

1999 Lisbon, Portugal

4th EFNS Congress, Lisbon, Portugal, 7 - 11 September 1999

Successful EFNS Congress in Lisbon

More than three thousand neurologists attended the fourth congress of the EFNS, which was held in Lisbon, Portugal, from September 7-11.1999. The congress venue was well chosen; the new and elegant Centro Cultural de Belem at the river Tagus provided ample space for all activities of a modern congress. Political circumstances in East Timor offered a dramatic setting. The development in the former Portuguese colony, which took place during the week of the congress had its counterpoint in the ballet performance at the opening of the congress and the colourful entertainment at the farewell dinner.

Each day of the congress was opened by a special lecture (Joao Lobo Antunes: Egas Moniz and cerebral angiography; Fernando Lopes da Silva: The impact of recent advances in basic mechanisms on neurology; Antonio R. Damasio: A neurological approach to consciousness). Then followed the main topics, three for each day: Diagnosis of early pathophysiological changes and decision making in stroke, sleep disorders, genetic and therapeutic aspects of motor neurone disease, new therapeutic strategies in epilepsy, differential diagnosis and pathophysiology in movement disorders, gene therapy, normal and pathophysiologic ageing, neuroimaging, behavioural neurology, language. For each topic, internationally distinguished experts reviewed the state of the art and future trends. Additional presentations, some of them of great importance, had been selected from submitted abstracts and were included as short communications in the main sessions.

Poster sessions were arranged according to topics and time and space had been allotted for viewing and discussions. The session chairperson awarded 27 poster prizes consisting of one year subscription to the European Journal of Neurology and free attendance of a teaching course at the 5th EFNS Congress in Copenhagen. In addition, congress participants chose three posters whose authors received the delegate's prize: a computer, a printer and Microsoft Office 2000 donated by Microsoft Portugal. The congress also included ten teaching courses on central themes in neurology presented during the two days preceding the opening. The teaching courses were well attended and received positive evaluation reports. The programme was rounded off by focused workshops mainly organized by the EFNS Scientist Panels by pharmaceutical companies. Fifty bursaries were given to young neurologists who had submitted good abstracts.

The 4th congress of the EFNS was a great success and the participants agreed on the admiration of and thankfulness to the Portuguese organizers, Maria Teresa Paiva, Antonio Bastos Lima and, last but not least, Isabel Leite, Bento de Sousa and the Local Arrangements Committee for the excellent organization of the congress.

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