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and C). Her findings are currently being prepared for publication. In addition she applied PCR-fingerprinting to study the relatedness of serial isolates obtained from clinical patients in Colombia and Peru, showing that each patient was infected with a single isolate. Similar findings were obtained in earlier studies carried out by Dr Ricardo Pereira Igreja from Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in Dr Meyer's lab. Alexandra Castañeda also conducted PCR studies to determine the mating types of the Colombian isolates using primers specific to the mating type locus of *C. neoformans*.

Ms Castañeda, Professor Castañeda and Dr Meyer would like to thank ISHAM for providing the fellowship to support Ms. Castañeda for her stay in Australia, hence enabling the project to be completed successfully. They would also like to thank all participating laboratories from the Latin American/Spanish cryptococcal study group for collecting and providing the strains.

**Alexandra Castañeda, Elizabeth Castañeda
and Wieland Meyer**

2nd European Workshop on Molecular Mycology

The 2nd European Workshop on "Modern Taxonomic Tools and Molecular Mycology in Diagnosis, Treatment, Epidemiology and Prevention of Fungal Diseases" was held from 4th to 8th November 2003, in the Mycology Reference Laboratory of the Microbiology department at the Medical School in Athens, Greece. ISHAM contributed sponsorship for this workshop, in addition to the first workshop held in April 2003.

Despite the frantic preparations for the forthcoming Olympic Games, in Athens, the scientific organizing committee succeeded in putting together an

educational and very topical workshop. The workshop attracted participants from both European and non-European countries, including Romania, Israel, Turkey, and Italy, as well as Greece.

Dr Aristeia Velegraki, who had the original idea for the workshop, aimed to provide an opportunity for the exchange of knowledge and the provision of training in basic and clinical mycology.

The workshop began with an introduction, given by Dr Aristeia Velegraki, in memoriam to Professor Glyn Evans, who had been a faculty member before his death in August 2003. The workshop covered many aspects of mycology and provided the participants with a global perspective on antifungal susceptibility, epidemiology and molecular taxonomy. Dr Chris Hitchcock (Pfizer, UK) gave a very interesting lecture on "Genomics and the challenge of drug discovery". Dr Wieland Meyer (Sydney, Australia) presented an excellent practical approach to the use of basic genetics and molecular biology in modern taxonomy. Dr Vincent Robert (CBS, The Netherlands) gave a very educational lecture on the difficult field of data processing and management of heterogeneous data, for example morphological, physiological, ecological, molecular, taxonomic and bibliographic data. Dr Ruth Ashbee (Leeds, UK) gave an interesting lecture on the epidemiology and immunology of diseases associated with *Malassezia*.

The lectures and practical sessions were well structured and useful to all the participants, despite their varied backgrounds. The practical sessions were particularly interesting as they detailed modern diagnostic techniques for antifungal susceptibility testing and molecular taxonomy. The online demonstration of sequence data handling and real-time PCR were especially informative.

The workshop closed with a farewell dinner in the restaurant "Ancient Tastes" with a meal composed entirely of recipes from ancient Greece.

For me personally as a fungal taxonomist, the workshop was an excellent opportunity to discuss several issues. First, it gave an insight into how to combine data from conventional and molecular tests. Secondly, it provided information on how to select the appropriate molecular tools and also how to organize a molecular laboratory tailored to the requirements of different users.

Much of modern fungal taxonomy and epidemiology is based on strain data and the workshop helped to provide the training necessary for this data to be generated. It also provided an opportunity for participants to establish links with colleagues in other countries to allow exchange of data internationally.

Olga Kostoula

5th National Conference of the Society for Indian Human and Animal Mycologists (SIHAM)

The Mycology Division of the Department of Medical Microbiology, Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and Research, Chandigarh, organized the 5th National Conference of SIHAM from 12th to 14th March 2004 in Chandigarh, Northern India. The theme of the conference was "Challenges ahead against flourishing fungi". A pre-conference CME meeting on "Recent developments in Medical and Veterinary Mycology" was also held at the same venue on the 11th of March. Eminent mycologists from India and abroad participated in the conference, as well as nearly 200 delegates from different centers in India.

The conference began by paying homage to two great medical mycologists Dr Libero Ajello and Professor E.G.V. Evans, who passed away in recent times. International Society for Human and Animal Mycology (ISHAM) had arranged the "ISHAM Glyn Evans Memorial Lecture" in memory of Professor Evans, and the first lecture, "Travel the world, dine on keratin and become a derma star", was delivered by Dr David Ellis during this conference. Dr Malcolm Richardson, General Secretary of ISHAM chaired the session. The organizer of the conference initiated the "Thirumalachar Memorial Lecture" in honor of the great Indian mycologist, Dr M.J. Thirumalachar, and Dr Arvind A. Padhye delivered the lecture on "Diagnostic Mycology: Past and Present". Dr H.S. Randhawa chaired the session.

The scientific program of the conference included symposia, free oral papers and posters, and a mycology quiz. Symposia topics included "Fungal infections: Indian scenario", "Epidemiology of fungal diseases", "Diagnosis of deep-seated fungal infections", "Dermatomycosis", "Fungal infections in AIDS", and "Management of fungal diseases". Twenty-five oral papers and 36 posters were presented during the conference. Symposia and free



Photo of the participants and faculty of the workshop (courtesy of Dr Wieland Meyer).