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## Editorial

# “Beyond the limit of histochemistry”. The 14th International Congress of Histochemistry and Cytochemistry, Kyoto, Japan, August 26–29, 2012

Every four years the International Federation of Societies of Histochemistry and Cytochemistry ([www.ifshc.com](http://www.ifshc.com)) celebrates the highlight of its calendar with an international congress that brings together the largest gathering of histochemists from throughout the World. After almost half of century of such congresses, it is still always an exciting event that allows scientists the opportunity to learn about the latest trends, methods and equipment and to exchange ideas and meet with the leading histochemists. It is difficult to define what exactly constitutes a histochemist and what is histochemistry as the rate of new methodologies is changing so rapidly. All cell biologists are using histochemical techniques, though relatively few appreciate that they are in fact practicing histochemists or identify with this terminology.

Successive congresses of histochemistry in the last couple of decades have proved that this is always one of the most satisfying and enjoyable international meetings. I have fond memories of the recent congresses in York (UK) in 2000, San Diego (2004) and Gdansk (2008). The selection of speakers is always outstanding providing an update of developing topics and technologies. In both York and San Diego, plenary lectures were given by future Nobel laureates. Above all I think that these IFSHC congresses are so enjoyable because of their relatively small size (500–700 scientists) rather than the giga-enormous meetings of Cell Biology, Neurosciences, Cardiology or Dental Science where attendance can reach 25,000 or more. The small size results in less intense pressure, easy access to plenary sessions, fewer parallel sessions, time to see all the posters and ability to meet colleagues and enjoy the local hospitality.

The next congress (IHC2012) scheduled for Kyoto, Japan (August 26–29, 2012) will undoubtedly be a similar outstanding occasion. I can vouch for this personally owing to my involvement as a member of the IFSHC Executive Committee. The program is truly exciting with over ten plenary lectures by distinguished speakers from all over the world, eighteen symposia, and six workshops on state-of-the-art hot topics. The Kyoto meeting will provide an excellent opportunity to review and discuss recent revolutionary topics in histochemistry and cytochemistry. I am co-chairperson of a Symposium on Virtual Microscopy, which is being organized in conjunction with the Japanese Society for Telepathology and Virtual Microscopy. This is sponsored by Acta histochemica and will include the Acta histochemica invited lecture. In association with this Symposium, there will be a vendors' session with the leading

companies that produce scanning stage light microscopes and software. This will provide a unique opportunity to compare the various systems for telepathology, e-learning, archiving and research in virtual microscopy. We anticipate an excellent trade exhibition as so many of the major manufacturers of microscopes, imaging devices and diagnostic systems are based in Japan.

The Editors of all the leading histochemistry journals will again hold a round-table symposium on the status and future of histochemical publications. This is an open discussion where the audience can meet the editors, find out how to improve their manuscripts and chances for acceptance and hear about the current publication issues such as plagiarism, economics, open access, and copyright. I shall be the representative for Acta histochemica in this forum.

The future of histochemistry depends on the young generation and the IFSHC allows each member society to select a Young Histochemist to participate in the Congress. These Young Histochemists receive free registration and a monetary award to help cover in part the cost of airfare.

Kyoto is one of the more spectacular sites to hold a scientific meeting with its remarkable beauty and history with some 17 UNESCO World Heritage sites. It is the seventh largest city in Japan with a population of 1.4 million people. Enormous efforts have been made to preserve its countless historical temples, shrines and gardens to make it one of the leading tourist sites in the World (about 45 million visitors in 2007). Although Japan suffered a severe blow with the Tohoku 2011 earthquake and tsunami, Kyoto is very far from this region and we are reassured that it did not suffer physical damage or environmental pollution as a result of this disaster.

The Second Circular for IHC2012 is now available. I can heartily recommend this meeting to everybody who wants to be at the forefront of histochemistry and cytochemistry. If you have not yet visited Kyoto, then this is a great and enjoyable opportunity not to be missed. For further details see: [www.acplan.jp/ichc2012/](http://www.acplan.jp/ichc2012/)

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