

## **Narrative**

### *Working group brief progress report*

It has been a notable experience to actively participate in the *Malassezia* Working group for the past two and a half years. The Group has brought together clinical, laboratory and molecular Mycologists, as well as pharmaceutical chemists, who are cordially referred to as “Malasseziologists”.

Through the Working Group colleagues from different continents have worked and published together, but perhaps the most important achievement of the working group is that more research groups are now working on *Malassezia* proteomics, metabolomics and, importantly, on the yeast’s biology. More specifically, the group’s activities have made this member of the human and animal skin microbiota and occasional pathogen an issue on which interesting research questions could be acknowledged. The clinical significance of the new species, virulence factors, studies on the *in vivo* and *in vitro* mechanisms of action and pathogenicity of bioactive *Malassezia* metabolites, the contribution of culture and non-culture methods in elucidating global epidemiology and pathogenicity issues, including the input of multi locus sequencing typing (MLST) in the reliable identification of *Malassezia* genotypes, are only some research areas that are now actively pursued. Soon, the coordinators of these projects will upload in the ISHAM website the proposed protocols for these studies.

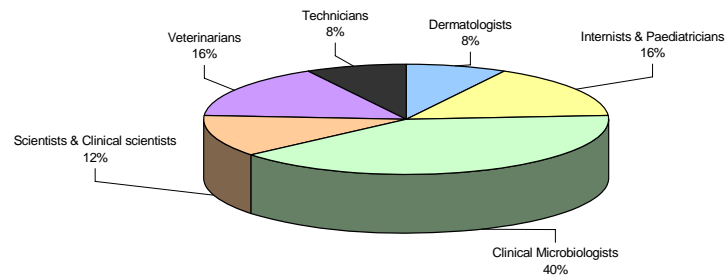
During this time, ISHAM has actively supported and promoted the international multidisciplinary collaborations of the working group members who wished to explore novel research areas and persistently encouraged active participation of Veterinary scientists. In that respect, the World Health Organization doctrine “one medicine, one health” was certainly realized and its outcome is presented in the first book devoted to *Malassezia* due to be published soon.

## **The Pre-TIMM-ISHAM practical Workshop**

### *“Malassezia identification methods. Advances in Epidemiology and genomics”*

The aim of this Workshop was to train and update *Malassezia* researchers from all disciplines on conventional and molecular identification methods, epidemiology and genomics of the 13 *Malassezia* species. The workshop was designed for 25 clinicians, veterinarians, clinical microbiologists and clinical scientists (Fig. 1) and was awarded 14 CME credits by the U.E.M.S. It took place in October 16-17, 2009 at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece with the Practical session completed at the Microbiology Department.

In his address to the participants the ISHAM General Secretary, J. P. Donnelly (Fig. 2), emphasized the role of ISHAM in promoting Medical Mycology and offering opportunities for international collaboration through the numerous working groups.



**Fig 1.** Distribution of specialties among workshop participants

The Workshop was evaluated by the participants who rated high the scientific content and speaker excellence, the educational methods employed, the exhaustive, yet pertinent, further reading material distributed in a specially compiled CD, the printed lecture material and practical schedules. They have also submitted positive criticism on the workshop's practical value in research and clinical laboratory practice.



**Fig. 2.** The General Secretary of ISHAM addressing the workshop participants during the laboratory session.

The participants also responded to the evaluation sheet question on which future monothematic practical workshops would like ISHAM to organize. Their preferences reflect the need for small group, monothematic educational events that provide comprehensive information, especially in laboratory diagnostic approaches.

On behalf of the Workshop Faculty (Fig. 3-10), and as the working group coordinator, I wish to express our appreciation to ISHAM for supporting and sponsoring the workshop, as well as all our other sponsors.



**Fig. 3.** Welcome & Introduction by the working group coordinator.



**Fig. 4.** "The genus *Malassezia*. Life history and present status" by the Faculty member Eveline Guého.



**Fig. 5.** "Molecular tools in studying *Malassezia* phylogenetics. A global perspective" by the Faculty member Teun Boekhout.



**Fig. 6.** “*Malassezia* skin diseases in Man and clinical significance of the new *Malassezia* species” by the Faculty member George Gaitanis.



**Fig. 7.** “The Chemistry of *Malassezia* bioactive metabolites and their role of in human disease” by the Faculty member Prokopis Magiatis.



**Fig. 8.** Having a break. Faculty member Takashi Sugita (centre) after presenting the topic “Direct detection and identification of *Malassezia* species by quantitative real-time PCR. Can it establish a causal relationship between *Malassezia* yeasts and the associated skin diseases”?



**Fig. 9.** Having a break.

Faculty member Suzana Hadina (left) after presenting the topic “Factors influencing *Malassezia* yeast proliferation on animal skin”.



**Fig. 10.** “*Malassezia* bloodstream infections and the utility of susceptibility testing. Where we stand and what is to be done” by the Faculty member Aristeia Velegraki.



Workshop participants at a rare moment of ease.

