EDITORIAL ESBRA 2013

14th Congress of the European Society for Biomedical Research on Alcoholism (ESBRA)
September 8-11, 2013 Warsaw, Poland

Marcin Wojnar¹, Anna Klimkiewicz¹ and Helmut Seitz²

¹Department of Psychiatry, Medical University of Warsaw and ²Salem Medical Center, University of Heidelberg

Alcohol use is considered to be the major factor contributing to global health burden as well as social and economic harm. According to the World Health Organization alcohol abuse and dependence cause 2.5 million deaths every year around the world. Alcohol misuse among young people is especially harmful. It is estimated that 320,000 of youth die from alcohol-related causes every year, what contributes to 9% of all deaths in group between 15 and 29 years of age. Alcohol is also the leading risk factor for disease burden being the world’s third largest and the second largest in Europe. Harmful drinking is linked to many serious social and developmental issues. Violence, child neglect and abuse, and losing a job are most commonly mentioned.

Heavy drinkers’ use of health services is rare. Those patients avoid treatment until becoming in serious medical condition. Unrecognized alcohol dependence decreases significantly efficacy of treatment of other medical problems. It also multiplies costs associated with patient care.

European Society for Biomedical Research on Alcoholism and the Polish Society of Addiction Research have organized the 14th Congress of ESBRA in Warsaw. Hosting so many outstanding scientists in the field of alcohol research is especially valuable for development of research on alcohol in this part of Europe since alcohol dependence and alcohol related problems are particularly significant here. The aim of the ESBRA meeting is to learn about recent advances in basic science research as well as clinical aspects of substance use, abuse and dependence. We have made great efforts to enable future collaborations of international and multidisciplinary research groups. We hope that the Congress will also encourage young scientists to develop many new research initiatives. Organized workshops will be outstanding possibility to get unique know-how from experts on the field of alcoholism and alcohol related disorders.

The agenda for the Congress represents a multidisciplinary approach toward the problem of alcohol drinking, including neurobiological, psychosocial and therapeutic perspectives as well as new research on alcoholic liver disease presented during 34 Symposia, 7 Free Communications Sessions and 2 Poster Sessions.

We are very happy to host four great plenary speakers. During the first lecture, Dr. Marc Schuckit from USA will present the summary of four decades of research on the level of response to alcohol as a risk factor for alcoholism. His lecture will review the research that began as early as in 1973 regarding the low level of response to alcohol as a risk factor for heavy drinking.

Next, Dr. Charles O’Brien from USA will give a lecture on new genetic subtype of alcoholism, presenting pre-clinical and clinical data leading to a personalized treatment and new treatment goals.

The third topic of Plenary Lectures will be the association between alcohol and cancer. Dr. Helmut Seitz from Germany, the President of ESBRA, will be presenting research outcomes on acetaldehyde as an important factor linking alcoholism and carcinogenesis. In the final talk, Dr. Philippe de Witte from Belgium will stress hypotheses coming from current studies suggesting that glutamate can be essential factor for the development of alcohol dependence. This neuroamine appears to enhance the reward value of alcohol to a higher level than considering dopamine release alone.

In addition, Dr. Mikihiro Tsutsumi from Japan will be presenting a Charles LIEBER Memorial Lecture about binge leading to development of NASH from obesity induced simple steatosis.

The Organizing Committee and Scientific Advisory Committee reviewed carefully all submitted abstracts. We selected those, which in our opinion will lead to new research programs, improve the knowledge on alcohol related problems but most of all that will refine patients’ care. We hope that our Congress will be a milestone in the development of individualized treatment of alcohol dependence.

REFERENCES


