

## **3rd RTC in Sub-Saharan Africa**

### **Abidjan, Ivory Coast 8 - 10 July, 2010**



The 3rd Regional Teaching Course (RTC) took place in Abidjan, Ivory Coast and was organised in co-operation with the University of Cocody, The Ivorian Society of Neurology (SIN), the World Federation of Neurology (WFN) and the International Brain Research Organisation (IBRO). Patronage for the RTC was also received from The President of the Ivory Coast, Mr. Laurent Gbagbo

The RTC was organized and chaired by Prof. Jean-Michel Vallat (France) who is in charge of the EFNS Task Force „Sub-Saharan Africa and Neurology”. Representatives from the EFNS, the World Federation of Neurology (WFN), the Pan-African Association of Neurological Sciences (PAANS), the International Brain Research Organisation (IBRO), the Society of Ivorian Neurologists (SIN) and the University of Cocody in Abidjan took part in this 3rd RTC and expressed shared opinions on the great value of these Regional teaching Courses. EFNS staff Ms. E. Sipido (Italy) as well as Prof. Therese Sonan (Ivory Coast) and Dr Annabelle Kpindih (Ivory Coast) provided invaluable logistical help for the smooth running of the RTC.

Over 100 attendees consisting of neurology and neurosurgery trainees, psychiatrists and general practitioners, faculty members and specialists from Ivory Coast and its neighboring countries benefited from the RTC. Thanks also to IBRO's financial support, 12 neurology trainees from Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Congo Brazzaville, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and Togo could attend the course.

This 3rd RTC followed the structure that brought plenary lectures in the morning followed by clinical case discussion in the afternoon.

Prof. Richard Hughes, President of the EFNS, opened the 3rd RTC together with Prof. Isidore Diomand, Dean of the University of Cocody, Prof. Gustavo Roman, delegate for the WFN and Prof. Alfred Njamnshi, President of the Pan-African Association of Neuroscience Societies (PAANS).

The morning session of the first day, dedicated to Infectious Diseases, saw the participation of Prof. J-M. Vallat (France) who addressed the burden of neurological diseases, Prof. F. Boa (Ivory Coast), Prof. E. Schmutzhard (Austria) Prof. B. Kouassi (Ivory Coast) and Prof. M. Dumas (France). In the afternoon session, dedicated to the discussion of clinical cases related to the morning lectures, the faculty members were joined by colleagues from the Cocody University and Prof. R. Gouider (Tunisia).

The clinical case discussions were extremely positive and the interactivity and open interest of the attendees during this afternoon session was impressive. This year, following a request voiced during the 2nd RTC, attendees could submit their own clinical cases to the faculty members for discussion. As every year, the time for this interactive session resulted too little.

Dementia was addressed on the second day. Professors G. Roman (USA), Th. Agossou, former WHO Regional Director for Mental Health in Africa (Benin), M. Tsolaki (Greece), A. Kpindih (Ivory Coast) and F. Pasquier (France) gave the morning lectures. Clinical case discussions were presented in the afternoon and Ivorian colleagues joined the faculty.

Saturday morning was dedicated to an open discussion with the participants. Prof. A. Gallo Diop (Senegal), together with Prof. G. Roman (USA) gave a very much appreciated master class on how to present a scientific lecture and how to submit a scientific article.

Prof. R. Hughes presented on the Cochrane Library. Only about a quarter of the participants knew about the Cochrane Library which is an easily accessible on-line library of evidence for treatments. James Lind did the first controlled trial on lime juice for scurvy on Captain Cook's ship in the 18th century. Dr Archie Cochrane, one of the fathers of evidence based medicine, challenged the profession to produce systematic reviews and the Cochrane Library was named after him. The Library holds over 500.000 references to controlled trials and 4000 systematic reviews. These reviews are peer reviewed, electronically published and open to electronic criticism. The library is updated on two-yearly basis. Access to the Cochrane Library is free of charge to most sub-Saharan countries.

Prof. J. De Reuck presented on Prof. Milton Hodge (USA) who worked on the perception of "useless" expressions used in scientific literature e.g it has long been known (I did not take the time to check the initial citation) that occur quite often.

Prof. Njamnshi, PAANS delegate, Prof. A. Gallo Diop and Prof. B. Kouassi expressed the strong wish to take the EFNS RTC's initiative ahead. Prof. JM Vallat brought the candidacy of Prof. A. Njamnshi (Cameroon) to host the 4th RTC to the attention of all. WFN and IBRO confirmed their wish to continue working with EFNS towards the next RTCs. A list of possible topics to be addressed in the forthcoming RTC was circulated for voting among all Abidjan participants. The topics that will be addressed in the next RTC will be chosen from those indicated by the African colleagues and RTC attendants.

The African Faculty as well as the attendant commented that the EFNS - RTCs in Sub-Saharan Africa have become and are the annual scientific highlight for young neurologists, neurologists in training, general practitioners and trainees in neighbouring specialties.

J.-M. Vallat & E. Sipido