

Short Course on Dermoscopy

Graz, Austria, July 13-17, 2004

The International Short Course on Dermoscopy in Graz, Austria, held on July 13-17, 2004, was organized by Professor Peter Soyer and Professor Rainer Hofmann-Wellenhof from Graz, and Assist. Professor Giuseppe Argenziano from Naples, Italy. As an active Course participant, I had the privilege to learn more about dermoscopic algorithms (Fig. 1).

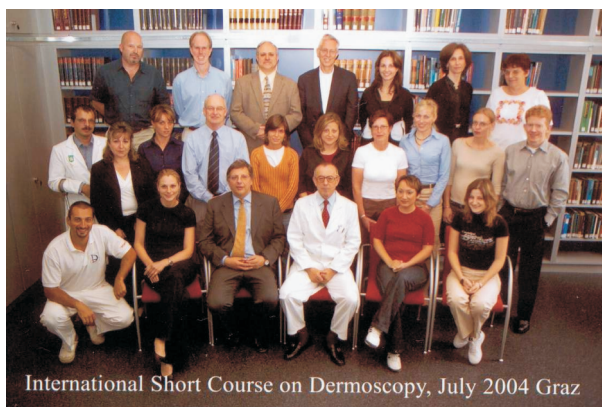


Figure 1. Active participants of the International Short Course on Dermoscopy, July 2004, Graz, with organizers: Prof. P. Soyer (third from the left), and Prof. H. Kerl (third from the right).

Dermoscopy, also known as epiluminescence microscopy, is a noninvasive diagnostic technique that uses optic magnification to permit visualization of the morphological features that are not visible to the naked eye, thus forming a link between macroscopic clinical dermatology and microscopic dermatopathology. This "submacroscopic" observation of pigmented skin lesions (PSL) adds to the available *in vivo* diagnostic tools by providing new morpho-

logical features for the differentiation of melanoma from other melanocytic and nonmelanocytic PSL. To evaluate the diagnostic algorithms we assessed performance of a 2-step procedure for dermoscopic classification of PSL. Differentiating melanocytic from nonmelanocytic lesions is the focus of the first step algorithm. The second step in this 2-step procedure focuses on differentiating melanoma from benign melanocytic lesions using 4 different diagnostic algorithms: 1) modified pattern analysis; 2) ABCD rule of dermoscopy; 3) Menzies method; and 4) 7-point checklist. Clinical examination leads to an accurate diagnosis in 65% to 80% of melanomas, depending on the physician's experience, whereas the proportion of correct diagnoses based on dermoscopic observation ranges from 70% to 95% and depends on training. Dermoscopy is also useful in follow-up examinations of PSL to document morphological changes including growth and/or alterations. It is especially important in monitoring patients with many atypical melanocytic nevi or familial dysplastic nevus syndrome. Dermoscopy is a useful adjunct to the clinical evaluation of PSL by improving the diagnostic accuracy and allowing for a more reliable preoperative assessment of malignant melanoma.

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Report on the 1st Croatian Congress of Psychodermatology with International Participation

Cavtat, Croatia, September 23-26, 2004

The 1st Croatian Congress of Psychodermatology with International Participation was held in the beautiful old town of Cavtat. It was organized by the Department of Dermatology and Venereology, Sestre milosrdnice University Hospital, under the auspices of the Croatian Dermatovenerological Society of Croatian Medical Association and European Society for Dermatology and Psychiatry. Professor Mirna Šitum was the main organizer of this Congress, together with Head Doctor Lenka Oremović as vicepresident, Lena Kotrulja as secretary, and other members of the Organizing Committee: Maja Vurnek, Ines Sjerobabski-Masneć, Marija Buljan, Meri Tadinac-Babić, Nataša Jokić-Begić and Rudolf Gregurek.

This Congress emphasized the importance of collaborative team approach of experts on different fields in recognizing and helping patients with skin disorders considered as psychosomatic dermatoses and those with significant psychological disturbances due to dermatologic diseases.

The program of the Congress was divided into 6 main sessions: Psychiatric and psychological aspects of dermatologic disorders; Chronic skin disorders and quality of life; Cutaneous associations of psychiatric disorders and self-inflicted dermatoses; Psychoneuroimmunology; Alcoholism and dermatologic diseases; and Psychotropic drugs and psychotherapy in dermatology. The Congress gathered many experts in the field of psychodermatology from Croatia and abroad. We were happy to welcome dermatologists, psychologists, psychiatrists, pediatricians, general practitioners, internists and school medicine experts. There were around 150 participants from eight European countries, including many leading scientists in the fields.

