

## President's Column

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Dear ASHI Members,

Spring has come and we all should enjoy the beauty and vitality that surrounds us. It is early May as I write this, my second presidential column. I have to admit, time goes by very fast when you are busy and having fun.

The ASHI co-sponsored symposium with the International Society of Heart and Lung Transplant (ISHLT) on the role of HLA and non-HLA antibodies in heart and lung transplantation, held in Vienna April 9, was very successful. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Drs. Nancy Reinsmoen, Marlene Rose and Ron Kerman for their contributions. In spite of potential difficulties related to political and health issues, the meeting was well attended, generated excellent discussions, and provided an important forum for recognition of ASHI's expertise. A summary of the symposium will be published in the ISHLT journal.

A consensus meeting on "Humoral rejection and clinical significance in renal, heart and lung transplantation" was held April 23-24, in Bethesda, Md. This was a very exciting and intense meeting where about 80 participants from the various clinical transplant societies were assembled to discuss all aspects of detection, diagnosis and treatment of humoral rejection in solid organ transplantation. The attendees were divided into four working groups, each with a clear objective to accomplish. Each group prepared a detailed summary that was shared the second day with all participants. ASHI representation in the various groups was outstanding, and in addition to the consensus publication for the American Journal of Transplantation, there will be summaries that will be published in the next *ASHI Quarterly* and in *Human Immunology*. This was an excellent opportunity for us to learn from and share our expertise with our clinical and surgical colleagues. This forum also gave us the opportunity to guide the proposed clinical practice for recognition and treatment of humoral rejection. In addition to the important clinical implication, this meeting raised scientific issues and proposed new avenues for potential NIH-funded research. I would like to thank all ASHI participants and FAIT for their support. I would also like to extend our thanks and gratitude to the co-organizers, Dr. Frank Delmonico and Dr. Steve Takemoto, who helped raise the funds and facilitated this clinically important consensus meeting.

The chair of the ASHI Scientific Affairs Committee, Dr. Peter Nickerson, together with Drs. Bob Bray and Howie Gebel, finished the white paper "Pre-transplant assessment of donor reactive antibody in renal transplantation: contra-indication versus risk." In addition, Dr. Nancy Reinsmoen, assisted by Dr. Karen Nelson and myself, is completing a summary of the "Clinical significance of HLA antibody and crossmatch in heart

and lung transplantation." These papers are also reviewed by additional ASHI members and approved by the Board of Directors and the National Affairs Committee. The next important step will be the publication of these manuscripts in both sister society journals and in *Human Immunology*. With the increased clinical awareness of antibody-mediated risk of allograft dysfunction and the increasing need to cross the pre-formed antibody barrier, clinicians, surgeons and tissue typing personnel have to work together to provide the best clinical care.



ASHI members work hard as an integral part of the transplantation community. This year, our hard work will be recognized by the leaders of sister societies. The current president of ASTS, Dr. Jim Schulak, is planning in his address at the ATC meeting to mention ASHI as part of the "Teamwork in Transplantation." In addition, the AST board of directors "is interested in learning more about the important activities of ASHI as well as exploring potential areas of collaboration between our two societies." I was invited to make a short presentation at their board meeting prior to the ATC meeting in Washington D.C. The North American Transplant Coordinators Organization (NATCO) hosted the President's Council in August 2002 and AST is hosting the meeting during the ATC 2003. ASHI will participate in this meeting. This is an excellent opportunity to discuss important transplant-related issues that impact the field.

Our annual meeting is approaching and we are planning a very exciting one. I would like to highlight a very special event: the announcement of a new award in the name of Dr. Paul Terasaki, followed by the keynote address from Dr. Terasaki. In recognition of Dr. Terasaki's achievements in clinical transplantation, this new award will be established for a clinical scientist who has demonstrated major commitment and accomplishments in transplantation. Dr. Terasaki has pledged an endowment for supporting this award. I would like to thank Dr. Terasaki for his generous contribution to ASHI and Dr. Yuichi Iwaki for his help in facilitating this important acknowledgment of Dr. Terasaki's legacy.

