

Immunology from the East

The *European Journal of Immunology* invited representatives of two members of the International Union of Immunological Societies (IUIS), Japan and Turkey (also an EFIS member), to present their societies in this month's 'News and EFIS' section. Below the organising committees are introduced, they describe to us what activities were organised for the Day of Immunology, and give us an insight into the promotion of immunology in their respective countries.

Japanese Society for Immunology goes public: Immunology outreach in Japan

In Japan, the period that spans the last week of April and the first week of May is a public holiday called the “Golden Week”. This year we enjoyed brilliant weather all over the country during this holiday. In the midst of this week, the Japanese Society for Immunology (JSI) organized a novel outreach activity, the *Men-eki Fushigi Mirai* (Fig. 1), which literally translates into “Immunity, Wonder, and Future”. The *Men-eki Fushigi Mirai* was the first JSI-sponsored education activity that was aimed at promoting mutual and direct communication between immunologists and the public, and was coordinated with the Global Day of Immunology 2007 proposed by the EFIS and the IUIS. *Men-eki Fushigi*

Mirai was held for two days from May 3, 2007 at Nippon Kagaku Miraikan, The National Museum of Emerging Science and Innovation, in Tokyo. We displayed approximately 50 educational panels specifically made for this occasion, in eight sections ranging from basic immunology to advanced clinical applications (Fig. 2). Free printouts of the panels were given to all of the visitors. We also displayed real lymphoid tissues and cultured immune cells under various types of microscopes, live animals, and hand-made models of lymphocyte-dendritic cell interactions (Fig. 3).

Professor Hiroshi Kiyono was among many leading immunologists who presented one of a series of 28 short-talks

on topics such as mucosal immunity and its potential use for making painless vaccines (Fig. 4).

A total of approximately 100 JSI members (investigators and graduate students in an approximately 2:1 ratio) volunteered to make this event happen. The attendance was boosted by nice weather, with approximately 3000 visitors enjoying the event (Fig. 4, Table 1).

Aside from this landmark event in the capital city of Tokyo, the JSI Committee on Public Affairs organized five additional outreach occasions in local cities throughout Japan, including visiting lectures at high schools in Kyoto, and a small-scale Science Cafe on immunology in Tokushima (Table 1). Approximately 720 citizens in those cities enjoyed the events during the holiday season. It is notable that we had more participants (totaling approximately 3670) to these activities than to the annual JSI meetings (2600–2800 in the last three years). Feedback during the *Men-eki Fushigi Mirai* showed that approximately 90% of the attendees became interested in immunology during their visit to the event (858 out of 962 questionnaire responses), and approximately 95% of the visitors said they really enjoyed themselves (898 out of 947 responses). Many visitors mentioned that they favored and appreciated having direct conversations with immunologists and making microscopic observations of living cells and real tissues. More than 95% of the JSI members who volunteered at the *Men-eki Fushigi Mirai* and related events also expressed delight in being able to communicate with the



Figure 1. *Men-eki Fushigi Mirai* Flyer (left), and Nippon Kagaku Miraikan in Tokyo, the venue for the *Men-eki Fushigi Mirai* (right).

