
NEWS AND VIEWS

THE INTERNATIONAL HEMATOLOGY AND RH CONFERENCE, NOVEMBER 1946

Perhaps the first International Congress devoted solely to hematologic subjects to be held in the Western Hemisphere took place in Dallas, Texas, and Mexico City in November 1946. It began in Dallas on November 15-16 in affiliation with the second Mexican Congress of Blood Transfusion and then transferred its deliberations to Mexico City, where sessions were held from November 17 to November 23. Thus, the meeting was truly international as to both the participating sections and the meeting places.

The idea for such a meeting developed in December 1945 at a conference between Dr. Eduardo Uribe Guerola of the Juarez Hospital, Mexico City, and Dr. Joseph M. Hill of the Baylor Hospital, Dallas, Texas. Support for the proposal was given by the Mexican Government through the Department of Health headed by Dr. Gustavo Baz and by the Trustees of the Baylor Hospital. Additional financial support in Dallas was offered by various benefactors who had previously shown an interest in Baylor Hospital and its Blood Bank. It was originally planned to limit the program of the meeting to problems of the Rh factor. However, as interest in the proposed meeting rapidly mounted, and as a more general type of program seemed desirable, the final title of the meeting was changed to "International Hematology and Rh Conference."

Chairman of the Conference at Dallas was Dr. Joseph M. Hill, Pathologist at the Baylor Hospital; Secretary, Dr. Sol Haberman of the same hospital. Dr. Eduardo Uribe Guerola was Chairman of the Second Mexican Transfusion Congress and Dr. Alfonso Veléz Orozco, Secretary. There was a large attendance of physicians at the Dallas meeting, representing 21 states and the District of Columbia. In addition several physicians from Canada, Mexico, China, and England were present. Interest in the program which follows was intense:

Philip Levine, New Jersey:	"A Brief Survey of the Rh Factor"
Ernest Witebsky, Buffalo:	"Interrelationship between the Rh System and the A-B System"
Ignacio González-Guzmán, Mexico City:	"The Nuclear Structure of the Blood Cells"
Robert R. Race, London, England:	"The Rh Genotypes and Fisher's Theory"
Joseph M. Hill and Sol Haberman, Dallas:	"Rh Hemolytic Immune Globulins: Evidence for a possible Third Order of Antibodies Incapable of Agglutination or Blocking"

William Dameshek, Boston:	"Hemolytic Mechanisms"
Louis K. Diamond, Boston:	"Physiochemical and Immunological Character of the Rh antibodies"
Israel Davidsohn, Chicago:	"Rh Antibodies"
Mario Salazar Mallen, Mexico City:	"The Frequency of the Rh Factor in Different Groups of the Mexican Population"
Bruce Chown, Winnipeg, Manitoba:	"Variation in the Outcome of the Pregnancies in Which Erythroblastosis Occurs"

The Conference transferred to Mexico City from Dallas by plane at 4:30 A.M., Sunday, November 17, arriving in Mexico City about noon. Formal opening of the Second Mexican Blood Transfusion Congress took place in the Palace of Fine Arts, where addresses of welcome were delivered by, among others, Dr. Salvador Zubirán, Rector of the National University of Mexico and Director of the Hospital for Nutrition, and Dr. Gustavo Baz, Secretary of the Ministry of Public Health. A diplomatic reception was held on the evening of November 21 at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the host, a physician himself, being Dr. Francisco Castillo Najera, Minister of Foreign Affairs. Visits were made to the Hospital de Jesús, the oldest hospital in the Western Hemisphere, in continuous operation since 1554, to the Military Hospital, and to Xochimilco and the Pyramids.

