

Iranian neurological events: The second Iranian congress of neuromuscular disorders

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Neuromuscular disorders represent a growing area of interest in Iran, a vast country with a population of 77 million characterized by its great ethnic variety and high consanguinity rate. The second Iranian congress of neuromuscular disorders and electrodiagnosis was held during 4-8 July 2012 in Tehran and was supported by the Iranian Neurological Association and the Institut de Myologie in Paris, France. Approximately, 200 professionals, including adult neurologists, pediatric neurologists, human geneticists, rehabilitation physicians, radiologists, and general practitioners, from across Iran and other countries contributed to this event. International participants were J. Andoni Urtizberea, Shahram Attarian, France Leturcq, and Pierre Carlier from France, Kian Salajegheh from the USA, Haluk Topaloglu from Turkey, Ziad Nahas from Lebanon, Elena Zaklyminkaya from Russia, and Bruno Reversade from Singapore. Individuals with neuromuscular diseases and the Iranian Muscular Dystrophy Association were also active contributors.

The five-day congress was coordinated by Shariar Nafissi, Massoud Houshmand, Farzad Fatehi, and J. Andoni Urtizberea and aimed to update the Iranian medical community about recent developments in the

neuromuscular field and to create more public awareness in Iran. To ensure these goals were achieved, Iranian media gave the congress significant coverage, the positive results of which were felt both by the organizers and the patients themselves. Medical universities and hospitals across Iran were also informed and the expectations of the patients, advocacy groups and medical doctors with regards to accuracy of diagnosis and the implementation of proper patient management have been raised.

The meeting comprised three distinct sections:

1. An electrodiagnosis workshop including muscle sonography, muscle magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) (by Pierre Carlier), single fiber electromyography (EMG) (by Shahriar Nafissi), and EMG guided botulinum toxin injection (by Hamid Noorollahi).

2. Clinical aspects of neuromuscular disorders such as myopathies, polyneuropathies, motor neuron disorders, and neuromuscular junction disorders. Many topics were covered by 30 lectures delivered during six sessions featuring Iranian and guest speakers.

3. Myology from a clinical and genetic perspective. The importance of efficient networking and dissemination of knowledge on many occasions was stressed. Two very exciting interactive clinical workshops were organized during these last two days. This, allowed Iranian specialists to present attention-grabbing solved or unsolved case reports.

The meeting undoubtedly paved the way for a better cooperation between different local

stakeholders with two immediate objectives: more accurate diagnosis, notably at the molecular level, and better daily care for patients. Additionally, important

collaborative links with European myology teams were developed and built throughout the congress.