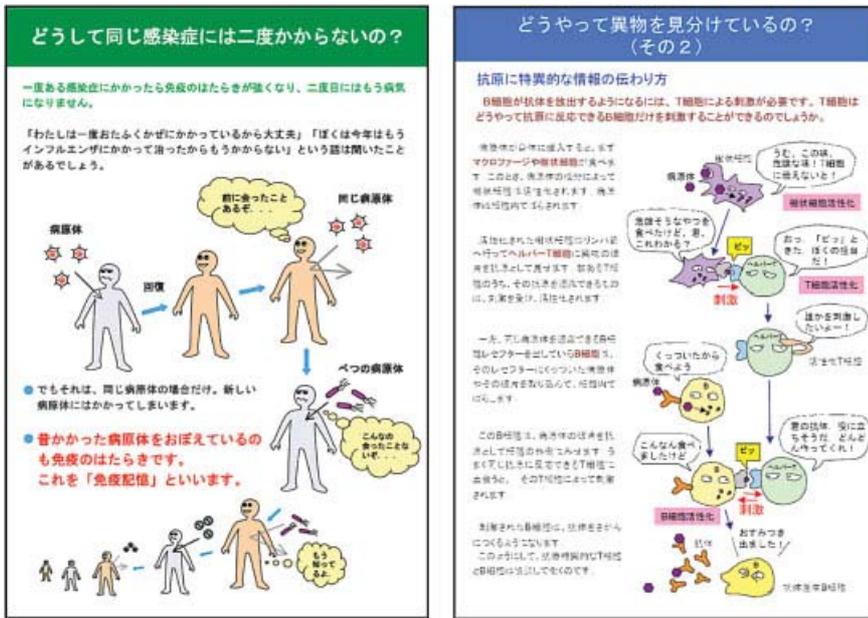


Figure 2. Examples of panels displayed at *Men-eki Fushigi Mirai*: (Left) 'How are we immune to secondary infection?' and (right) 'How does our immune system distinguish between self and non-self substances?'

Table 1. *Men-eki Fushigi Mirai* and related outreach activities of the JSI in Spring 2007

Outreach activity	City	Date	Number of visitors
<i>Men-eki Fushigi Mirai</i>	Tokyo	May 3 and 4	~3,000
Open-campus lecture and exhibition	Sapporo	April 28	~50
Visiting lecture at a high school	Kyoto	April 28	80
Science Cafe on immunology	Tokushima	April 21	26
Public lecture	Kumamoto	April 28	~450
Visiting lecture at a high school	Okinawa	April 25	71
Various outreach activities	6 cities in Japan	April 21 to May 4	~3670 in total

visitors and found the event highly successful. The majority of the visitors and the volunteers voiced their interest in seeing another *Men-eki Fushigi Mirai* in the near future, hopefully within the next year. We are certainly excited about the responses, and hope to establish the *Men-eki Fushigi Mirai* as a regular activity of the JSI.

Finally, we would like to express our sincere appreciation to the leadership of EFIS and IUIS in propagating outreach activities of immunology at a global level. Immunology, *men-eki-gaku*, in Japan is going public! For further information please visit our website at <http://www.soc.nii.ac.jp/jsi2/english/index.htm>

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Figure 3. Microscopic observations of microinjection experience (left), live animal tanks (middle), and lymphocyte-dendritic cell models (right) at the *Men-eki Fushigi Mirai* exhibition.



Figure 4. Exhibition (left panel) and a short talk (right panel) from Professor Hiroshi Kiyono on mucosal immunity and its potential use for making painless vaccines at the *Men-eki Fushigi Mirai*.

Presenting the Turkish Society of Immunology

The Turkish Society of Immunology (TSI) is one of the oldest scientific associations in Turkey. Its inception can be traced back to the early 1970s when a small group of enthusiastic scientists interested in the clinical and basic aspects of immunology began to meet regularly to share their knowledge and discuss their experiences. These pioneer scientists formed the core founder members of the Society, which was established in 1974 under the auspices of Prof. Dr. Asuman Müftüoğlu in Istanbul. The Turkish Society of Immunology has now become of age, so to say, by entering its 34th year as it continues to flourish with over 450 members.

The head office of the TSI is located in the heart of Turkey's capital, Istanbul. The Executive Committee is comprised of seven dedicated acting members Prof. Günnur Deniz (President), Prof. Aydan İkinciogullari (Vice President), Dr. Gaye Erten (General Secretary), Dr. M. Cem Ar (Treasurer), Assoc. Prof. Nerin Bahçeciler (Associate), Assoc. Prof. Barbaros

Oral (Associate), and Dr. Gülderen Yanikkaya-Demireland (Associate). The Executive Committee plans, co-ordinates and performs all of the activities of the Society under the presidency of Prof. Günnur Deniz.

TSI also has working groups in different fields of immunology such as Laboratory Immunology, Flow Cytometry, Clinical Immunology, Immunodeficiencies and Molecular Immunology. These working groups consist of experts in the mentioned specialised fields and their aim is to reach higher standards in specific areas of immunology through practice and education. According to this fact, the TSI is organising the “1st Turkish-US Flow Cytometry Workshop” in collaboration with Istanbul University (Immunology Department of the Institute for Experimental Medicine and Istanbul Medical Faculty) and Miami University on October 25–28, 2007. The meeting will last for four days and will bring together national and international speakers. The major goal of this



A poster about B cells that was displayed during the Day of Immunology, in Istanbul, 2007

meeting is to promote interactions between scientists performing flow cytometry applications on the cell cycle, DNA content measurement, malignant diseases, signal transduction, stem cells, and drug resistance.

