Basic and Clinical Science of Mental and Addictive Disorders

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Preface

This monograph contains the proceedings from the plenary sessions and the oral presentations of the satellite meetings of the Collegium Internationale Neuro-Psychopharmacologicum (CINP) Regional Conference held on July 10-14, 1995, in Vienna and Prague. The theme of this CINP Regional Conference was 'Neuroscience and Neuropsychopharmacology in the East and West at the Beginning of the European Decade of Brain Research'. The concept for such a meeting evolved from a program, which I articulated, as President of CINP, to reach out to our scientific colleagues in Eastern and Central Europe with the CINP to promote collaborations and scientific exchange. During the XIXth CINP Congress in Washington, D.C., in June of 1994, several meetings were held with many of the representatives from the scientific communities in Central and Eastern Europe who were attending the CINP Congress. What emerged from these discussions was a consensus behind the idea of organizing a CINP-sponsored meeting which would involve basic and clinical scientists from Eastern and Central Europe with scientists from other nations, especially Western Europe, as a first step in an effort to improve communication, enhance friendships and collaborations with scientists from all parts of the world with the relevant scientific communities in Eastern and Central Europe.

Another important goal of the 1995 CINP Regional Conference was to acquaint neuroscientists and neuropsychopharmacologists from Eastern and Central Europe with the CINP and to encourage interested and qualified scientists to join and participate in CINP activities. The response both to the proposed CINP Regional Conference and to the CINP itself by our colleagues in Eastern and Central Europe was very gratifying and encouraging. To sym-
bolize the joining of the ‘East and West’ a decision was made to convene the conference in two different cities, and as a result, Vienna, one of the easternmost cities of Western Europe, and Prague, one of the westernmost cities of Eastern Europe, were selected. The first 2 days of the Regional Conference were held in Vienna and the final 2 days in Prague with a travel day in between. Over 500 scientific delegates attended the Regional Conference, making it one of the most successful regional meetings held by the CINP.

The overriding principles in developing the scientific program for the 1995 CINP Regional Conference was first, to include only presentations that represented the very best of basic and clinical neuropsychopharmacology and neuroscience at the very cutting edge of our field. Second, every attempt was made to be as representative as possible, in an international sense, and to invite presentations from scientists from as many of the European countries as possible, both East and West. Third, given the increasingly important role of basic neuroscience in fueling discovery in the mental, substance use disorders and disorders of aging was to emphasize and integrate presentations on relevant basic neuroscience and neuropsychopharmacology topics. In crafting the program, the Scientific Program Committee applied all these principles very effectively in selecting the speakers and in organizing the program. We owe them our gratitude for a job well done. The Scientific Program Committee consisted of Vaclav Filip (Czechia), Salomon Langer (France), Julien Mendlewicz (Belgium), Giorgio Racagni (Italy), Oakley Ray (USA), Bernd Saletu (Austria), Jean Charles Schwarz (France) and myself (USA).

The first day of this unusual CINP Regional Conference was convened in Vienna and was devoted to a very important, but largely ignored, clinical and public health problem presented by subsyndromal forms of mood, anxiety and cognitive disorders. This is the first scientific meeting, at the international level, to focus on this very important topic and the presentations represented the best data and thinking available on these important subsyndromal states. Since the CINP Regional Conference was held in 1995, most likely stimulated by the presentations from the Conference, an increasingly powerful compilation of scientific evidence is emerging on the clinical and public health importance of the subsyndromal states in the community, in primary care and mental health settings. These presentations on subsyndromal disorders are included in Chapter 1. The second day in Vienna concentrated on the applications of new technologies of functional brain imaging (Chapter 2) and of cell and molecular biology (Chapter 3) to solve the clinical problems presented by severe mental disorders. Presentations also covered the use of molecular genetic methodologies in the study of bipolar and other disorders. Apects of these chapters also described the promise of new psychotropic drug discovery through the use of modern molecular biology techniques.
The topics for days three and four (Chapters 4-7) cover the presentations that were made during the 2 days in Prague. The general topic area for each chapter was chosen by representatives from the scientific community in Eastern and Central Europe. The primary focus in each of these topic areas of schizophrenia, Alzheimer’s disease, alcoholism and drug addiction and suicide and the mood disorders was to present recent updates of the clinical science in each topic area. Chapters 8-11 involve presentations from satellite symposia that were held in conjunction with the 1995 CINP Regional Conference. These presentations covered the new clinical characteristics of a calcium channel blocker, new developments in the treatment of social phobia, and new aspects of the atypical neuroleptics. Chapters 11 and 12 involve specific recent clinical studies of two new agents in the treatment of Alzheimer’s disease and Gilles de la Tourette syndrome. The final chapter (Chapter 13) describes the new curriculum on normal and abnormal human behavior, which has been developed by the CINP Educational Committee for use in CINP-sponsored educational training programs directed toward developing countries. In summary, each of the scientific presentations during the 4 days of the CINP Regional Conference represented the very best of what our field has to offer on each topic.

The compendium of data included in this monograph range broadly and cover many of the most relevant topics of high clinical and public health importance for our field. This compilation in its entirety is a symbolic benchmark of the enormous progress that is being made in neuroscience and neuropsychopharmacology to better understand, diagnose and treat mental and addictive disorders and disorders of the aging. We believe there will be something of interest in this volume for the basic and clinical scientist, and for clinical practitioners who diagnose and treat patients with brain disorders.

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