

This is authors' manuscript (final draft) of the original article:

Sirkku Peltonen, Sabine A. Eming, Christopher E.M. Griffiths, Márta Széll, David Kellsell, Menno Alexander De Rie, Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of ESDR, Journal of Investigative Dermatology, Volume 140, Issue 9, Supplement, 2020, Pages S145-S146, ISSN 0022-202X, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jid.2020.02.043> (<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0022202X20313920>)  
CC-lisence: CC BY-NC-ND

# Celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the European Society for Dermatological Research

Sirkku Peltonen<sup>1</sup>, Sabine Eming<sup>2</sup>, Christopher E.M. Griffiths<sup>3</sup>, David P. Kellsell<sup>4</sup>, Márta Széll<sup>5</sup>, Menno de Rie<sup>6</sup>

1 Department of Dermatology, University of Turku and Turku University Hospital, Turku, Finland

2 Department of Dermatology, University of Cologne, Cologne, Germany

3 Centre for Dermatology Research, NIHR Manchester Biomedical Research Centre, University of Manchester, Manchester, UK

4 Blizard Institute, Queen Mary University of London, London, UK

5 Department of Medical Genetics and the Dermatological Research Group of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences both at the University of Szeged, Szeged, Hungary

6 Department of Dermatology, Amsterdam University Medical Centers, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Editorial

Conflicts of interests:

Sirkku Peltonen: none

Sabine Eming: none

Christopher Griffiths: None relevant

This is authors' manuscript (final draft) of the original article:  
Sirku Peltonen, Sabine A. Eming, Christopher E.M. Griffiths, Márta Széll, David Kelsell, Menno Alexander De Rie, Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of ESDR, Journal of Investigative Dermatology, Volume 140, Issue 9, Supplement, 2020, Pages S145-S146, ISSN 0022-202X, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jid.2020.02.043>  
(<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0022202X20313920>)  
CC-lisence: CC BY-NC-ND

David Kelsell: none

Márta Széll: None

Menno de Rie:

This special issue of the Journal of Investigative Dermatology (JID) celebrates an important milestone namely the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the European Society for Dermatological Research (ESDR). It reflects not only the remarkable advances in communication, internationality, and technologies, but also the collaborations, networking and friendship that have helped to shape the past 50 years of achievement of our Society, dermatological research and skin science in Europe.

#### **Dawn of the ESDR: first critical contacts in the pre-internet era**

When the first seeds for an investigative society for dermatology in Europe were planted in the 1960's, the world was very different from today. Europe was still divided after World War II, national societies dominated the clinical fields, including dermatology, and scientists published their articles in their native languages including English, German, French, Italian, and Spanish. European countries, in general, had not been able to invest as much resource into science as the USA; as a consequence the USA was attracting high-flying postdoctoral researchers from Europe. When Michel Prunieras (France), Sam Shuster (UK) and Klaus Wolff (Austria) first met and started to discuss the idea of a new society for dermatological research in Birmingham UK in 1967, there were no e-mails, cell phones, conference calls or fax. All communication needed to be carried out by: expensive international phone calls; airmail letters or; travelling to meet face to face. Nowadays one cannot even imagine how effective communication could be carried out using only these tools. In the era of slow publication processes due to lack of computing (word processing/ image software) and, of course, the absence of the internet, it was very difficult to discover and interact with other

This is authors' manuscript (final draft) of the original article:  
Sirku Peltonen, Sabine A. Eming, Christopher E.M. Griffiths, Márta Széll, David Kellsell, Menno Alexander De Rie, Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of ESDR, Journal of Investigative Dermatology, Volume 140, Issue 9, Supplement, 2020, Pages S145-S146, ISSN 0022-202X,  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jid.2020.02.043>  
(<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0022202X20313920>)  
CC-lisence: CC BY-NC-ND

scientists or research groups interested in dermatological research but not yet internationally recognized. Thus, it was not surprising that it took three more years until the foundation of the ESDR.

### **The founding fathers: young, enthusiastic and international**

The founding fathers of the ESDR were truly visionary. Despite cultural and language barriers they wanted the ESDR to use a single language and to be truly international. The group of founding members included: Michel Prunieras (France), Sam Shuster(UK), Klaus Wolff (Austria), Rudi Cormane (Netherlands), Ferdinando Serri (Italy), Otto Braun-Falco (Germany), Robert Brun (Switzerland), André Kint (Belgium), Charles Lapière (Belgium), Hans Rorsman (Sweden) and Kimmo Mustakallio (Finland).

