

9th ESPE Maghreb School

18–23 November 2019, Sousse, Tunisia

The 9th ESPE Maghreb School took place in Hotel Iberostar in Sousse, by the Mediterranean Sea, some 120km to the south of Tunis. This was the final year of the third cycle of Maghreb School meetings, which take place each year in either Morocco, Algeria or Tunisia.

The French-speaking Maghreb school comprises a faculty of seven professors from the Maghreb countries:

Thouraya Kamoun and Mongia Hachicha (Sfax, Tunisia)

Saayda Ben Becher (Tunis, Tunisia)

Asmahane Ladjouze and Meriem Bensalah (Algiers, Algeria)

Zineb Imane (Rabat, Morocco)

Sana Abourazzak (Fès, Morocco).

Thouraya and Mongia took on the role of local co-ordinators this year and made an excellent team.

The European component of the teaching faculty comprised: Juliane Léger (Paris, France), Marc Nicolino (Lyon, France), Cécile Brachet (Brussels, Belgium), Guy Van Vliet (Montreal, Canada) and Malcolm Donaldson (Co-ordinator; Glasgow, UK).

Having been sad to say goodbye to Christina Kanaka (Greece) last year, we were delighted to welcome Marc to the Maghreb School this year.

The student faculty this year was the largest so far, with 30 students selected from Algeria (10), Morocco (10), Tunisia (8), Mauritania (1) and Senegal (1). Unusually, not a single student had to cancel due to unforeseen circumstances, such as illness, and so all 30 students were able to attend.

The faculty worked hard before the event itself. The students worked with their allocated teachers on their chosen clinical case and research project and the abstracts for these were printed as a booklet, available during the meeting. The PowerPoint presentations of each case and project were sent to the students' tutors before the meeting for commentary and editing. An ESPE e-Learning case was available from the online portal before the meeting, and an article on the effect of prenatal androgen on gender identity in 46,XY DSD was also sent out for study prior to the meeting.

The intensive 4-day programme at Hotel Iberostar featured interactive lectures with a focus on pituitary disorders, basic molecular genetics, diabetes (insulin therapy, transition, and monogenic and neonatal diabetes), gonadal disorders (primary insufficiency and polycystic ovary syndrome), adrenal disorders (Cushing's, adrenal insufficiency and congenital adrenal hyperplasia).

Other topics were addressed in small group sessions comprising two to three teachers and five to eight students, including teachers' cases, and presentation of student research projects. Each student delivered their case study to the plenum, and eight students were selected to show their research project to the whole faculty.

The standard of student case presentations was again very high this year, so that the teachers struggled to choose the best. Finally, it was agreed to award the prize to Jihene

Methlouthi (Sousse, Tunisia) for her case of familial neonatal hyperinsulinism. Among the research projects, some students had managed to advance their work from the previous years and to present data. The prize for the best research project was awarded to Insaf Mehzoud (Constantine, Algeria), for her study on vitamin D status in type 1 diabetes.

On the Thursday of the Maghreb School, there was an afternoon excursion to Monastir, where we visited the Ribat, a mediaeval fort, and then the mausoleum of Tunisia's legendary president Habib Bourguiba. This was followed by a coach ride back to Sousse for a visit to the Archaeological Museum, which features second and third century Roman mosaics of astonishing quality. The evening dinner was, as usual, in a traditional restaurant. This time the venue was near Kantaoui Bay, where we enjoyed traditional Tunisian food including 'La Gargoulette' (marinated lamb with herbs).

As always, there was much singing of French, English and Arabic songs during the precious free time in the evenings after the days' work.

On the day after Maghreb School, the '6ème Séminaire Maghrébin d'Endocrinologie Pédiatrique' took place in the same venue – the Hotel Iberostar. A total of 250 paediatricians and endocrinologists from the Maghreb attended, including all the faculty members from this year's Maghreb School. The main areas covered were diabetes, puberty, thyroid disorders and Turner syndrome. Invited speakers included some faculty teachers, but also previous Maghreb School students, and a representative from the Ministry of Health to discuss newborn screening, which is still not established in Tunisia (or indeed in any of the Maghreb countries). We are very grateful to ESPE for kindly covering the cost of this last day, which gives the opportunity for those interested people to feel part of and benefit from the ESPE Maghreb School.

This was, by common agreement, an excellent ESPE Maghreb School, and a very successful Maghreb Seminar. The reputation of the ESPE Maghreb School as a model of training in paediatric endocrinology continues to grow throughout the three countries. To date, more than 100 young doctors have attended the Maghreb School, of whom more than 50 have completed the maximum of three meetings.

This year we say farewell to Malcolm Donaldson, a co-founder of Maghreb School. He will be replaced by Rasa Verkauskiene (Lithuania) as teacher and by Asmahane Ladjouze as co-ordinator for 2020. We express our gratitude and thanks to Thouraya Kamoun and Mongia Hachicha for all their hard work in making both the Maghreb School and the 6th seminar such a success. We also thank Novo Nordisk for supporting the Maghreb School since 2018.

The 10th Maghreb School will take place in Morocco between 16 and 20 November 2020, with a 7th Maghreb Seminar envisaged on Saturday 21 November. Sana Abourazzak and Zineb Imen have agreed to be the local organisers for this meeting, and applications will be invited from mid-March onwards, with a deadline of May 2020.

Malcolm Donaldson and Asmahane Ladjouze
on behalf of the Maghreb School faculty



Maghreb School teaching and student faculty, Sousse, November 2019



Malcolm Donaldson (Co-ordinator 2017–2019) shown left with Juliane Léger (Co-ordinator 2011–2016) and on the right handing over to the next Co-ordinator, Asmahane Ladjouze



Delegates at the 6th Maghreb Seminar on Paediatric Endocrinology, 23 November 2019