

Introduction to the Proceedings of the 2nd World Molecular Imaging Congress

In 2007, the Academy of Molecular Imaging (AMI) and the Society of Molecular Imaging (SMI) held the first “Joint Molecular Imaging Congress” in Providence, Rhode Island. In many ways, this meeting was an experiment in terms of site selection, program development, abstract selection, and unprecedented collaboration between two relatively new organizations. We were delighted to find that the meeting was an overwhelming success and was attended by over 1,800 scientists from around the world. Feedback from participants helped us to realize the educational importance of this meeting to students entering the molecular imaging field from diverse scientific backgrounds. By attending sessions and educational workshops, newcomers were able to immerse themselves in all aspects of imaging and network with experts across a broad spectrum.

Following on from this initial success, we turned our attention to planning the joint meeting in 2008. We changed the name to the “World Molecular Imaging Congress” (WMIC) in order to reflect the formal collaboration between AMI, SMI, the European Society of Molecular Imaging (ESMI), and the newly formed Federation of Asian Societies for Molecular Imaging (FASMI). The congress was held in Nice, France in September of that year and was attended by more than 2,100 delegates from around the world; we focused the meeting on bench-to-bedside molecular imaging and continued to provide educational workshops. The program was driven through a combination of peer-reviewed abstracts and talks given by many of the leaders in the field.

In September of 2009, we held the second WMIC in Montreal, Canada. Building on the foundations of both the Providence and Nice meetings, we felt that it was time to construct the oral scientific sessions entirely through proffered papers, allowing the field to drive the direction of the program. We received more than 1,000 abstracts and, with the help of the program committee, a group of experts whom we have termed “Emphasis Co-Chairs” (each over-seeing a set of subcategories), constructed a program to reflect the cutting edge of the field, but with a focus on bringing the individual modalities into combined sessions in order to generate the critical cross-pollination of ideas. Despite these changes, we have encouraged the underlying themes to focus on technology and probe development for understanding key aspects of biology and facilitating the translation of the tools to the clinic.

In addition to holding the meeting, we have also achieved another key goal in 2009. Until now, we have not been able to publish abstracts from this joint effort and we recognized that this was a major issue to many of the attendees. Thanks to the support from many individuals across all organizations, we reached an agreement to publish this year’s abstracts and those efforts are recognized in this special issue of *Molecular Imaging and Biology*. Discussions around abstract publication made us realize that we had an opportunity to create a permanent voice for the WMIC; we are delighted to announce that the journal *Molecular Imaging and Biology* is now co-owned by AMI and SMI. This partnership raises the collaboration between AMI and SMI to a new level and we believe this will benefit many of the stakeholders in the molecular imaging field. We hope that you share our enthusiasm for this partnership in *Molecular Imaging and Biology* and look forward to working together with many of you to grow this journal into the official journal and voice of the WMIC.

We hope that those of you who attended the World Molecular Imaging Congress in Montreal enjoyed your time in Canada, and to those of you who were unable to join us there or are new to the field, we hope to welcome you in the future. Our next World Molecular Imaging Congress will be held in Kyoto, Japan, September 8–11, 2010.

WMIC 2009 Steering Committee

Timothy McCarthy, Ph.D., President of the Academy of Molecular Imaging

Chrit Moonen, Ph.D., President of the Society for Molecular Imaging

June-Key Chung, M.D., Ph.D., Council Representative of the Federation of Asian Societies for Molecular Imaging

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Yasuhisa Fujibayashi, Ph.D., President-Elect of the Society for Molecular Imaging and Secretary General of the Federation of Asian Societies for Molecular Imaging

Juri Gelovani, M.D., Ph.D., Immediate Past President of the Society for Molecular Imaging

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Bertrand Tavitian, M.D., Ph.D., Immediate Past President of the European Society for Molecular Imaging