The 30th Annual Meeting of the European Society for Paediatric Infectious Diseases (ESPID) was held in Thessaloniki, Greece, from May 8 to 12, 2012. The main theme selected for this meeting was *Advances in Paediatric Infectious Diseases*. The scientific program, evolved through intense collaboration between local and international experts, attempted to comprehensively cover the latest advances and developments in all fields of pediatric infectious diseases. Almost 2800 participants from all over the world attended the meeting and more than 1000 abstracts were submitted, numbers confirming the steady presence of ESPID as the largest pediatric infectious diseases meeting worldwide over the last few decades.

After 2 days of industry-sponsored satellite symposia reviewing important recent data mainly on vaccines, ESPID officially started with the opening symposium consisting of 3 inspiring lectures by: (a) Johan Giesecke from the European Center for Disease Prevention and Control, on Europe’s defenses against infectious diseases of the young; (b) Mike Levin, on the role of proteomics and genomics in understanding the pathogenesis of infectious diseases; and (c) Thomas Walsh, on the role of translational approaches and guidelines in pediatric infectious diseases. During the following opening ceremony, Professor Stephanos Geroulakos gave an excellent and insightful overview on the amazing achievements of medicine in the Byzantine era, with emphasis on hospital infection control. This topic was especially linked to the host city, Thessaloniki, as this was an important center during that time of Hellenism.

Plenary sessions were indeed outstanding and given by some world experts on the particular topics; they included neonatal infections, with focus on preventive strategies for Group-B streptococcal and *Candida* infections; tuberculosis, with focus on development of novel vaccines, prevention and treatment of tuberculosis in immunocompromised children as well as management of multidrug-resistant and extensively drug-resistant disease. The closing session of the meeting was dedicated to the discussion of the most important topic, that is, the rationale and possibility for unified European recommendations and guidelines regarding vaccination schedules and diagnosis and treatment of community-acquired pneumonia. Other highlights of the scientific program included a symposium on cystic fibrosis (to the best of our knowledge, for the first time in ESPID’s history) covering the subjects of microbiology, fungal pulmonary syndromes and inhaled versus intravenous antimicrobial therapy, as well as sessions on emerging infections, pediatric HIV, travel medicine and zoonanthroposes.

The alarming trends of bacterial resistance to commonly used antimicrobial agents have affected not only adults but also pediatric patients worldwide. Prevention and treatment of infections caused by multidrug-resistant bacteria pose a challenge for pediatric infectious diseases specialists. In this context, the meeting included a total of 4 sessions/symposia on bacterial resistance and antimicrobial use. Among them, the joint ESPID/Pediatric Infectious Diseases Society symposium, successfully organized during the ESPID annual meeting for the second time, focused on antibiotic prescribing and stewardship in the community and the hospital transatlantically. Other sessions covered the areas of epidemiology and prevention of antibiotic resistance, pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamics of antimicrobials in pediatric patients as well as newer antibacterial and antifungal agents in pediatrics.

The recipients of the prestigious Bill Marshall Award, the 2-year ESPID fellowship and Young Investigator awards are traditionally announced during the annual meeting. The 2012 Bill Marshall Awardee was Professor Andrew Cant, a world-renowned pediatric infectious diseases and immunology expert, from Newcastle, United Kingdom. Professor Cant has made significant contributions in the management of children with congenital immunodeficiencies, including development of hematopoietic stem cell transplantation as treatment for primary immune disorders. He has published numerous peer-reviewed articles and successfully

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held several posts, including leadership of the UK national pediatric infectious diseases group and presidency of ESPID from 2006 to 2009. Professor Cant gave a fascinating Bill Marshall lecture, entitled: “Of man and micro: the child as the father of the man”.

The 2012 ESPID fellowship was given to Koen Vanden Driesche, from Belgium, a young pediatrician, who has developed a model to sample and culture airborne pathogens produced by coughing patients. He will use this model to study the impact of different interventions on the infectiousness of tuberculosis and air-transmitted pathogens in cystic fibrosis patients. The 2012 Young Investigator Awards were given to Paula Tähtinen (Finland) for clinical research and Aubrey Cunnington (United Kingdom) for basic research.

The 30th ESPID meeting provided an opportunity to implement and introduce new types of presentations of original data. In addition to the regular oral presentations and posters, the “Poster Discussion sessions” were implemented for the second time, consisting of brief slide presentations of posters by their authors. In these sessions, presentations were organized again according to different infectious diseases areas of interest. The brief oral presentations by the authors provided an excellent opportunity for constructive discussions among the attendees. Furthermore, for the first time, a selection of posters from those not included in poster discussion sessions, called “E-posters,” were presented in electronic form and could be viewed by the participants on site, on large screens located in the Poster Area, or even at home. Approximately 100 posters were also presented as E-posters. The electronic format was highly appreciated by the participants as it greatly facilitated the search for the posters.

As previously, the meeting provided an excellent opportunity for networking, fruitful interactions among ESPID scientists and coordination of research activities across Europe and beyond. Research hubs (new activity) and research lunch meetings focused on several topics, such as immunity to mycobacteria, host gene variants in infectious diseases, improving antibiotic use in children, community-acquired *Staphylococcus aureus* infections and pharmacokinetics/pharmacodynamics of antimicrobial agents. In addition, the 4th ESPID Research Masterclass, on the last day of the meeting, provided an excellent forum for a total of 18 research groups from all over Europe to discuss their progress on projects, such as new diagnostics, treatment and epidemiology of pediatric infectious diseases, medical microbiology, immunology and vaccinology.

A special event of this meeting was the anniversary of the 30 years of ESPID’s existence as a scientific society. The anniversary was celebrated during the ESPID members’ and faculty dinner, where Professors Dimitris Kafetzis and Urs Schaad, founding members of ESPID, recalled their memories since the Society’s establishment in November 1981 and the very early years of the group in a warm, emotional and at times humorous way. A selection of photographs projected from all 29 previous ESPID meetings reminded people that, apart from being an active scientific society, ESPID brings together colleagues from all over the world and creates long-lasting networks.

We thank everyone, speakers, contributors and participants of the 30th ESPID meeting in Thessaloniki and strongly believe that it met participants’ expectations and the high standards set by the Society during the last years. Next year’s ESPID meeting will be held in Milan, Italy, from May 28 to June 1, 2013. The meeting is being organized by Professor Susanna Esposito and its main theme is Respiratory Infections and Their Prevention. Professor Esposito is a well-known and very active member of ESPID with inspiring ideas, thus promising an excellent meeting. We hope to see everybody again, together with many more new colleagues, in Milan next year.