

2nd Regional Teaching Course in Sub-Saharan Africa

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia – 25 to 27 June 2009

Jointly organised by the EFNS in cooperation with the University of Addis Ababa, WFN and IBRO

The EFNS Africa project, initiated by Prof. J. De Reuck, President of the EFNS, set up also this year a Regional Teaching Course in another sub-Saharan country.

Following the very successful Regional Teaching Course (RTC) the EFNS organised in Dakar, Senegal in June 2008, a second RTC took place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Prof. Zenebe Melaku, neurologist, was the on-site responsible in Addis Ababa for this successful second RTC. The Neurology Department of the Addis Ababa University (AAU) and the Association of Neurological Sciences of Ethiopia (ANSE) hosted the RTC at the Black Lion Hospital in Addis Ababa.

Following the EFNS policy for RTCs, the African colleagues were invited to submit two topics for the RTC. The 2009 RTC addressed Stroke and Epilepsy. The RTC offered European and African faculty members the opportunity to share their knowledge and experience encouraging neurologists, neurologists in training and neighbouring specialists to excellence in practice and research.

The RTC was organized and chaired by Prof. Jean-Michel Vallat (France) who heads the EFNS Task Force "Africa & Neurology". Representatives from the EFNS, the World Federation of Neurology (WFN), the Pan-African Association of Neurological Sciences (PAANS), the International Brain Research Organisation (IBRO), the Association of Neurology Societies of Ethiopia (ANSE) and the University of Addis Ababa took part in the RTC and expressed shared opinions on the great value of such RTCs. EFNS staff Ms. E. Sipido (Italy) and E. Mueller (Austria) as well as Drs Mehila Zebengus (Ethiopia) and M. Zenebe (Ethiopia) provided invaluable logistical help for the smooth running of the RTC.

Over 120 attendees consisting of neurology and neurosurgery trainees, psychiatrists and general practitioners, AAU faculty members and specialists from Ethiopia and its neighbouring countries benefited from the RTC. Thanks to IBRO's financial support, nine neurology trainees from Kenya, Cameroon, Uganda and Malawi could also attend the course.

This 2nd RTC also followed the structure that brought plenary lectures in the morning followed by clinical case discussions in the afternoon. The morning session of the first day, dedicated to Stroke, saw the participation of Prof. J. De Reuck (Belgium), Th. Adoukonou (Benin), R. Kalaria (UK), Y. Samson (France) and Girish Modi (South Africa). In the afternoon session, dedicated to the discussion of clinical cases related to the morning lectures, the faculty members were joined by colleagues from the Addis Ababa University, Kenya and Uganda.

The interactivity and open interest of the attendees during the clinical case discussions was extremely positive and the question for more time to be dedicated to these highly interactive sessions arose many times. The attendees also asked for time to submit their own clinical cases to the faculty members in order to obtain input and answers to difficult case reports.

Epilepsy was addressed on the second day. Professors P. Boon (Belgium), Ch. Baumgartner (Austria) A. Gallo Diop (Senegal and R. T Haimanot (Ethiopia) gave the morning lectures. Clinical case discussions were presented in the afternoon and Ethiopian colleagues joined the faculty.

On Saturday morning an open discussion and interactive session between students and faculty members took place. It was also the ideal platform for delegates from the participating organizations to express their satisfaction with the RTCs and to identify several practical issues and difficulties related to neurology in Africa. The importance to take the knowledge gained at the course into research and clinical work was stressed.

Prof. Njamshi, PAANS delegate and Prof. A. Gallo Diop expressed the strong wish to take the EFNS RTC's initiative ahead. Prof. JM Vallat brought the candidacy of Prof. B. Kouassi (Côte d'Ivoire) to host the 3rd RTC to the attention of all. WFN and IBRO confirmed their wish to work with EFNS towards the next RTC. The African colleagues will be consulted with regard to the topics to be addressed.

Jean-Michel Vallat and Evelyn Sipido

