Over 4,000 attendees experienced the American Stroke Association’s International Stroke Conference 2009 (ISC) in San Diego, Calif., Feb. 17–20. The event kicked off on Feb. 17 with the daylong State-of-the-Art Stroke Nursing Symposium. Over 850 nurses attended the symposium, which has been growing in popularity over the past several years. Stroke program coordinators from primary stroke centers across the U.S. and other countries now make a point of attending this annual event. The symposium provides current information for nurses and other healthcare professionals who treat patients and families in all phases of stroke care from the emergency department through rehabilitation. It is also an invaluable opportunity for networking and sharing best practices. This year’s format was more expanded, with a plenary session in the morning and parallel concurrent sessions in the afternoon. This allowed the symposium to suit the needs of both newcomers to the stroke community, who might be seeking introductory information on topics such as stroke center development, as well as long established stroke specialists who are interested in hearing the latest updates and advanced stroke concepts. Sponsored and organized by the Council on Cardiovascular Nursing, this symposium is an excellent example of two AHA Councils working together to achieve common goals.

The scientific sessions of the ISC followed the Nursing Symposium and were held from Feb. 18–20. This premier event provides a forum for stroke specialists from around the world to present recent work related to stroke and cerebrovascular disease. ISC 2009 featured over 900 abstract presentations, lectures, debates and forums. The new debate format of some of the sessions was a particular success, focusing on controversial areas of patient care such as off-label use of Factor VII, ethical issues in stroke care and telephonic vs. telemedicine advice for IV tPA administration. The debates were lively, informative and entertaining all at the same time. Also, new at ISC 2009 were the Moderated E-Poster Sessions. This new resource allowed selected presenters to discuss and display their poster as a PowerPoint presentation to a captive audience.

At the opening plenary session the Thomas Willis Lecture, “The Changing Landscape of Cerebral Ischemic Injury,” was given by Dr. Costantino Iadecola and the prestigious William M. Feinberg Award for Excellence in Clinical Stroke was presented to Dr. Larry B. Goldstein. Subsequent sessions included discussion of recent news reports that in a select subgroup of patients intravenous tPA can be given 3 to 4.5 hours after onset of an acute ischemic stroke. Published in September 2008 in the New England Journal of Medicine (Hacke et al, NEJM, 359:1317–1329, 2008) this was welcome news as breaking the barrier of the “three-hour window of opportunity” for thrombolytic therapy for acute ischemic stroke has been a vexing problem for many years. Other research programs which are also trying to break the three-hour barrier include the ongoing IMS III trial and the upcoming DIAS III trial. The approach of IMS III is to use a lower initial dose of intravenous tPA followed by either intraarterial tPA and/or the use of special catheters which can mechanically extract the clot or use sound energy to enhance tPA efficacy. Another approach is to test new thrombolytic agents, such as desmoteplase, which is the purpose of the DIAS III trial.

The conference ended with the second plenary session during which a sample of the “Best Science of ISC 2009” was presented. These oral abstracts were among those rated highest by the program committee and included research that spanned the spectrum of science from transplanted human neural progenitor cells, to new devices such as the Penumbra system, to novel therapies such as transcranial laser therapy and finally bi-hemispheric stimulation to enhance stroke rehabilitation.

Overall, another successful International Stroke Conference thanks to the hard work of the AHA/ASA staff and the Stroke Council Program Committee.

Be sure to mark your calendars for ISC 2010 in San Antonio, Texas. Submit your best science and plan to attend!

- **Scientific Abstracts and Nursing Symposium Abstracts:**
  June 15–Aug. 7

- **Late-Breaking Science and Ongoing Clinical Trials Abstracts:**
  Oct. 5–Nov. 2

- **State-of-the-Art Stroke Nursing Symposium:**
  Tuesday, Feb. 23

- **International Stroke Conference:**
  Wednesday, Feb. 24–Friday, Feb. 26
SEE YOU NEXT YEAR
San Antonio

Nursing Symposium: February 23
Exhibits: February 24-25
Sessions: February 24-26

Abstract Submission: June 15 – August 7
Housing and Registration Opens Early October

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