The Second American Cough Conference

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Two years after our inaugural meeting [1], the Second American Cough Conference was held in June 2009 on the banks of the Hudson River, in the shadow of the New York City skyline. Once again, a faculty of internationally renowned basic and clinical scientists provided state-of-the-art summaries and updated developments in the recently energized field of cough. The audience filling the auditorium to capacity comprised a broad range of interested parties: researchers, academicians, clinicians, and members of the pharmaceutical industry.

Reflecting the multidisciplinary challenge that pathological cough presents, conference speakers represented a broad range of backgrounds: basic and preclinical science, respiratory medicine, allergology, otorhinolaryngology, biomedical engineering, and pediatrics. As is the goal of the American Cough Conference, new and emerging themes, involving mechanisms, diagnosis, and management of cough, were presented and discussed. Notable among these is the concept that a preexisting, heightened cough reflex may underlie the development of chronic cough in susceptible individuals upon the superimposition of a second, exacerbating factor such as acute viral upper respiratory tract infection or gastroesophageal reflux, whereas in others with less sensitive baseline cough reflex sensitivity, identical triggers will not result in the onset of cough [2]. New developments in the pharmacology of cough were prominently featured, including an update on the TRP family of ion channels. Whereas the TRPV1 ion channel has received significant attention as a potential target for antitussive drugs

[3], the TRPA1 channel is now identified as a particularly exciting area of investigation. Recently emerging areas of inquiry, including the association of cough with sleep, exercise, and laryngeal sensory neuropathy, were discussed and new data presented. The urgent need for new and better antitussive drugs was a recurrent theme throughout the meeting, as was perhaps also the sentiment that the most efficient path to that goal would involve collaboration between academia and the pharmaceutical industry.

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The Third American Cough Conference is planned for June 2011. Updates regarding this meeting will be provided, as they become available, on our website: www.coughconference.com.

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