



## Letter from the President



Welcome to the third ECTRIMS newsletter of 2017. This is a busy time of year for ECTRIMS as it prepares for the Annual Congress, which takes place in Paris on October 25-28th (MSParis2017). The Congress is being held jointly with ACTRIMS, such joint meetings taking place every 3 years. A record number of abstracts were submitted this year and abstract selection was undertaken in July by a committee of ECTRIMS and ACTRIMS representatives. This year's Congress looks set to be another very large meeting with many excellent educational and scientific presentations in the field of MS. Particular thanks to Catherine Lubetzki (chair, Local Organising Committee) and Bernard Hemmer (chair, Scientific Programme Committee) for their hard work in preparing for this year's Congress.

Following a successful focused workshop on "Advancing Trial Design in Progressive MS" that was held last March in association with the International Progressive MS Alliance, a publication on this topic is planned to appear later in the year as a series of papers in a themed issue of the Multiple Sclerosis Journal. Special thanks to Jeremy Chataway and Bob Fox, the guest editors of this themed issue. Plans are underway to hold a 2018 focused workshop on "Aggressive MS".

The 2017 summer school on "Rehabilitation and symptomatic treatment in MS" was held in

collaboration with RIMS in Santiago de Compostela in June. It proved to be an extremely popular event with excellent feedback from participants. Thanks to Maria Pia Amato, Peter Feys and Xavier Montalban for their organisation. The 2018 summer school will be on "Optical Coherence Tomography in MS".

A successful regional teaching course was held with the Baltic MS Council in Vilnius in May and two more courses are being planned for 2018, in Argentina (in association with LACTRIMS) and Brazil (in association with BCTRIMS). Thanks to Per Soelberg Sørensen for his continued support in developing these courses.

A joint ECTRIMS-EAN symposium on MS was held at the European Academy of Neurology Congress in Amsterdam in June and was very well attended. Joint symposia are anticipated at ECTRIMS and EAN meetings in future years.

Along with the US National MS Society, ECTRIMS jointly sponsors the work of the International Committee on Clinical Trials in MS. In Berlin last May, this Committee held an international meeting on spinal cord involvement and imaging in MS and NMO. It also convened an International Panel to update diagnostic criteria for MS. New (2017) McDonald diagnostic criteria are anticipated later this year.

I hope that you find this newsletter informative and will be encouraged to attend what should be an excellent Congress in Paris in October.

David Miller

## Topics

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## MSParis2017 – 7th Joint ECTRIMS – ACTRIMS Meeting/ 25 - 28 October 2017, Paris/ France

Dear friends and colleagues,

We would like to give you some news regarding the MSParis2017 – the 7th Joint ECTRIMS-ACTRIMS Meeting, which is quickly approaching... to date, we have received an overwhelming number of registrations, and it looks like Paris is going to be the biggest multiple sclerosis meeting ever!

The first abstract selection was achieved by mid July. Abstracts for platform presentations for the different sessions of the meeting and a balance between translational research and clinical topics have been selected. Last but not least, "late breaking news" abstracts for oral presentations have

been chosen just recently, among them several clinical trials results.

So the scientific programme is now fully established and, as you can see on the website, it is really exciting! 18 teaching courses, 2 plenary lectures, 16 parallel sessions, 10 hot topic sessions, 4 “free” sessions, 2 “young investigators” sessions, 2 nurses sessions, there will be a lot to exchange and to learn! In addition, there are going to be several poster sessions of high quality, with sufficient time to discuss with your colleagues. You will also have the opportunity to share your ideas and expertise within the 2 social media sessions.

In addition to the scientific programme, don't miss the networking event on Wednesday evening, at the Musée d'Orsay, a train station that looks like a palace, with the largest collection of impressionist and post-impressionist masterpieces in the world! And to sum up, take some time to explore the beautiful city of Paris.

On behalf of the scientific committee, and of the local organizing committee, I am really delighted to welcome you in Paris, 25-28 October 2017.

