Awards Ceremony Address

JAMES O. DAVIS

Before we begin our Awards Ceremony this afternoon, I would like you to join me in paying tribute to a great man, Sir George Pickering of Oxford. His passing last September (1980) was a great loss for our Society, for the Hypertension and Academic communities and, of course, a great personal loss of a dear friend and colleague of all of us. Sir George Pickering had so many attributes that it is difficult to single out any one as being the most outstanding. I remember Sir George first of all as a scholar and academician. He was a great teacher and a true humanitarian, and he will be remembered for a long time for his witty remarks. Sir George contributed greatly to the field of hypertension for many years. We all remember him for giving us the concept that the measurement of blood pressure in a population yields a continuous distribution of values and that there is no sharp distinction or line of demarcation between normotension and hypertension. This is an extremely important concept, because it is crucial for the rational treatment of hypertensive cardiovascular disease. You will recall that Sir George Pickering organized and hosted the first formal meeting of our Society in Oxford in 1970. He was the first Volhard lecturer.

The International Society is paying tribute to Sir George Pickering by having a commemorative edition of his book The Nature of Essential Hypertension printed for presentation to each of you in attendance here. I would like to express my personal appreciation to Professors Franz Gross and Alberto Zanchetti for their help in planning this event and to Dr Ian Robertson for engineering the project of reprinting with Churchill-Livingstone. On behalf of the Society, and as president, I present a copy of this book to Lady Carola Pickering, who has been so kind to make this trip here from England to participate in this ceremony.

The other person whom we lost this year was Dr James McCubbin, who died on 3 May, and who was a retired member of the Cleveland Clinic where he contributed to the field of hypertension for many years. He was quite active in the International Society of Hypertension.

I would like to ask all of you to stand and observe a moment of silence for the loss of these two members of our Society. Thank you.

Let us now begin the Awards Ceremony in our programme. The Awards Ceremony represents one of the highlights of our meeting. The Demuth Awards are given at each scientific meeting to three young investigators who are no more than 35 years of age. The stipend is 3500 Swiss Francs to be used in travel to and from this meeting. The recipients are persons whose papers have been selected for either an oral or a poster presentation. Selection of the awardees is made on the basis of excellence and originality of the work to be presented. Also, his or her curriculum vitae and previous research contributions are considered.

Drs C. and F. Demuth Medical Foundation Awards for Young Investigators

One of the recipients of this award for this meeting is Dr James Gregory Dusting from the University of Melbourne in Australia. The title of Dr Dusting's paper is 'Vasodepressor effects of arachidonic acid and prostacyclin in hypertensive rats'.

The second recipient of the Demuth Award is Dr Sven-Erik Ricksten from the University of Göteborg in Sweden. The title of Dr Ricksten's paper is 'Renal nerve activity and exaggerated natriuresis in spontaneous hypertensive rats'.

The third recipient, Dr Yasuharu Takada, is from Ehime, Japan. The title of Dr Takada's paper is 'Immunological and immunofluorescent studies on human angiotensin converting enzymes'.

I am very sorry to have to tell you at this time that Dr Demuth, the lady who sponsored this award, died a few days ago, on 28 May. But I am happy to tell you that she left as her wish that we continue this award to young scientists.
Smith Kline and French Young Investigator’s Award

The young Investigator’s Award is given biennially to a scientist who is 40 years of age or younger for performing outstanding basic or clinical research in hypertension during the last 3 years. The award is endowed by Smith Kline and French and amounts to $25,000. A sum of $2000 is given as a personal prize to the awardee plus a sum of $23,000 to be used for research during the next 2 years, or the awardee has the privilege of using the entire $25,000 for research. Also, Smith Kline and French have prepared a nice scroll for the recipient.

This year’s awardee, Dr Pierre Corvol, is from the National Institute of Health and Medical Research in Paris. He received his medical degree in Paris in 1971 and he is presently in charge of a clinical hypertension research unit, and director of a hypertension research laboratory in Paris. His research deals with the renin–angiotensin–aldosterone system and its important role in the control of arterial pressure and salt and water metabolism. Dr Corvol is described by his colleagues, and I quote, ‘as an imaginative thinker who has had rigorous scientific training and who approaches his research with intense interest and energy’. His publications do indeed bear this out. One of the notable features which characterizes the research of Dr Corvol is found in both its depth and its breadth. His research ranges from very basic problems to clinical problems which have immediate application to the patient. For example, Dr Corvol and his colleagues have recently purified renin from several species including man and, in addition, they have obtained monoclonal antibodies to human renin. These achievements allow the development of a direct radioimmunoassay for renin as well as opening the way to a number of avenues of hypertension research. For those of you who like to see quantitative data, Dr Corvol has published 25 papers in which he was the first author and 134 papers as co-author, and on many of these 134 papers it is obvious that he has contributed substantially. Dr Corvol, it is with great pleasure that I present to you the Young Investigator’s Award.

Astra Award for Clinical Pharmacology and Therapeutics of Hypertension

The Astra Award for Clinical Pharmacology and Therapeutics of Hypertension is also given biennially to a distinguished investigator for meritorious research. The stipend for this award is $2,500. If you think for a moment, who meets these qualifications better than this year’s recipient, Dr Robert Tarazi? Dr Tarazi received his medical degree from Cairo University in 1955 and graduated with (Cum Laude) honours. After his house staff training in Cairo University Hospital, he became a member of the faculty at Cairo University. In 1965, Dr Tarazi joined the staff at the Cleveland Clinic, where he progressed rapidly to become a senior member of the staff; he is now chairmain of the Department of Clinical Science and vice-chairman of the Research Division of the Cleveland Clinic. Dr Tarazi has contributed to our knowledge in many different areas of the therapeutics of hypertension, including diuretics, beta-blockers, angiotensin II antagonists and converting-enzyme inhibitors. He was among the first to demonstrate that antihypertensive drugs lead to regression of cardiac hypertrophy. He recognized that patients with low renin hypertension are volume dependent and that the plasma volume/interstitial fluid volume ratio is low even in mild hypertension. Dr Tarazi has performed extensive studies on the effects of angiotensin II antagonists and converting-enzyme inhibitors in patients with hypertension. While carrying out all of these research activities he has trained many young physicians and investigators in the field of haemodynamics in hypertension. Indeed, Dr Tarazi has become increasingly well known as one of the world’s authorities on the haemodynamics of hypertension. With all of these fine qualities as a scientist, and because I know Bob Tarazi quite well, I can say he is an unusually fine person. Bob, it is with great pleasure that I present to you the Astra Award in Clinical Pharmacology and Therapeutics.

This concludes our Awards Ceremony and I thank you for your attention and support of this fine group of investigators.