

19th International Symposium on Cells of the Hepatic Sinusoid in June

The 19th International Symposium on Cells of the Hepatic Sinusoid (ISCHS 2017) will be held in Galway, Ireland from June 14th to 17th, 2017. The conference will be held in the National University of Ireland Galway Conference Centre on the University Campus. 2017 marks the 40th anniversary of the First International Kupffer Cell Symposium held in the Netherlands in 1977. One of the main themes of the 19th ISCHS will be the involvement of the gut microbiota in liver disease and in liver regeneration. **Registration is now open.** Full details regarding registration/benefits and abstract submission may be found on the conference website at: www.ischs2017.ie.



**KEY
DATES**

March 31 - Abstract Submission closes

April 1 - Early Bird Registration closes



Nominations Open: President-Elect (2017-19) and Secretary (2017-19)

Active members of ISHSR will be asked to cast their votes this spring for two positions. The positions include President-Elect (2017-2019) and Secretary (2017-2019). In preparation for these elections, nominees will soon be sought through email from the ISHSR office. Nominees for President-Elect must commit to host the International Symposium on Cells of the Hepatic Sinusoid in 2021 and to prepare sufficient financial resources required for the event.

Nominees are also sought for the post of Secretary. The Secretary must work with the ISHSR President and Treasurer to maintain the society activities including maintenance of the society Web site and membership roster; fund raising from industries and institutions; preparation, distribution, and collection of election ballots; and preparation and distribution of the annual newsletter. As a society member, you can nominate and vote. Please make sure your membership is renewed.

Professor Kenjiro Wake To Receive the EASL Recognition Award 2017

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It is my great pleasure to announce that Professor Kenjiro Wake will be conferred the 2017 European Association for the Study of the Liver (EASL) Recognition Award at the International Liver Congress, in Amsterdam this April. Professor Wake is the “father” of hepatic stellate cells. His significant contributions to our understanding of the cell biology of stellate cells include his “re”discovery of the cells and clarification of their fine three dimensional structure by utilizing ultrastructural and histochemical techniques. He has notably contributed to the development of our society, first as a member of the Scientific Organization Committee of the International Symposium on Cells of the Hepatic Sinusoid (ISCHS) from 1982 to 1998 and as President of the 7th ISCHS, which was held in Kyoto, Japan on September 4 – 8, 1994. The first EASL Recognition Award was introduced in 2006 during the 41st EASL Annual Meeting in Vienna. Since then, the Award has been bestowed

Kenjiro Wake, M.D., Ph.D.

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EASL Recognition Award 2017

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on thirty recipients based on their accomplishments, recognized and admired worldwide. Professor Kenjiro Wake is the first anatomist and Japanese scientist to receive this “*Ballon d'Or*” of Hepatology.

Kenjiro Wake was born in Osaka, Japan, in 1932. Today, at 84 years of age, he is still an active scientist. Dr. Wake obtained his MD (1958) and PhD (1963) from Osaka City University Medical School - my great senior and mentor. I am honored to share with you a brief summary of his scientific achievements.

In 1876, Carl von Kupffer first described stellate cells (*Sternzellen*) in the liver, using the gold chloride method. These star-shaped cells, located outside of liver sinusoids, were subsequently thought by von Kupffer to be liver macrophages. While at Osaka City University Medical School, Professor Kenjiro Wake rediscovered the original stellate cells.¹ In addition, Dr. Wake found that stellate cells were the same as Zimmermann's “pericytes”, Ito's “fat-storing cells” and Suzuki's “interstitial cells”, and most importantly, that stellate cells store vitamin A.

During his two year stay at Justus-Liebig University in Giessen studying with Professor A. Okschei as a Fellow of the Alexander V. Humboldt Foundation, Dr. Wake studied the sensory nervous system distribution in the pineal organ of lower vertebrates. While at Tokyo Medical and Dental University, Dr. Wake demonstrated the three dimensional structure of hepatic stellate cells, using the Golgi method and scanning electron microscopy. His work showed that the quiescent stellate cells consist of the cell body and several dendrite-like processes which encompass two or three sinusoids. Thorn-like microprojections, called “spines” protrude from the surface of the cells. A single stellate cell includes more than 300 of these spines, whose tips make contact with hepatocytes. A single stellate cell is in contact with two or three endothelial cells and with 20 to 40 hepatocytes. He termed this cellular complex the “stellate cell unit” or the “stellon”. Intralobular heterogeneity of stellate cells was also demonstrated. His group isolated and cultured hepatic stellate cells from rats and observed the production of extracellular matrix materials, including collagen types I, III and IV. In addition, Dr. Wake and his associates identified liver-associated NK cells and dendritic cells, and re-evaluated the classic reticulo-endothelial system (RES) theory to describe a new scavenger cell system, i.e. the endothelial cells of hepatic sinusoids, in addition to the macrophage system.

I first met Dr. Wake in his office at Tokyo Medical and Dental University in 1987, and he kindly introduced me to the International Kupffer Cell Symposium, the former name of the ISCHS. Since I first heard him speak in 1990 at the 5th ISCHS in Arizona, I have always been inspired by Professor Wake's amazing presentations of electron microscopic, histochemical and cell biology observations. He is truly an artist with an exceptional scientific insight. Dr. Wake's passion for science still strives; I hear he regularly examines human liver tissues under an electron microscope to this day. Based on his distinguished achievements, Dr. Wake was awarded the National Medal of Honor from the Emperor of Japan in 2012.

I am sure my admiration of him is shared by all the members of ISHSR and by scientists of hepatic stellate cell biology around the world. Dr. Kenjiro Wake is an anatomist and scientist with legendary SAMURAI spirit.

Selected references:

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4. Bhunchet E, Wake K (1992) Role of mesenchymal cell populations in porcine serum-induced rat liver fibrosis. *Hepatology* 16: 1452-1473.
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