Catherine Lubetzki  
Chair Local Organizing Committee

Please click [here](#) to watch the video about the announcement of the MSPARIS2017 – 7th Joint ECTRIMS – ACTRIMS Meeting in Paris.

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### Update on ECTRIMS-EAN Guideline

Following presentations at ECTRIMS in 2016 and EAN congress in 2017, this is an update on the development of the treatment guideline.

The guideline is now fully written and consensus has been reached within the GL working group, composed by an international panel with representatives from EU countries. The approved GL manuscript is currently being reviewed by the Guideline Production Group and the Scientific Committee of the EAN.

While it was the panel's plan to announce publication on the second half of 2017, new recent treatment developments recommend the publication to be postponed until the end of 2017, when full approval of new drugs is expected to be in place. Although this means some delay, it is the panels belief that the wait will render a complete clinical tool, useful for patients and neurologists.

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### Update on ECTRIMS Focused Workshop 2018

ECTRIMS Focused Workshop this spring will be devoted to “Aggressive MS” and held in Brussels, Belgium 1 - 2 March 2018. The sessions and discussions will focus on how to define, predict and treat aggressive forms of the multiple sclerosis. Also the overall management of patients including communicating negative information and the side effects of high-efficacy treatments will be discussed. Sessions on the role of MRI and biomarkers for predicting worsening, along with special considerations for patients in different age groups are planned.

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### Update on ECTRIMS Summer School 2018

The 2018 ECTRIMS Summer School, which will take place in Budapest / Hungary from 25th to

27th June 2018, will focus on “Optical coherence tomography in multiple sclerosis”.

The human retina reflects central nervous system tissue and is directly accessible to visual imaging. Here, optical coherence tomography (OCT) imaging allows a highly sensitive and accurate quantification of different retinal structures. Though it has already been introduced into clinical neuroimmunology more than 20 years ago, OCT has developed into a more broadly and frequently used technique in the field of multiple sclerosis (MS) during the last years. To date, retinal OCT has matured into an easily applicable method to evaluate different aspects of retinal pathology in MS and related diseases.

The 2018 ECTRIMS Summer School will give a detailed overview on the use of the OCT in clinical neuroimmunology. Lectures will address different aspects of OCT in optic neuritis, MS and related diseases. The participants will undergo an intensive practical hands-on training on performing retinal OCT examinations, performing OCT quality control and conducting further retinal segmentation. Using clinical cases, the participants will also learn how to implement the OCT technique into daily clinical practice.

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## Reports of ECTRIMS Fellows

### ECTRIMS CLINICAL TRAINING FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME



#### **Fellow**

Youssef Sidhom, MD – 2013 Awardee

#### **Research Topic**

“Multiple sclerosis disability progression in North African: comparison of North African living in Tunisia, North African living in France and French Caucasian population”

#### **Fellowship Institution**

Pitié-Salpêtrière Hospital, Paris, France

#### **Mentor**

Dr. Bertrand Fontaine

#### **Fellowship Duration**

1 year

#### **Summary as ECTRIMS Clinical Training Fellowship Programme Fellow 2014 - 2015**

The aim of my ECTRIMS clinical fellowship project was to compare the clinical disease progression of MS patients in North African living in Tunisia (NAT), North African living in France (NAF) and Caucasian born and living in France (CF). In fact, few comparative data regarding

disease severity have been available in different ethnic groups throughout the world. Comparison of patients living in North Africa, North African immigrants and Caucasian multiple sclerosis patients might allow us to gain better insight into the different factors, genetic and environmental, involved in multiple sclerosis disease severity. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first study to compare Caucasians, immigrants from a different ethnic group including two immigrant generations and patients still living in their country of origin with multiple sclerosis.