Ms. Lucia Tomas Arragones, a health psychologist from Spain, member of Executive Committee of European Society of Dermatology and Psychiatry (ESDaP) was present as ESDaP observer and was

very satisfied with the organization and program of the Congress.

Dr. Christopher Bridgett, psychiatrist from Chelsea and Westminster Hospital in London and member of Executive Committee of ESDaP, gave two outstanding lectures on service provision for psychodermatology and psychotropic medications in dermatology. He also showed a video film about behavioral therapy, "habit reversal", as part of atopic eczema pruritus treatment. Prof. Linda Papadopoulos, health psychologist from London Metropolitan University, talked about psychological experience of skin disease in children and cognitive behavioral therapy in dermatologic patients. Our guest, Professor Jacek Szepietowski, dermatologist from Poland, delivered a lecture on the connection of psoriasis with depression and stress. He also talked about the treatment of pruritus in advanced diseases. Other foreign speakers who contributed to this congress were L.T. Arragones and S.E. Marron from Spain, Danielle Innocenzi from Italy, and Kurt Seikowski from Germany. We would also like to mention some of the Croatian lecturers with outstanding presentations: Professor Danijel Buljan, psychiatrist, gave a very interesting and systematic overview of the field of psychodermatology; Professor Aleksandra Basta-Juzbašić gave an inspired lecture on dermatitis artefacta Branka Marinović, Milan Vrkljan and Hrvoje Cvitanović discussed the topic of psychoneuroimmunology; extremely successful was the session on alcoholism and dermatologic diseases moderated by our colleagues from University Department of Psychiatry, Sestre milosrdnice University Hospital, together with Head Doctor Antica Soldo-Belić. There were also many fellow dermatologists from the University Department of Dermatology and Venereology, Zagreb University Hospital Center, and from Dr. Ivan Barbot Neuropsychiatric Hospital; we greatly appreciate their valuable contribution to our Congress. In the Poster Section, nine interesting posters were presented. The participants showed great interest in

the Balint Group Workshop moderated by Professor Rudolf Gregurek, psychiatrist from the Department of Psychological Medicine, Zagreb University Hospital Center.

One of the events that took place during the Congress was presentation of the Croatian translation of the extraordinary textbook-atlas Dermatology by G. Rassner, whose main editor is Professor Mirna Šitum.

Neither should the social program accompanying the Congress be forgotten, as it was rich and attractive indeed. The opening ceremony by the outdoor pool, excursion to Dubrovnik and gala dinner, along with the scientific program made the Con-

gress an unforgettable and joyful event for all participants.

In the end, we would like to thank our generous main sponsor Belupo as well as all other sponsors without whom none of these events would be possible.

Prof. Mirna Šitum, MD PhD
President of the Congress

Lena Kotrulja, MD, MSc
Secretary of the Congress

Report from the 2nd International Consensus Meeting on Urticaria

Berlin, Germany, October 1-2, 2004

The Urticaria 2004 Symposium was organized by Professor Torsten Zuberbier from Department of Dermatology and Allergy, Charité Universitätsmedizin Berlin, along with a joint symposium of the EAACI Dermatology Section and GALEN and financially supported by the European Centre for Allergy Research Foundation.

Following the successful meeting in the year 2000, the main goal of the Symposium was to provide again a platform for lively discussion on the fascinating topic of urticaria. A number of experts in the field of urticaria presented the current knowledge and new approaches in the understanding of the disease. Short communications covered a whole spectrum from basic mechanisms of urticaria to the results of epidemiologic investigations and clinical presentations. A major talk of all participants was during panel discussion where eleven renowned dermatologists presented problems in the diagnosis and treatment of urticaria.

At the beginning, the Pathophysiology I section included discussion about mast cells, infiltrates and

adhesion molecules (P. Skov, Copenhagen). Session I oral presentations tackled urticaria and prednisolone, cold urticaria successfully treated with penicillin, and diagnosis of systemic mastocytosis and anaphylactic shock. Considering epidemiology, interesting discussion was held on the quality of life and socioeconomic consequences of the disorder. Session II oral presentations dealt with cold urticaria, chronic urticaria, and allergy to local anesthetics and analgesics. Session III covered therapeutic correlations and results in chronic urticaria, urticaria pigmentosa and hereditary angioedema. In panel discussion, Professors C. Bindsvlev-Jensen, W. Cannonica, C. Grattan, B.M. Henz, A. Kapp, M.M.A. Kozel, M. Maurer, D. Simon, G.A. Vena, B. Wedi and T. Zuberbier were actively included.

The very good scientific program was followed by rich and attractive social events offering further contacts with topic dermatologists.

Assist. Prof. Višnja Milavec-Puretić, MD, PhD