L. Gabriel Navar, PhD, FAHA

The main activities of your Leadership Committee this past quarter have been related to the fall conference (Sept. 15–19) in Atlanta. The Program Committee under the leadership of Clinton Webb organized a terrific program with a very timely and important workshop. These were described in the previous newsletter. By the time you read this, the meeting will be over, but I hope that you attended the meeting and participated in the activities. If you were not able to attend this year, please make a special effort to join us in 2009 in Chicago. This year’s meeting had several new features including the first presentation of the Donald Seldin lecture by Mark Knepper and the first presentation of the Harriet Dustan lecture by Suzanne Oparil. The Seldin Award is sponsored by the Kidney Council. The Dustan Award is sponsored by the High Blood Pressure Research Council with the specific objective of highlighting our outstanding women scientists. Congratulations to all our award recipients.

In addition to planning the fall conference, Leadership Committee members have started plans for the next hypertension summer school to be held in 2009. The Chair of the organizing committee is Ray Townsend (townsend@exchange.upenn.edu). Please feel free to communicate with him to make suggestions and volunteer to assist.

One of my main activities as Council Chair is to represent us before the AHA Science Advisory and Coordinating Committee. At our June 25 meeting several new initiatives were approved. The Interdisciplinary Working Groups (IWG) were converted to the same status as Councils, with the same rights and responsibilities as Councils. The only distinction is that the former IWGs will be called Interdisciplinary Councils. This action will affect our members who also belong to an IWG and it will be important for you to be sure and declare the High Blood Pressure Research Council as your primary Council.

The scientific mentoring program continues to grow and AHA will provide 10 travel grants to mentees who commit to attending Scientific Sessions. An important aspect of this commitment is that some of you may be asked to serve as mentors to this program. If interested in participating, please let me know.

The AHA Research Committee reported on the development of its new strategic plan. In addition to the current programs focused primarily on Scientist Development Grants and Established Investigator Grants, new programs include Innovative Research Grants, Clinical Research Program and Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowships. For spring, the Research Committee funded 85 Scientist Development Grants, eight Fellow to Faculty awards and 11 Clinical Research Program awards. The payline for SDGs is about 24 percent so junior faculty investigators should be encouraged to apply. The Scientific Publishing Committee reported on its new initiative to launch five (SIX?) new journals. Of the five new journals planned, two have already been launched with the remaining three to start in 2009.

The SACC action that will have the greatest impact on our Council is the decision to raise dues effective January 2009. This will be linked with improved member benefits like the AHA Learning Library. It was emphasized by the Member Benefits Task Force that our old dues structure was outdated and that the health of our association depended on increased dues. Over the year, AHA has markedly increased services to its members and has launched many public education programs. I appeal to all our members to remain loyal to our Council and renew your membership, preferably at the premium professional category for 2009! In addition, please make special efforts to recruit new members to our Council. Our target is to have 2,000 Council members by 2010.

The report from the Advocacy Coordinating Committee emphasized the importance of
maintaining a strong advocacy program and described our advocacy efforts. Even during these times of financial constraints, it is very important to maintain a strong advocacy program and continue to remind our legislators of the importance of increased funding for biomedical research. As noted by the recent actions of Congress to increase funding for NIH in spite of record budget deficits, our collective message is getting through, but we must remain vigilant. Our Council is very fortunate to have J.R. Haywood as our Advocacy Committee representative. He has worked very hard to develop a strong advocacy program. Please help with the advocacy effort by contacting J.R.

Remember that Scientific Sessions will be held in New Orleans Nov. 8–12, 2008. Howard Pratt, our representative to the Scientific Sessions Program Committee, reported on our increased involvement in Sessions, including more than eight oral and poster sessions and a Sunday morning session on diagnosis, evaluation and management of resistant hypertension. Several cardiovascular seminars relating to hypertension will be held and a lecture will be presented by Mario Cappechi, co-recipient of the 2007 Nobel Prize in Physiology and Medicine. If you have not done so yet, please make plans to attend Scientific Session. Please send me an e-mail (navar@tulane.edu) if you will be attending since the Council may hold an informal social during the week.

Finally, I would like to say farewell to our members as this will be my last newsletter as Council Chair. The next newsletter will come out after our fall meeting where we make the transition. It has been a wonderful and fulfilling experience to serve as your Chair. I have had the good fortune of having excellent staff support from AHA and hard-working members of the Leadership Committee who made my job much easier. A special note of thanks to Bob Carey for his mentorship as I struggled to learn about all the duties of the Chair. During these last two years, we have made considerable progress in program activities and membership, but there is still much to do. I am very comfortable in knowing that I leave you in the hands of Clinton Webb who will become Council Chair and Rhian Touyz who will become the Vice Chair of the Council and Chair of the Program Committee for the 2009 Fall Conference. I ask you to give them your full support and to work with all the members of the leadership committee to make our council even more responsive to the needs of our members. We are here to serve you.