Here we show that multiple sclerosis disability progression, compared between patients living in North Africa, North African immigrants and Caucasian multiple sclerosis patients, is more severe in patients of North African ethnicity. In addition, the study identifies the particular severity of the disease in North Africans living in France, especially for the second generation. North Africans living in Tunisia have an intermediate severity. This demonstrates that, in addition to genetic factors, environmental factors differing between France and North African countries influence disability progression.

This study has been sent to different congresses and the manuscript entitled “Fast multiple sclerosis progression in North Africans: Both genetics and environment matter” was published in *Neurology* 2017; 88(13):1218-1225.

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## **ECTRIMS-MAGNIMS FELLOWSHIP IN MAGNETIC RESONANCE IMAGING IN MS**



### **Fellow**

Mohammad Aboulwafa, MD, Master of Clinical Neurology – 2015 Awardee

### **Research Topic**

“Whole Cord and Voxel-Based Assessment of the Cervical Cord Atrophy in MS Patients with Different Clinical Phenotypes”

### **Fellowship Institution**

Neuroimaging Research Unit in San Raffaele Hospital, Milan, Italy

### **Mentor**

Prof. Massimo Filippi

### **Fellowship Duration**

1 year

### **Summary as ECTRIMS MAGNIMS Fellowship in Magnetic Resonance Imaging in MS Fellow 2015 - 2016**

I have been actively involved in the ongoing, prospective MAGNIMS study focused on the assessment of spinal cord damage, entitled: “Whole Cord and Voxel-Based Assessment of the

Cervical Cord Atrophy in MS Patients with Different Clinical Phenotypes". Specific aims of this project are to assess the validity of the application of different cord atrophy methods in a multicenter setting; to characterize the patterns of cord atrophy and lesions at baseline and their changes over one year of follow-up; and to study the relationship of cord atrophy and lesions with brain damage and clinical disability. The preliminary results of this study showed that cervical cord cross-sectional area in MS patients was lower compared to healthy controls (with progressive MS patients showing the highest atrophy, while a relative sparing of cord tissue was found in patients at the onset of disease and in benign MS patients).

Moreover, compared to healthy controls, MS patients showed a higher rate of cord atrophy progression over time, especially in patients who had clinical worsening.

I was also involved in a sub-analysis on a sample of 203 MS patients from 6 European centers. This study aimed at comparing the identification of focal lesions in the cervical cord between dual echo/STIR sequences (which are the standard sequences used in clinical practice) and the high-resolution 3D T1-weighted sequence. Together with another rater (an experienced neuroradiologist with 15 years of experience in evaluating MS lesions), I learned to evaluate the presence of cord lesions on dual echo/STIR sequences and 3D T1-weighted MRI sequence. The study has shown that the 3D T1-weighted sequence, when acquired at a high-field strength, is sensitive and reliable for the detection of focal MS lesions in the cervical cord, and when used in combination with dual echo/STIR sequences it allows a better lesion localization. The improved detection and localization of cord lesions might help diagnosis and might ameliorate correlations with patients' disability.

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## Meeting Dates

### **MSParis2017 - 7th Joint ECTRIMS - ACTRIMS Meeting**

Paris / France: 25 – 28 October 2017

### **ECTRIMS Focused Workshop 2018**

Brussels / Belgium: 1 – 2 March 2018

### **ECTRIMS Regional Teaching Courses 2018**

Buenos Aires / Argentina: 15 March 2018

Curitiba / Brazil: November 2018

### **ECTRIMS Summer School 2018**

Budapest / Hungary: 25 - 27 June 2018

### **ECTRIMS 2018**

Berlin / Germany: 10 - 12 October 2018

We are looking forward to seeing you in Paris!



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**Please be aware of fraudulent organisations!**

**WARNING**

There are an increasing number of fraudulent websites that impersonate MSParis2017. We would like to alert all participants to be aware of possible scams and to strongly advise you to only use the official MSParis2017 registration and ECTRIMS accommodation agency Congrex Travel.

**ECTRIMS Executive Committee**

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T. Derfuss, Basel/CH, Treasurer & Newsletter Editor  
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