Recently, I have had the opportunity to meet with representatives of various drug companies and explain ASHI's role in promoting education and laboratory expertise. We received an unrestricted educational grant for \$5,000 from **Fujisawa Healthcare Inc.** to support the International Immunogenetics Summer School in 2004, and additional funds from **SangStat Medical Corp.** (\$5,000) and **Novartis** (\$10,000) to

support the annual meeting. I am very pleased with this new initiative, and would like to extend special thanks to Jan Seng from Fujisawa, Kevin Campbell from SangStat, and Steve Takemoto, who facilitated the interaction with Iain McGill from Novartis. The silent auction that will take place at the banquet during the annual meeting will be an exciting event and the proceeds will also support the Immunogenetics Summer School.

Dr. Sandra Rosen-Bronson, the chair of the task force charged with improving the educational activities focusing on bone marrow transplantation, has been very busy. Several lectures and workshops on basic and advanced strategies of donor search were given in conjunction with the NMDP spring meeting for the transplant coordinators and also at the ASHI regional meeting in Atlanta. Dr. Rosen-Bronson and Linda Edwins presented on "Donor search strategies: finding the perfect match" and "Donor search strategies - a systematic approach." Dr. Carolyn Hurley gave a basic HLA lecture titled "Navigating your way through HLA" at the NMDP spring meeting. Furthermore, two workshops on the donor search process and strategies are planned for ASHI's annual meeting. Michelle Setterholm from NMDP, Sandra Rosen-Bronson, and Linda Edwins will coordinate these activities. ASHI and NMDP are at the initial stages of writing a series of joint publications addressing matching requirements for hematopoietic stem cell transplant, the laboratory's role in the process, and search strategies for finding the most suitable unrelated donor. Through these very valuable joint educational activities we hope to improve the communication and the relationship between HLA laboratories and transplant centers.

The National Affairs Committee has carefully reviewed the 32 proposals published by OPTN/UNOS for public comments. After two conference calls, and with a lot of help from Dr. Andrea Zachary, Dr. Mary Sue Leffel and Louise Jacobbi, ASHI responded. It is a privilege to be able to comment on policies in which we have expertise. We provided input on 15 of the proposals. In spite of limited time and other commitments, this wonderful team responded in a timely fashion.

CMS recently published the final rule regarding requirements for quality control provisions and laboratory qualifications. ASHI's Accreditation Review Board will review these changes and provide a summary in the *ASHI Quarterly* as well as updates through the various forums. We also sent a congratulatory note to Ms. Judith Yost for completion of the laboratory regulations. We thanked her agency for taking into

consideration ASHI's stand on maintaining the high quality of laboratory performance while providing the flexibility necessary for laboratories to operate in an efficient and cost-effective manner.

On a sad note, I would like to pay tribute to Roy Crystal, MPH, from Health Systems Concepts in Rockville, Md., who recently passed away. He was very instrumental in preparing our application for deemed status and in introducing us to the key employees of HCFA.

Our Executive Director, Steve Echard, with the help of Association Headquarters, has assembled a new and effective team to support ASHI's activities. The new members are: Kimberly Glenn, Assistant Executive Director, who is working with Steve in overseeing all ASHI activities; Larissa Cahill, Member Service Coordinator, who is in charge of membership issues as well as coordinating the Proficiency Testing program; and Celeste McNair, Meeting Director, who will be coordinating and planning all board, regional and annual meetings. Welcome to all. I believe we have a good team at AH to provide the services and support for ASHI's many committees and members.

In closing, I would like to share with you a few quotes from Debbie Ford's new book titled "The Right Questions." I find it fascinating and so appropriate for every aspect of our lives as individuals and as members of our society.

"We have the most precious gift; we have the capacity to make a choice."

"Our choices may influence the quality of relationships with ourselves and others."

"When we are making the right choice we feel empowered."

ASHI members, we all can contribute to our society by having patience, enthusiasm and the desire to work together. When we make the choice to look for what is good and not what is wrong in every situation, a new reality emerges that allows us to focus on fulfillment and success.

Adriana Zeevi