Report From the Nominating Committee

Robert M. Carey, MD, MACP
Chair, Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee congratulates Dr. Rhian M. Touyz, who has been elected to the position of Vice-Chair and Chair-Elect of the Council for High Blood Pressure Research. Rhian is an outstanding investigator and leader in hypertension research. She is professor of medicine, and holds the Canada Research Chair in Hypertension, at the University of Ottawa, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada. Elected to the Leadership Committee as at-large members were Drs. Ronald Victor, Donna Wang and Mark Chappell. Dr. Victor is professor of medicine and Norman and Adurey Kaplan Chair of Hypertension at the University of Texas Southwestern in Dallas, Texas. Dr. Wang is professor of medicine at Michigan State University in East Lansing, Mich. Dr. Chappell is professor in the Hypertension and Vascular Disease Center at Wake Forest University School of Medicine in Winston Salem, N.C. Also, Dr. Jan Danser was elected to the Leadership Committee as international at-large member. Dr. Danser is professor of cardiovascular pharmacology at Erasmus University, Rotterdam, The Netherlands.

Dr. George Bakris has been selected to serve as Chair of the Council’s Professional and Public Education Committee, which is now combined with the Publications Committee. Dr. Raymond Townsend will serve as Vice-Chair.

The Trainee Advocacy Committee will include the following trainees: Drs. Maria Antonia Garcia Espinosa, Romer Gonzalez-Villalobos, Radu Illescu, Huda Abdullah, Justin Grobe and Erika Boesen.

The Nominating Committee congratulates all of these individuals who will provide valuable service for our Council.

Opportunities to serve the Council for High Blood Pressure Research include membership on the following committees: Trainee Advocacy, Professional and Public Education, Annual Fall Conference, Novartis Award Selection, Scientific Sessions Program, Nominating, Awards and Leadership. If you are interested in serving, please contact Dr. L. Gabriel Navar, the incoming Nominating Committee Chair.

Letter From the Editor

Nancy L. Kanagy, PhD, FAHA, Editor

As the summer ended, the members of our Council attended another exciting fall conference on Sept. 15–19 in Atlanta, in conjunction with the Kidney Council. In addition, many members of our Council are presenting their research at Scientific Sessions in New Orleans in November. Below is a short list of research briefs from this quarter’s issues of Hypertension. Be sure to check out the important research published in our Council’s journal in your library or online at http://hyper.ahajournals.org

New Professional Education Center Web site

On Sept. 1, 2008, the American Heart Association Professional Education Center launched a new and improved Web site! The site incorporates a new look and feel and is designed to better inform users about our current educational offerings. Enhancements were made to improve navigation, course search capabilities and registering for an account. We’re excited about this opportunity to provide a greater user experience for our learners. Visit the Professional Education Center for the latest continuing education on cardiovascular disease and stroke!
July 2008

This study reported that weight loss independent of changes in activity improves both peripheral conduit artery and resistance vessel endothelium-dependent dilation, with the latter mediated by increases in NO bioavailability. The results were similar between young and older adults. (Weight Loss Alone Improves Conduit and Resistance Artery Endothelial Function in Young and Older Overweight/Obese Adults. Gary L. Pierce, Stacy D. Beske, Brooke R. Lawson, Kara L. Southall, Francoise J. Benay, Anthony J. Donato, and Douglas R. Seals. Hypertension. 2008;52:72–79.)

Attenuation of Nox4 and its downstream signaling associate with reduced myofibroblast migration and, thus, may be expected to decrease neointimal hyperplasia and restenosis after balloon angioplasty. (Nox4 Oxidase Overexpression Specifically Decreases Endogenous Nox4 mRNA and Inhibits Angiotensin II–Induced Adventitial Myofibroblast Migration. Mounir J. Haurani, M. Eugenia Cifuentes, Alexander D. Shepard, and Patrick J. Pagano. Hypertension. 2008;52:143–149.)

August 2008

Serotonin in cardiac hypertrophy: This study in mice found that blocking the 5-HT2B receptor prevented cardiac hypertrophy independent of the cause and without affecting hemodynamics, introducing a new potential target for treating cardiac hypertrophy. (Serotonin 5-HT2B Receptor Blockade Prevents Reactive Oxygen Species–Induced Cardiac Hypertrophy in Mice. Laurent Monassier, Marc-André Laplante, Fabrice Jaffré, Pascal Bousquet, Luc Maroteaux, and Jacques de Champlain. Hypertension. 2008;52:301–307.)

Aldosterone contributes to cardiovascular risk independent of blood pressure effects: This multicenter, international clinical trial of eplerenone suggests that in myocardial infarction patients, aldosterone has a short-term effect contributing to acute cardiac death and a long-term effect worsening the CV system especially if they were previously hypertensive. (History of Hypertension and Eplerenone in Patients With Acute Myocardial Infarction Complicated by Heart Failure. Bertram Pitt, Ali Ahmed, Thomas E. Love, Henry Krum, Jose Nicolau, José S. Cardoso, Alexander Parkhomenko, Michael Aschermann, Ramon Corbalán, Henry Solomon, Harry Shi, and Faiez Zannad. Hypertension. 2008;52:271–278.)


Combining renin inhibitor and an ARB protects endothelial function: A study in hypercholesterolemic rabbits found that adding a renin inhibitor to an ARB increased NO production, levels of BH4, and decreased plaque formation more than either treatment alone. (Olmesartan Prevents Cardiovascular Injury and Hepatic Steatosis in Obesity and Diabetes, Accompanied by Apoptosis Signal Regulating Kinase-1 Inhibition. Eiichiro Yamamoto, Yi-Fei Dong, Keiichiro Kataoka, Takuro Yamashita, Yoshiko Tokutomi, Shinji Matsuba, Hidenori Ichijo, Hisao Ogawa, and Shokei Kim-Mitsuyama. Hypertension. 2008;52:573–580.)

September 2008


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