

Pancreas 2000 – A New Concept for Education and Development in Pancreatology

T. Gasslander^{a,b} B. Holmberg^c J. Permert^b

^aDepartment of Surgery, Östergötland/Vrinnevi Hospital, Norrköping, ^bCenter for Surgical Science, Karolinska Institutet at Karolinska University Hospital, Huddinge, and ^cSolvay-Pharma AB, V. Frölunda, Sweden

During the last decades the number of active scientists within pancreatology has decreased in Europe and the age of the active scientists has increased. To guarantee the future of clinical pancreatology and pancreatic research, the educational program 'Pancreas 2000' started in August 1999. This is a new concept for continuous collaboration between the university (Karolinska Institutet) and the pharmacological industry (Solvay Pharmaceuticals) with the purpose of creating an international network of physicians/scientists interested in pancreatology and thus to contribute to a positive development of European pancreatology. This is a true collaboration, scientific as well as economic, as the program is sponsored partly by the respective departments of the participants and partly by the industry.

The program is designed to stimulate development in especially three areas: pancreatology, scientific thinking and group leadership. The program, of which the 3rd course now is running, has recruited 22–25 young physicians/scientists to each course. They work together with 10 senior pancreatologists, the mentors. The mentors are actively contributing to the lectures and discussions and, furthermore, to every meeting special guests (world leading pancreatologists) are also invited to give lectures. Associated to the program is one leadership expert, who participates in every meeting, and a statistician. One program runs over two and a half years during which the

group meets at six 3-day meetings. These takes place at the different universities where the mentors are working. To the first course, which started in August 1999, participants were recruited from the Nordic and Baltic countries, to the second and 3rd courses participants from several northern European countries, including Germany, Switzerland, UK, France, and the Czech republic, were invited.

Along with pancreatological education and leadership training the participants also plan and carry through scientific projects in network-based groups of 5–6 persons, guided by two mentors. This implies brain-storming for research ideas (first meeting), implement ideas to research protocols, apply for ethical approval and funding, realise the projects and write a manuscript suitable for submission. The scientific projects also runs between the meetings and the aim is to finish the different projects during the two and a half years. This has, however, not always been possible. Some of the groups have thus continued and finished their projects outside the timeframe of the six meetings but still within the Pancreas 2000 network. This far, 13 different projects have been initiated and of these 5 have been accepted or published [1–5] and 4 have been, or will soon be, submitted [6–9]. One study of risk factors, predictors and course in ERCP-induced acute pancreatitis is ongoing and three of the initiated projects will probably not be completed.

The concept of Pancreas 2000 has been successful. The aim to create a European-wide pancreatic network has succeeded. Pancreas 2000 now has its own homepage, www.pancreas2000.org/. Several high quality research projects have been initiated and carried through and a majority of the participants, up to now in total 56, has continued with pancreatic research. Exchange of ideas

and pancreatologists on different levels between the universities has taken place. The project has meant a development for Swedish pancreatology and stimulated cooperation between different Swedish and European institutions. We now have a pancreatic network in Europe and thus a very good base for future research and development in this field.

References

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