Overview of HGM11

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Following the successful inauguration of the Genome Data Base (GDB) as the database system for human gene mapping workshops at HGM10.5 in Oxford, extensive computing facilities detailed in the report from the Informatics committee, comprising approximately 100 workstations and personal computers networked to two SUN Microsystems database servers holding GDB, were also provided at the New Connaught Rooms, London for HGM11.

The workshop was organised so that each workshop committee was able to run its working (editorial) sessions together with open sessions for general delegates. Earlier in the year, the HGM11 computing team had developed a software application for personal computers to permit the electronic submission by delegates of abstracts for the Workshop.

The information submitted on diskette -over 700 abstracts – was compiled into a hard copy abstract book, by chromosome, and was also uploaded into GDB for future on-line access. In addition, delegates brought posters to HGM11 which were mounted adjacent to the relevant workshop committee's workspace.

Workshop committee Chairs and Co-Chairs commenced editing work on GDB at HGM11 in the afternoon of 16th August with the able assistance, as for HGM10.5, of a team of 45 graduate students trained by the organising team in the use of GDB and the computing facilities. General delegates registered on 18th August and the programme of the main workshop commenced at 9.00 a.m. on Monday 19th August

During the first two days, general delegates were able to mix, most productively, with the chromosome committees of interest to them; to discuss the new information in their posters; and to participate in open discussion sessions about the maps of each chromosome. On the third day, parallel workshop sessions on a variety of topics relevant to gene mapping as a whole, such as cDNA and Combining genetic and physical maps, were well attended. Reports from these sessions can be found in this volume following the Workshop committee reports. On the fourth day, contributions to a session of plenary lectures on a number of important topics relevant to gene mapping, from derivation of protein structure from the genetic code and man's history as revealed by DNA sequences to the ethics of the Human Genome

Project engaged a large audience and stimulated significant press interest, in particular in the ethical issues. The afternoon of the final day was taken up with plenary discussion sessions, with expert panels, on comparative gene mapping – the study of model organisms vital to progress of the human gene map – and on the future of the Human Gene Mapping Workshops, a topic which provided lively contributions from the floor by general delegates who emphasised the value to them of the larger workshops such as HGM11 and wished to see them continue. The latter concern has been addressed and met by the new HUGO Genome Mapping Workshops committee as described in the Introduction.

Throughout the Workshop, a demonstration of eight genome-related databases, incorporating graphical displays of maps and maps of the mouse genome for example created much interest

from the delegates. A short description of each of the demonstrations can be found in the report from the Informatics Committee. Delegates were also able to gain "hands on" experience through a demonstration of GDB.

In addition, several companies mounted commercial exhibitions of their products and others provided flyers announcing particular products and services. The Science and Technology Agency of Japan held an evening reception for invited guests in order to promote collaboration with Japanese groups in the gene mapping field.