Meeting Report

Middle East Society of Organ Transplantation Meeting

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Aside from superlative sideshows, the recent Middle East Society of Organ Transplantation (MESOT) meeting in Shiraz (November 17 – 20, 2008) was an outstanding get-together for a) those who know, b) those who have done remarkable things in this field, and c) those who are just fascinated by the enormous possibilities of human organ give and take affair.

Attendees, foreign and domestic, were heavy weight champions. It was a fair match and all sides came out winning. Interestingly enough the Iranian speakers managed to hold their own in the contest. A true mark of the success of such scientific meetings is the scarcity of people outside the meeting halls during the conference sessions. Full or nearly full attendance in three simultaneously running presentations marked the conference. It was difficult to know who was, and who was not, the key speaker. Over 520 liver transplants, with a remarkable success rate, carried out by Dr. Malek-Hosseini's team in Shiraz, and 2500 bone marrow transplants by Dr. Ghavamzadeh from Tehran University, dominated the meetings. As expected Dr. Starzl shone as the world's transplant champion simply because of his absolute control of the purely scientific aspects of transplantation. Of the socioethic angle of organ transplantation nothing was left unsaid.

To remember, cardiac surgery and organ transplantation took off about the same time in mid twentieth century, as the two great scientific medical innovations. The former seems to have reached its apogee. Transplantation, on the other hand, appears to be just taking off. Maybe the reason is that people have only one heart, but many organs they can share with each other. Equally important is the fact that cardiac surgery remains in the domain of a few highly-specialized surgeons and cardiologists. Transplantation is the business of gastroenterologists, nephrologists, pulmonologists, reconstructive surgeons, ethicists, and someday, hopefully, neurologists and neurosurgeons as well. More to the point, transplantation is something to which all countries can contribute, be it the manner of organ procurement, technical innovations, or the vast field of immunosupression. This, undoubtedly, is the real reason for MESOT thriving as a powerful and attractive assembly of the ever expanding transplantation business, which most certainly will never face a recession.

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