Most of the members of the new board were junior clinician scientists and few had an established leading position in national societies or universities. According to the original rules, drafted by Sam Shuster one of the key items was an age limit for "active members". This was a brave pronouncement but it had its risks, as Klaus Wolff writes in his article for the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ESDR: "We had considerable enthusiasm and also capabilities but little experience in handling delicate political problems and had little backing from existing, established institutions. There was also much antagonism to a supernational society by those in powerful positions in the individual countries who felt that a newly proposed society was being founded by those who had not yet rightfully earned their positions"; or because many of them had received their training abroad "representing foreign schools of thought". We had also difficulties lobbying for the new society fearing that as soon it was formed existing icons might take it over." As Ring and Karvonen write in

This is authors' manuscript (final draft) of the original article:  
Sirku Peltonen, Sabine A. Eming, Christopher E.M. Griffiths, Márta Széll, David Kelsell, Menno Alexander De Rie, Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of ESDR, Journal of Investigative Dermatology, Volume 140, Issue 9, Supplement, 2020, Pages S145-S146, ISSN 0022-202X,  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jid.2020.02.043>  
(<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0022202X20313920>)  
CC-lisence: CC BY-NC-ND

this JID issue, the determination to be a young society crystallized in 1980's motto: "trust no one over fifty!" (1). So please take this editorial with a pinch of salt as all authors are past this age!

Involving and encouraging young scientists to take responsibility has been a leading theme of the ESDR from the very beginning. The recently introduced instruments of ESDR Academy for Future Leaders, Leadership Training and Masterclass provide young scientists with an educational and networking forum to develop their own thoughts of leadership. Both mentors' and mentees' stories on the ESDR Academy for Future Leaders can be read in this JID issue (2-4).

### **Technological revolution takes research from morphology studies to mechanistic insights and translational investigations**

How was science when ESDR was founded? Klaus Wolff writes: "European dermatology in the 1960s was still largely a morphologically dominated medical discipline based on empiricism and dominated by the desire to attach new and exotic names to all kinds of rashes. Only a few groups existed where curiosity and creativity had joined to embark on investigating why something happened and how it happened and these groups were dispersed and knew little of each other."

Although the techniques used in skin research have gone through a metamorphosis during the history of the ESDR, the titles of the sessions in the meeting of 1975 sound familiar: atopic dermatitis; psoriasis; ultrastructure of connective tissue; new methods in ultrastructure research; tumour cells; epidermal organization and differentiation; mediators of inflammation and; cellular immunity. The 1960's was a golden era of electron microscopy and ultrastructural studies of the skin. Protein isolation and antibody technologies enabled further molecular characterization by immunolabelling in the 1970's and 1980's. The breakthrough of DNA technologies in the 1980's brought gene cloning to every laboratory and revealed molecular mechanisms of many heritable skin

This is authors' manuscript (final draft) of the original article:  
Sirku Peltonen, Sabine A. Eming, Christopher E.M. Griffiths, Márta Széll, David Kelsell, Menno Alexander De Rie, Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of ESDR, Journal of Investigative Dermatology, Volume 140, Issue 9, Supplement, 2020, Pages S145-S146, ISSN 0022-202X,  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jid.2020.02.043>  
(<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0022202X20313920>)  
CC-lisence: CC BY-NC-ND

diseases. The boosts in skin science by these technologies are described in articles by Bruckner-Tuderman (5) and Leigh and Zambruno (6) in this JID issue. Morphological research, including molecular characterization of structures and molecules, has paved the way for functional studies and further clinical applications. Cell signalling studies became popular in the 1990's, and these together with an increasing understanding and prominence of immunology have, during the past 10-15 years, enabled development of new medicines for inflammatory skin diseases and cancer. Although many scientists in dermatology have always carried out translational studies, this term and concept was introduced around the millennium and the translational point of view has become more pronounced in the ESDR during the 2010's, as described by Schmutz et al (7). The most recent trend appears to be big data and systems medicine harnessed into next generation healthcare which is being taken forward under the banner of the Skin Science Foundation (8).

