Scientific Activities

"Facilitating the exchange of information"

ERS Scientific Committee

In the year 2004, the ERS Executive Committee (on the recommendation of the Scientific Committee) directed substantial resources to the scientific activities of the ERS, which are so important for the Society's mission to promote research and respiratory medicine in Europe. The total budget dedicated to scientific activities (at the discretion of the Scientific Committee) in 2004, amounted to over 1 million euros.

Funds were directed into four main areas to support respiratory medicine and science throughout Europe:

1. Task Forces
2. Research Seminars
3. The ERS Lung Science Conference
4. ERS Fellowships

The Scientific Committee (Chair, Assembly Heads, and Treasurer) administer these important and significant resources of the Society. Any application whether it be for a Task Force, Seminar or Fellowship is peer-reviewed before any decision is taken.

Assembly and Group Officers are dedicated to providing the highest-quality scientific programme for the Annual Congress

Scientific Assemblies

To facilitate exchange of information and knowledge among its members, the ERS created 10 scientific assemblies. The Assemblies serve as a forum and sit at the heart of the Society. They influence and guide its scientific direction.

An important part of the work of these Assemblies is to help nurture ERS Task Forces designed to address specific problems concerning lung health in Europe.

ERS/ATS joint guidelines on the diagnosis and treatment of COPD

The Executive Committee of the ERS in cooperation with the Board of Directors of the American Thoracic Society (ATS) endorsed a new set of guidelines on chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), which were finalised in 2004. "Standards for the diagnosis and treatment of patients with COPD" updated the respective sets of guidelines, produced by both societies, almost 10-years ago. During the last decade, many new concepts and therapeutic options in the field of COPD have been identified. Hence there was an urgent need for these guidelines to be updated. The guidelines were launched in May 2004, and are available as a "live" web-based document. An accompanying summary of the guidelines was published in the *European Respiratory Journal* in June 2004.

"There can be little doubt that the ERS is doing its very best to support research and training to fight respiratory disease in Europe"

Task Forces

The Society financially supports ERS members wishing to form Task Forces and produce position papers, statements or guidelines that subsequently become the official ERS documents on issues relating to respiratory medicine. These guidelines are extremely important as they enhance general scientific understanding, especially in areas where controversy exists or procedures are unclear. They also establish a consensus and are effective tools when combating disease at an international level. Task Force proposals go through a peer-review system before being presented to the Scientific Committee by the relevant Assembly Head and being approved by the Executive Committee.

Eight new Task Forces were approved by the Scientific Committee in the year 2004, with a total investment of €72,897 as shown in table 1. These Task Forces are expected to complete their work in 2005.

The ERS/ATS COPD Guidelines are available as a "live" web-based document.

Table 1 – Task Forces approved in 2004

Assembly	Task Force	Financial Support €
1.0 Clinical	Smoking-related interstitial lung disease (ATS/ERS)	7,516
2.0 Respiratory Intensive Care	Ethics and decision making in end stage lung disease	14,582
5.0 Clinical Allergy & Immunology	Outcomes for COPD pharmacological trials: from lung function to biomarkers	26,349
	The assessment of cough	
	ERS/ATS Asthma control and exacerbations: standardising endpoints for clinical asthma trials	
6.0 Occupation & Epidemiology	Guidelines for smoking cessation in patients with respiratory diseases	23,446
	COPD epidemiology in Eastern and Western Europe	
7.0 Paediatrics	ERS/ATS Working group on infant and young children pulmonary function testing	1,004

Participants at the Lung Science Conference

Research Seminars

The purpose of Research Seminars is to gather a small group of well-established and preferably young investigators with a view to addressing scientific topics in-depth, including recently published work and research in progress. There is the ultimate aim of breaking new ground. Research Seminars are held over two days and take place in easily accessible European cities.

Three Research Seminars were held in the financial year 2004:

1) **The bronchial smooth muscle in airway responsiveness** (Gothenburg, Sweden)
   June 19–22, 2004
   Participants: 50
   Budget allocated: €38,628
2) **Genotyping and phenotyping of diffuse parenchymal lung diseases** (Freiburg, Germany)
   November 13–14, 2004
   Participants: 60
   Budget allocated: €43,778
3) **Adaptations to hypoxia** (Palermo, Italy)
   March 4–5, 2005
   Participants: 70
   Budget allocated: €48,077

> www.ersnet.org/education & research

ERS Lung Science Conference

The focus of the ERS Lung Science Conference is basic science. The Conference combines state-of-the-art lectures from internationally renowned scientists, together with poster and oral presentations from young clinical and non-clinical scientists, with much time for discussion. This dynamic conference attracts exciting new science and the opportunity for participants from many different disciplines to meet and discuss basic scientific processes and form future collaborations.

The Second ERS Lung Science Conference held in Taormina (Sicily) at the end of March 2004 was very successful, attracting over 170 participants. This Conference continued the series on lung inflammation begun in 2003, the specific theme being "Application of our knowledge of the basic processes of lung inflammation in lung diseases". The conference was again held in the beautiful surroundings of Taormina, Sicily, enhancing the participants enjoyment of the event.

The 3rd ERS Lung Science Conference held at the end of March 2005 completed the series on lung inflammation. A new series on Hypoxia in Lung Biology and Disease will begin in 2006.

Scientific Committee

Chair
Andrea Rossi

Gerhard W. Sybrecht
Ulrich Costabel
Tobias Welte
Monica Spiteri
Paolo Palange
Ratko Djukanovic
Benoit Nemery
Jorrit Gerritsen
Gilbert Massard
Rik Gosselink
Tom Schaberg

Andrea Rossi