

A EUROPEAN MODEL FOR LIFE LONG LEARNING IN BIO-MEDICAL SCIENCE

The European School of Haematology (ESH), located in the internationally renowned public teaching hospital, the *Hôpital Saint Louis* in Paris, is a non-profit interdisciplinary institution for continuing education. Professor Michel Boiron who later founded the European Hematology Association, which has become the largest European society covering all aspects of haematology, established the School in 1986.

The president of ESH, Eliane Gluckman, MD, PhD, is a pioneer in the field of umbilical cord stem cell transplantation. She carried out the first cord blood transplantation in the world in 1988. As part of the twenty-year anniversary celebration of this medical breakthrough, a scientific conference is planned in October in the south of France to be attended by over 300 international participants, honoured speakers, and former patients.

Haemopoietic stem cells are an ethical alternative to embryonic stem cells for research because they can be easily and painlessly harvested from umbilical cord blood immediately after the mother has given birth. As a result of her work, cord blood transplantations are increasingly used worldwide to treat malignant blood disorders. Professor Gluckman continues to inform the medical and lay community of the therapeutic importance of umbilical cord donations.

In addition to Professor Gluckman, many eminent haematologists govern ESH. Together, they develop the School's ongoing activities such as educational and scientific conferences, tutorials, training courses, on-line training, and scholarship programme as well as the production of teaching manuals and training handbooks. These activities have been supported by European Commission grants since 1990. The most recently awarded grant was a four-year Marie Curie Actions project covering thirty seven conferences, several distance learning tools and close to one thousand scholarships for younger scientists.



ESH is currently a partner of several EC grant applications that have successfully passed EC scientific review. One of these is a EUROCORD-Netcord-ESH project to develop a comprehensive on-line training tool in the field of umbilical cord blood biology and clinical applications entitled EUROCORD-ED.

In addition to these public funds, the generous unrestricted educational grants from private funds have allowed ESH to fund some of its activities and to improve and harmonise the quality of continuing education in haematology throughout Europe offered to both clinicians and scientist at all stages of their careers.

ESH has catalyzed the creation of other European medical organisations in recent years and has served as a model for institutions of lifelong learning in other bio-medical disciplines in haematology on other continents. The School continues to act as an educational partner for many important European scientific organisations in haematology.

In coming years, the School looks forward to strengthening its ties with European institutions, to promoting multiple approaches to lifelong learning and continuous professional development through on-line, hard copy and live continuous professional development activities, and to developing innovative tools and formats that will continue to foster the sharing of skills and knowledge in the rapidly evolving field of haematology



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