Preface

This year the 25th International Workshop on Surfactant Replacement was hosted by Elena Baibarina in Moscow from June 10–12, 2010. Moscow is famous for its hospitality and the delegates were warmly welcomed by Russian neonatologists who keenly attended the conference.

Two important Pre-Conference Workshops on reducing global neonatal mortality and controlled hypothermia for perinatal asphyxia were held prior to the opening ceremony. The speakers at these workshops were Ola Saugstad (Oslo), Bo Sun (Shanghai), Elena Baibarina (Moscow) and Denis Azzopardi (London).

The second Bengt Robertson Memorial Lecture was given by Henry Halliday from the Department of Child Health, Queen's University Belfast and it was entitled 'Useless Perinatal Therapies'. While Bengt Robertson was responsible, with others, for developing surfactant treatment, one of the most useful therapies in neonatal medicine, the lecturer reviewed some of the useless or indeed harmful therapies introduced into clinical perinatal practice in the past 100 years. Among the topics covered were: uncontrolled oxygen supplementation, inadequate temperature control, withholding feeds from preterm babies and various drug treatments – thalidomide, chloramphenicol, sodium bicarbonate, thyrotrophin-releasing hormone and corticosteroids. It seems that neonatologists and perinatologists have been slow to learn from the lessons of the past.

The other invited speakers covered a wide range of topics from early stabilisation of the very preterm infant to long-term pulmonary and neurological outcomes in

childhood and adolescence. Neil Finer from San Diego emphasised the importance of the 'First Golden Minutes' in the life of the very preterm baby, reminding the audience of the problems caused by over-zealous treatment in the delivery room. Tore Curstedt from Stockholm brought everyone up to date with progress in developing a synthetic surfactant that closely mimics the actions of the currently used natural surfactants. It seems that both surfactant proteins (SP) B and C are needed for optimal activity of a new surfactant. Howard Clark from Southampton discussed the therapeutic potential of SP concentrating on SP-A and SP-D and a potential role in prevention of bronchopulmonary dysplasia. Before effective surfactants were developed, antenatal steroids had been shown to be efficacious in preventing respiratory distress syndrome by enhancing fetal lung maturity. Mikko Hallman from Oulu reviewed the evidence supporting the use of antenatal steroids and he also discussed attempts to prevent preterm birth using progesterone.

Recently, paediatricians have rediscovered that near-term or late preterm infants can have problems in the neonatal period and difficulties in later childhood. Avroy Fanaroff from Cleveland reminded the delegates of these problems and emphasised the burden of ill health created by these births due to the relatively large numbers involved. The final invited lecture was given by Lex Doyle from Melbourne and he reviewed the extensive literature on long-term pulmonary and neurological follow-up into adulthood of former very preterm infants. As these children grow older they have reduced pulmonary function

with airway obstruction and lower exercise tolerance. In addition, many have significant developmental and motor delay in early childhood and at school age cognitive impairments and behaviour problems. Despite these difficulties most very preterm survivors escape without major long-term pulmonary or neurological problems.

During the 25th International Workshop on Surfactant Replacement, 14 free communications were presented orally and there were 26 poster presentations with contributors from many countries including Germany, the Netherlands, USA, Sweden, Norway, UK, Russia, Finland, Canada, Switzerland, Greece, Italy, Brazil, the Czech Republic, Belarus, Turkey, Mexico, and Iran. The papers from the workshop are published in this issue of

Neonatology along with the updated 'European Consensus Guidelines on the Management of Neonatal Respiratory Distress Syndrome in Preterm Infants'. The Editors-in-Chief of *Neonatology* are very grateful to Eric Shinwell from Rehovot, a member of the Editorial Board, for conducting the review process for these consensus guidelines.

Elena Baibarina, Moscow

Tore Curstedt, Stockholm

Henry L. Halliday, Belfast

Mikko Hallman, Oulu

Ola D. Saugstad, Oslo

Christian P. Speer, Würzburg