Young Researcher Day in Pediatrics
Lucerne 2012

Christa E. Flück, Bern

Prize winners 2012 for the best oral presentations: Chiara Abbas, Bern (left) and Simone Dertschnig, Basel (right).

The «Young Researcher Day in Pediatrics» was held during the Annual Meeting of the Swiss Society for Paediatrics on May 31 2012 in Lucerne. The program organizing committee consisted of the research representatives of the five University Children's Hospitals and was headed for this year by Christa E. Flück, Bern.

Young researchers involved in any field of research in Pediatrics were invited to submit their abstracts either for the category of clinical research or basic/translational research. Out of the submitted abstracts, the ten best abstracts were selected for oral presentation.

Among the clinical presentations, Bigna K. Bölsterli Heinzel from Zürich showed that in children with encephalopathy with status epilepticus during sleep a missing slope decrease of slow waves was observed that might be responsible for developmental regression. Roland Gerull from Bern presented data from a randomized trial on non-pharmacologic analgesic interventions (oral sucrose, facilitated tucking) on physiologic parameters in preterm infants suggesting effectiveness of oral sucrose in reducing reactions to pain. Nuria Camats from Bern showed her results on clinical, genetic and functional characterizations of ten novel SF-1 mutations (NR5A1) causing either disordered sexual development in 46,XY individuals or ovarian insufficiency in 46,XX subjects. Lisa Weibel from Zürich presented impressive pictures of successful topical beta-blocker therapy for infantile hemangiomas but cautioned that the topically applied drug might be absorbed causing systemic side effects. Finally, Chiara Abbas from Bern presented data of a new tidal single-breath washout test which uses two tracer gases to measure ventilation inhomogeneity in small airways. This test was able to detect short-term effects of physiotherapy and inhalation on lung function in patients with cystic fibrosis. With her excellent presentation she was awarded the prize for the best clinical presentation generously sponsored by Nestlé Switzerland.

In the category of basic/translational research the best oral presentation was given by Simone Dertschnig from Basel, for her talk entitled «Fibroblast growth factor-7 sustains thymic expression of tissue-restricted antigens during experimental graft-versus-host disease». Also this prize was generously sponsored by Nestlé Switzerland. Other oral presentations in this category included «The unsolved pathogenesis of idiopathic ketotic hypoglycemia: involvement of the pyruvate dehydrogenase kinase isoenzyme 4 gene» (by Thanh-Hong-Phuc Cung, Lausanne), «Brain damage in methylmalonic aciduria and glutaric aciduria type I: Rat 3D primary reaggregated brain cell cultures elucidate the pathomechanisms» (by Paris Jafari, Lausanne), «Platelet apoptosis in pediatric immun thrombocytopenia is ameliorated by intravenous immunoglobu-
in» (by Jeannine Winkler, Zürich), and «Involvement of autophagy in severe hypoxic-ischemic encephalopathy of newborn infants: an autopsy study» (by Marie-Pascale Pittet, Lausanne).

In addition, the program offered three short lectures by invited speakers. Nicole Ritz, Basel, was asked to talk about her recent extensive experience on going abroad (both to Africa and Australia) doing both clinical work as well as pursuing research projects. She gave a very lively summary of the pros and cons and (hopefully) convinced many young physicians to follow her path. Philipp Agyman, Bern, gave a very informative talk about the obstacles, disadvantages and advantages of doing clinical research. At the end of the day, the conference’s host Thomas Neuhaus from Lucerne was invited to talk about his academic career and his recent experience of leaving alma mater for a smaller, non-university Children’s Hospital.

Overall, the Young Researcher Day 2012 was a success. The research presented by our young investigators was of highest quality. This year we started the program after the opening ceremony of the main conference allowing participants to attend both. We also tried to coordinate coffee and lunch breaks as best as possible with the parallel sessions for better interactions. However, the research day/program is still not attracting the number of attendants one would wish. Therefore, we are currently taking feedbacks and discuss format changes for the future in order to attract more pediatricians.

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