

2004

"Invasive and non-invasive in vivo analyses in animals"

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In order to refine handling of animals in biomedical experimentation, the federal law of 1.7.1999 requires from new experimentalists to follow a one week "Introduction Course", which are organized several times every year in Zürich (in German or in English), in Basel (in German) and in Lausanne (in French) (for more information see www.ltk.unizh.ch/de/home.html or www.unifr.ch/inph/cofor/). In addition, the same law foresees that all experimentalists have to keep their knowledge updated in animal experimentation, in the form of continuous education courses, at a level of 4 days training every 4 years on average. It has become now a usual practice of the veterinarian offices to check whether these 4 days credits have been obtained by experimentalists when they apply for an authorization of animal experimentation.

Such demand from the veterinarian authorities aims at improving the way animals are handled in biomedical experimentation, a crucial and honorable goal. However, paradoxically, the veterinarian authorities do not, or only rarely, offer such continuous education courses. As a result, the researchers are responsible of their own training, which is certainly difficult to achieve on an individual basis. For this reason, the central committee of the SSN decided to contribute to the continuous education of the SSN members, by offering in 2004 two such courses, with special emphasis on Neurosciences. These two courses of one day training took place one in Fribourg (Sept. 17th; resp. Dr. E.M. Rouiller) and the other in Zürich (Sept. 24th; resp. Dr. I. Mansuy).

About 100 participants attended the Symposium on Invasive and non-invasive in vivo analyses in animals" (2/3 of SSN members, 1/3 of non-members), thus indicating that it corresponds to a real need. The focus of the course was on "in-vivo" animal experimentation, with four oral presentations covering the following topics: "*stereotaxic surgery in rodents*" (by Dr. G. Knott, University of Lausanne), "*micro-telemetry*" (by Dr. H.P. Lipp, University of Zürich), "*behavioral approaches in monkeys*" (by Dr. T. Wannier, University of Fribourg) and "*brain imaging in small animals*" (by Dr. T. Kekelidze, University of Zürich).

The central committee of the SSN warmly thanks these four colleagues for their highly valuable contribution, by giving excellent talks with an adequate balance between technical aspects and small "tricks", usually not described in papers, and true scientific issues in order to illustrate the topic. Based on this preliminary experience, it is the intention of the central committee of the SSN to repeat in 2005 this offer of two continuous education courses on animal experimentation. To this aim, we would appreciate to receive (e-mail: [eric.rouiller \[at\] unifr.ch](mailto:eric.rouiller@unifr.ch)) your comments and critics about the courses proposed in 2004 and, more important, proposals for topics (and possibly speakers) to cover in 2005 topics for which you have a special interest. A crucial challenge in the future for the SSN will be to organize such courses by offering not only theoretical training but, as demanded by the federal law, also practical training. To reach such an ambitious goal, the active contribution of the SSN members will be required, at least from those who have the infrastructure to organize practical training by small groups of colleagues.