

4th Tecan Symposium enjoys Chinese success

Tecan recently hosted the fourth annual Tecan Symposium, welcoming leading genomics, proteomics and biobanking experts from around the globe to discuss this year's topic; *Translational Medicine: From bench to bedside and back*.

Held outside of Europe for the first time, the 2011 Tecan Symposium was in Shanghai, China, reflecting Tecan's strong commitment to the Asian market and the growing importance of China as a major center for genomics and clinical research. The two-day event was divided into four topics – current trends in translational research, clinical aspects of translational medicine, the growing importance of biobanking and the impact of technology on translational science – and explored a wide range of current hot topics in this fast-growing area of life science research.

Following a brief welcome from CEO Thomas Bachmann, the first day's presentations started with a short retrospective on the field of genomics from Professor Huanming Yang, President of China's very own

'genome factory', the Beijing Genomics Institute (BGI). Professor Yang highlighted how the publication of an organism's genome leads to an increase in research on that organism, as well as the rapid development of genomics technologies since the beginning of the human genome project over 20 years ago. Continuing the technological theme, Dr Konstantinos Petritis from the Translational Genomics Research Institute (TGen) in Arizona, USA, discussed an innovative solution for protein biomarker verification and validation, stressing the importance of laboratory automation in achieving the required throughput and reproducibility. This was followed by Dr Mark Templin from the University of Tübingen, Germany, whose group is using protein microarray technologies to investigate potential disease and toxicological markers,



Dr Michael Christman discussed the current and future roles of biobanks



Tecan CEO Thomas Bachmann welcomed delegates to the 4th Tecan Symposium



Dr Kevin Rosenblatt talked about some promising biomarkers to predict the risk of preterm birth

taking advantage of a wealth of new and archived histological specimens to accelerate biomarker discovery and validation. The session was concluded by Dr Kevin Rosenblatt from the University of Texas, USA, who presented data on a recent study into circulating biomarkers which could help to predict the risk of preterm birth, potentially helping to alleviate a major cause of infant morbidity around the world.

The second session kicked off with a live teleconference with Dr Paul Rhyne from Bristol-Myers Squibb, USA, who provided an insight into the practical considerations of using biomarkers in a clinical setting, and was followed by a presentation on the latest biomarker discovery applications of SUPRA and MALDI mass spectrometry techniques from Dr Patrick Ducoroy of the

Clinical Innovation Proteomic Platform (CLIPP), France. Mr Shailesh Maingi from the Clinical Trial Division of LabCorp then discussed the current challenges and possible future direction of personalized medicine, followed by some practical examples of how existing genomics knowledge is being put into practice for diagnostics, prognostics and epidemiology investigation from Dr Christopher Wong from the Genomics Institute of Singapore.

The second day of the Symposium concentrated on biobanking, and was begun by Dr Michael Christman, President and CEO of the Coriell Institute for Medical Research, USA, one of the world's largest biobanks. Dr Christman looked at the current and likely future roles of biobanks in realizing the potential of genomics and proteomics

discoveries, reminding delegates that, while the cost of sequencing a genome will soon be below \$1000, the cost of interpreting that data is still millions of dollars. Dr Mark Cosentino from SAIC-Frederick, USA, then discussed the recent technological advances in biobanking itself, shattering the myth that a biobank is just a room full of freezers. Dr Mark Divers from the Karolinska Institute Biobank, Sweden, reinforced this message with a look at a number of collaborative research initiatives being undertaken by biobanks around the globe, highlighting the many and varied challenges that face these large multi-center collaborations. The session was concluded by Dr Frank Rühli, who took a step back through time to show how ancient biobanks – mummified remains from thousands of years ago – still hold valuable information about the evolution of many diseases. ▶



The Symposium also provided plenty of time for informal discussion of each day's topics



Many Tecan staff, including Dr Martin Brusdeilins (Tecan CSO, left) and Raymond Chan (Tecan Head of China and South East Asia, right), were on hand to talk to customers about the current needs in translational medicine



The new HP D300 Digital Dispenser generated a lot of interest amongst delegates



Shanghai offered a unique cultural experience for delegates

◀ The final session looked at some exciting recent technological advances, and was opened by Professor Yi Lu from the University of Illinois, USA, who showed how even well established technologies such as the near ubiquitous glucose meter can be used for novel diagnostic applications. This theme was carried on by Professor Changhui Yang from the California Institute of Technology (Caltech), USA, who demonstrated how the power of another common technology – cell phone imaging sensor chips – could be used as an alternative to conventional microscopes for a range of cell culture studies. This was followed by a potential application of this novel imaging technology from Dr Tarik Issad, who described a BRET technique for the real-time study of protein-protein interactions in living cells. The last speaker of the Symposium was Dr Colin Campbell from the University

of Edinburgh, who discussed an exciting joint project to identify the chickenpox- and shingles-causing Varicella-zoster virus using protein microarrays. Rather fittingly, this collaboration was first conceived during a chance meeting at the very first Tecan Symposium in Zurich, highlighting the scientific value and excellent networking opportunities offered by this innovative event.

Alongside the scientific content, Tecan's local representatives – Tecan (Shanghai) Trading Company Ltd – arranged a number of social events for delegates, including a river cruise to provide a more relaxed environment to discuss the day's topics, and a visit to a traditional Chinese tea house to celebrate the rich cultural heritage of Shanghai itself. Overall, the 4th Tecan Symposium was hailed a great success,

once again highlighting Tecan's innovation-driven, customer-focused approach.

To find out more about last year's Tecan Symposium, visit www.tecan.com/symposium2011



Dr Marina Lomtadze (left) from Delrus Inc., Tecan's distributor in Russia, and Professor Larisa Chernousova, Head of the Microbiology Department at the Central TB Research Institute of RAMS, enjoying the atmosphere at the tea house



A visit to a traditional Chinese tea house provided some local culture