### **From internationality to global relationships – and some tourism**

The abstracts of the annual meetings of the 1970's typically had one to three authors, all from the same institution. This tradition has gradually changed, and nowadays collaborations within Europe and overseas have become common along with easier communication techniques. The ESDR has always aimed at international networking and since its early years has held joint meetings with its American sister organization the Society for Investigative Dermatology (SID). The ESDR joined the SID in publishing the JID in 1976. The ESDR, SID and Japanese Society for Investigative Dermatology (JSID) collaborated for the First Tri-continental meeting in Washington DC in 1989 (1,9). The ESDR and JSID have also built strong mutual relationships and the ESDR annual meeting has attracted attendees from Japan since the 2010's (9). Most recently, invited representatives from Ethiopia and Myanmar have attended.

This is authors' manuscript (final draft) of the original article:

Sirkku Peltonen, Sabine A. Eming, Christopher E.M. Griffiths, Márta Széll, David Kelsell, Menno Alexander De Rie, Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of ESDR, *Journal of Investigative Dermatology*, Volume 140, Issue 9, Supplement, 2020, Pages S145-S146, ISSN 0022-202X, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jid.2020.02.043>  
(<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0022202X20313920>)  
CC-lisence: CC BY-NC-ND

According to the original rules, the ESDR meetings were always to be held in the same place “to prevent academic tourism”, as Sam Shuster wrote in his letter to the ESDR board a few years ago.

The annual meetings were thus organized in the International Congress Centrum RAI in Amsterdam in 1971-1987. However the ESDR meeting has now enjoyed the hospitality of other great cities of Europe and since the Munich meeting in 1988 the congress has made a long journey around Europe to return home to Amsterdam for its 50th Anniversary. The great science plus the lure of new places to visit in Europe has made the ESDR annual meeting a major “go to” global event in skin research. Nowadays the annual meeting attracts about 1200 attendees but can still be hosted by cities other than the biggest metropolises of Europe. Social networking evenings provide great opportunities for personal and cultural exchange. Festive evenings have been organized in informal and sometimes unique surroundings, for example in the City Hall of Stockholm, home of the Nobel ceremony, the Arsenal of Venice, a vast industrial shipyard dating back to the 12<sup>th</sup> century, a church in Rotterdam and most recently, the magnificent Palace de la Bourse in Bordeaux.

At the heart of the ESDR's concept is to foster skin science and to bring scientists and clinicians together at the international level. Thus, nowadays at ESDR meetings one hears English spoken in numerous accents. European scientists have research funding mainly from their own countries or apply from the EU in international consortia. Although we may compete as to who publishes the best science, we are more colleagues than rivals. This encourages skin scientists from all over the world to travel to the ESDR meetings, to be educated and to make friends in the old continent.

## References

1. Ring J. and Karvonen J. European Society for Dermatological Research (ESDR) in the 80-es of 20th century. *J Invest Dermatol* 2020

This is authors' manuscript (final draft) of the original article:

Sirkku Peltonen, Sabine A. Eming, Christopher E.M. Griffiths, Márta Széll, David Kelsell, Menno Alexander De Rie, Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of ESDR, *Journal of Investigative Dermatology*, Volume 140, Issue 9, Supplement, 2020, Pages S145-S146, ISSN 0022-202X, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jid.2020.02.043>  
(<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0022202X20313920>)  
CC-lisence: CC BY-NC-ND

2. Enk A and Bachelez H. The future leaders academy – a modern success story to foster young academic dermatologists and skin scientists
3. Sonkoly E. Looking back to the future: ESDR Academy for Future Leaders in Dermatology 2011. *J Invest Dermatol* 2020
4. Seneschal J. The ESDR Academy for Future Leaders: a springboard for career achievement *J Invest Dermatol* 2020
5. Tuderman-Bruckner L. ESDR around the Millennium Change. *J Invest Dermatol* 2020
6. Leigh I, Zambruno G.
7. Schmuth M, Barker J, Biedermann T. ESDR 2010-2020: Journey towards translational and systems medicine. *J Invest Dermatol* 2020
8. Gilliet M, Griffiths CEM. *J Invest Dermatol* 2020
9. Amagai M, Tokura Y. ESDR and JSID collegiality was not built in a day. *J Invest Dermatol* 2020