Some of the primary aims of the Society are to develop and maintain the highest standards in the practice and teaching of experimental and clinical immunology in Turkey. We intend to organise educational seminars nationwide in order to raise awareness in immunology and provide a more even geographical spread of immunology-related medical services across the country. The TSI would like to encourage “young” scientists to research in the



Day of Immunology, Istanbul, 2006



Day of Immunology, Istanbul, 2007

fields of experimental and clinical immunology, promote collaboration between clinical immunologists and basic scientists, and to foster and help flourish working relationships between immunologists in Turkey and other countries. Our overall objective is to be a recognised authority and an active policy maker in the field of immunology.

The TSI shares the values of EFIS and IUIS, and participates in their activities to be a global player in the field of immunology.

The TSI with its seminars, local workshops and national congresses, as well as various forms of scholarship and sponsorship for young immunologists, furthers the development and practice of immunology across Turkey by helping to provide the needed tools for scientists to keep up with the increasing pace of developments in the field. Our Society organised monthly scientific meetings at the Cerrahpaşa Medical Faculty, Istanbul University from 1990–94 within the framework of its education policy. Since 1996, the Society has been organising biennial Practical Immunology Courses.

Activities and meetings are announced through our web-site (www.turkimmunoloji.org.tr) and the “Bulletin of Immunology” with contributions from post-graduate and PhD students. Furthermore, since 2000 the TSI has been holding Regional Immunology Meetings two or three times a year at universities throughout the more rural areas of Turkey.

The *Turkish Journal of Immunology*, which was established in 1996, is published in English twice a year, and is the official journal of the TSI. The journal is intended to be a platform through which to exchange ideas, discuss “hot” topics and share information and observations in immunology, both nationally and internationally.

The TSI has organised 18 international immunology congresses. National immunology congresses of the TSI take place every two years and are hosted in different cities within Turkey. The congresses have become the greatest event of the Turkish immunological community with a contribution from invited national and international speakers. The next TSI congress will be held from November 21 to 24, 2007 in Antalya.

TSI has been a member of EFIS and IUIS since 1971 and 1977, respectively. The Society also became a member of the Balkan Association of Immunological Societies (BAIS) in 1996 and the President of TSI, Prof. Günnur Deniz, became the vice-president of BAIS in the last election. The TSI, having hosted the 5th European Immunology Congress in 1982 and the 5th Balkan Immunology Congress in 2003, has demonstrated experience in organising events of this magnitude.

TSI has also been celebrating the Day of Immunology by organising conferences, seminars and site visits to schools

in order to raise public awareness of immunology. In 2006 we held a “One day public education” activity in the conference hall at the Taksim entrance of the Istanbul underground. Using audiovisual techniques, we explained to the public the functions and importance of the immune system. Some of our members also delivered speeches about the immune system on radio and TV programmes. The press release of TSI on the importance of the immune system has been published in different local and national news papers.



A stand at Profilo Shopping centre, Istanbul, Day of Immunology, 2007

In 2007, we celebrated the “Day of Immunology” by organising public meetings in five different cities. We also visited schools during the week days, held interactive seminars and distributed booklets explaining the main functions of the immune system. We also opened a stand in one of the largest shopping malls of Istanbul promoting immunology. There we distributed “Day of Immunology” badges and T-shirts.

The Day of Immunology has been an excellent way for the TSI to develop our primary aims and we look forward to organising many more in the future.

Günnur Deniz

President of the TSI

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37th Annual Meeting of the German Society for Immunology

This meeting will be held in **Heidelberg, Germany** from **September 5 to 8, 2007** in the Ruprecht-Karls-Universität. The preliminary scientific programme includes seven symposia, 32 workshops and lunchtime seminars and tutorials. The final programme will be published on the website by the end of August 2007.

For any further information or questions please contact the conference secretary Mrs. Sonia Aliaga, e-mail: dgfi2007@uni-hd.de or visit <http://www.dgfi.dbkr.de>