

Report on 8th ESPE Maghreb School held in Alger, Algeria from Monday 19th to Saturday 24th November 2018

This year's ESPE Maghreb School took place in Hotel AZ Palm Beach, situated by the Mediterranean Sea some 26 kilometres to the west of Algiers.

The meeting, which was conducted as usual in the French language, marked the second of the third three-year cycle of this teaching programme and hence the 8th Maghreb School to date. This year's teaching faculty comprised seven professors from the Maghreb Countries : Asmahane Ladjouze [local coordinator] and Meriem Bensalah from Algeria; Zineb Imane and Sana Abourazzak from Morocco; Saayda Ben Becher, Thouraya Kamoun and Mongia Hachicha from Tunisia; and five colleagues from Europe/ North America: Juliane Léger from France, Cécile Brachet from Belgium, Christina Kanaka-Gantenbein from Greece, Guy Van Vliet from Canada and Malcolm Donaldson [coordinator] from United Kingdom. We were sad to say goodbye to Jean-Pierre Chanoine from Canada and Farida Jennane from Morocco last year, but glad to welcome Guy Van Vliet and Zineb Imane this time.

The student faculty consisted of 26 students: eleven from Algeria, nine from Morocco, five from Tunisia and one from Mauritania. The intensive four-day programme featured interactive lectures, focusing on growth (normal growth and puberty; short stature and GH deficiency; endocrine effects of brain tumours and their therapy); calcium and bone (hypocalcaemia; hypercalcaemia; and skeletal dysplasias); adrenal disorders and DSD (tumours and 46,XX DSD); diabetes and obesity (Type 1 diabetes with focus on ketoacidosis; Type 2 diabetes and MODY); and thyroid problems (screening for congenital hypothyroidism; hyperthyroidism; and goitre, including iodine deficiency and thyroid cancer).

Small-group sessions included the ever-popular teachers' cases on each day, four parallel groups of research presentation by 6-7 students to 3 teachers, and rehearsal of case presentations. Each student delivered a case study to the plenum, and 10 students were selected to show their research projects in a plenary session.

The standard was exceptionally high this year, with excellent case presentations and with a number of students presenting ongoing research projects, including some which had been started during the previous year. The prizes for best case report and best research project went to two third-year students - Dr Asma Marzouk from Tunisia for her presentation on hypocalcaemia secondary to hypomagnesemia, and Dr Aldjia Laieb from Algeria for her project on factors influencing glycaemic control in type 1 diabetes.

The afternoon excursion on the Thursday was to the world-famous Casbah in the centre of Algiers, with visits to the Casbah museum, the Dar Lalla Aziza riad, and then a drive to the hilltop Cathédrale de Notre Dame d'Afrique with a splendid view of Algiers at night. The evening dinner was in a traditional restaurant deep within the Casbah, with a four-piece band (oud, violin, tabla and keyboard). As always, there was much singing of French, English and Arabic songs during the other evenings after the days' work.



On the day after Maghreb School, the “5^{ème} Séminaire Maghrébin d’Endocrinologie Pédiatrique” took place at the Zianaia Faculty of Medicine in Ben Aknoun, Algiers. Almost all faculty members were able to attend the one-day symposium which consisted of invited lectures not only from Maghreb School teachers but also from outside speakers including Professor Yves Le Bouc from Paris and paediatric surgeon Mr. Hichem Choutri from Setif, Algeria. A record number of over 300 delegates attended the meeting, which was open to all doctors within the Maghreb and which was kindly sponsored by Novo Nordisk, Algeria.

This was, by common agreement, the best ESPE Maghreb School and the best Maghreb Seminar ever in terms of standard and participation. The reputation of Maghreb School has grown since its inception in 2011 and 97 doctors have attended, of whom 45 have completed the full three years, with a further nine students due to finish in 2019.

This year we said a fond farewell to our dear friend Professor Christina Kanaka-Gantenbein who has been with us from the start of Maghreb School. We extend our gratitude and thanks to Dr Asmahane Ladjouze and her team who worked so hard to make both Maghreb School and the 5th seminar such a success. We also thank Pfizer for their support of Maghreb School from 2011-2017 and Novo Nordisk who have kindly taken over sponsorship from this year.

The 9th Maghreb School is scheduled to take place in Sousse, Tunisia between 18 and 22 November 2019, with a 6th Maghreb Seminar envisaged on Saturday 23rd November. Professor Thouraya Kamoun is the local organiser for this meeting, and applications will be invited from mid-March onwards, with a deadline of 30 April 2019.

Malcolm Donaldson, on behalf of the Maghreb School faculty.



Maghreb School teaching and student faculty, Algiers November 2018



Algiers at night with Christina Kanaka-Gantenbein



Delegates at the 5th Maghreb Seminar in Paediatric Endocrinology, Saturday 24th November 2018