Sessions were held daily, both the Spanish and English languages being used. The program was as follows:

J. M. Hill and Sol Haberman:	"Production and Use of Anti-Rh Serum"
Alfonso Veléz Orozco:	"The A and B Factors as Possible Causes of Erythroblastosis"
Sol Haberman and J. M. Hill:	"Demonstrations of Technics of Rh Testing"
R. R. Race:	"Subgroups of the Rh Factor. Demonstration of the Genetics of Rh and Other New Blood Groups"
A. V. Orozco and Rolando Medina Aguilár:	"Percentages of the Rh Subgroups in Mexico"
Philip Levine:	"The Individuality of Human and Animal Blood"
	"The Importance of the Rh Factor and Historical Development"
R. M. Aguilár:	"Use of A.C.D. Solution in Blood Banking"
I. González-Guzman:	"The Histopathology of Erythroblastosis"
Harry Wallerstein:	"The Treatment of Erythroblastosis by Complete Exchange Transfusion" (motion picture)

The discussions in Mexico City, although often lengthy, were lively and stimulating. At the concluding session* on the morning of November 23, Dr. J. M. Hill, Chairman of the International Hematology and Rh Conference, and Dr. Eduardo Uribe Guerola, President of the Mexican Transfusion Congress, presided as co-chairmen. Discussions were held concerning the following problems:

(1) Organization of an international blood society with particular reference to experimental and immunohematology.

(2) Nomenclature of blood antigens and related antibodies. (3) Technics to be recommended for routine testing for these antigens and antibodies. (4) Availability of sufficient Rh serum for routine typing in transfusions and pregnancies.

After a very active and complete discussion, recommendations and actions were taken by this joint conference. Two committees were appointed with authorization to function as indicated. The first committee was charged with the responsibility for taking the necessary steps to form an international organization to carry on the work begun at this meeting. This committee was also instructed to undertake the standardization of blood typing serums and to promote the production of Rh serums from human sources as a cooperative project. This committee consists of Dr. J. M. Hill, Dallas, Texas, Chairman; Dr. William Dameshek, Boston, Mass.; Dr. Louis K. Diamond, Boston, Mass.; Dr. Luis Gutierrez Villegas, Mexico, D.F.; Dr. Philip Levine, Raritan, New Jersey; Dr. E. A. Mourant, London, England; Dr. W. S. Stansbury, Toronto, Canada; Dr. Eduardo Uribe Guerola, Mexico, D.F.; and Dr. Ernest Witebsky, Buffalo, New York.

The second committee was appointed to study and recommend nomenclatures for blood antigens and technics to be used for routine blood typing and antibody investigations. This committee consists of Dr. Philip Levine, Raritan, New Jersey, Chairman; Dr. Bruce Chown, Winnipeg, Canada; Dr. Israel Davidsohn, Chicago, Illinois; Dr. Sol Haberman, Dallas, Texas; Dr. J. M. Hill, Dallas, Texas; Dr. R. R. Race, London, England; and Dr. Eduardo Uribe Guerola, Mexico, D.F.

In the discussions the advantages of the Chown capillary and Diamond slide technics for routine Rh typing were emphasized. For detection of antibodies the Coombs ("developing") test and the Diamond albumin test received favorable comment. The compatibility test of Witebsky was also highly recommended. Review of these and other technics was referred to the committee.

It was of interest that the Fisher-Race theory of inheritance and the CDE nomenclature suggested by these workers were felt to be most suitable for serologic and genetic study of Rh and Hr subgroups and were recommended for acceptance temporarily until the problem could be more thoroughly reviewed by the committee. The members of the joint meeting also decided to retain, at least for the immediate future, the term "erythroblastosis foetalis" for cases resulting from isoimmunization of mothers by the Rh, Hr, and other blood antigens. The use of the terms "Rh positive" and "Rh negative" along with "homozygous" and "heterozygous" was retained for clinical use. The use of the terms "X-protein" and "conglutination" was rejected on the basis of lack of evidence.

* The report of this session was furnished by Dr. Sol Haberman.

Routine Rh typing for all transfusions and pregnancies was strongly recommended. However, it was suggested that when adequate quantities of anti-Rh serum were not available, only women should be routinely Rh tested. Testing of women only was also recommended when the population or race concerned was known to have a very small percentage of Rh negatives. It was agreed that anti-Rh serum for routine testing should contain the anti-D antibody (85 per cent) or anti-D+C (87 per cent).

The meetings in both Dallas and Mexico City proved highly successful. Their international character was of help in fostering mutual good will among those participating. It was agreed by all that further conferences of this sort, dealing perhaps with other subjects and of a more general character, were worth while. It seemed eminently desirable to initiate by every means possible the formation of an International Society for Hematology. It was also agreed to attempt the publication of the various papers at both sections of the Congress in a special issue of **BLOOD**.