prolongation'.
 - Mr P.E. Westerweel (University Medical Centre Utrecht) was awarded a prize for his poster called 'Endothelial progenitor cell dysfunction and the role of nitric oxide'.
 - Mr D.A. Pijnappels (Leiden University Medical Centre) received a poster prize for his poster entitled 'Forced expression of human myocardin increases electrical conduction velocity across human adult mesenchymal stem cells to levels comparable to cardiomyocytes.'
- Finally the 'Best Referee Prize 2005' was presented to Dr L.J. de Windt (Netherlands Institute for Developmental Biology).

All oral and poster presentations gave a clear answer to the title of the day: research is indispensable! ■

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