

51st International Conference on the Bioscience of Lipids:

**“The golden era of lipids: Over 50 years of lipoexcitement”
September 7-11 2010, Bilbao, Spain**

The 51st ICBL conference was organized in Bilbao, the capital of the province of Biscay in the autonomous community of the Basque Country in the north of Spain. The conference brought together scientists from different disciplines in the bioscience of lipids, including e.g. cell biologists, medical doctors, biochemists and biophysicists, from all over the world. The venue of the meeting was the Alhondiga Conference Center, an old wine depot just renovated to a center of cultural events, sports and entertainment, in the city centre.

The conference started with the yearly van Deenen Lecture, given in honor of Laurens L.M. van Deenen (1928-1994), a Dutch pioneer in membrane research, who significantly contributed to the understanding of the structure and function of biologically relevant lipids and the role of membranes in biological systems. This time the Laurens van Deenen lecture was given by Dr. William Dowhan (Houston, Texas, USA) about lipid-protein interactions as determinants of membrane structure. The conference was composed of seven sessions, covering topics such as the physical chemistry of lipids, lipids in biomembranes, bioactive lipids and lipidomics, lipid binding proteins, lipids in health and disease, and microbial and plant lipids. During the conference we heard lectures from many renowned lipid researchers such as Heiko Heerklotz (Canada), Manuel Prieto (Portugal), Yasuyuki Igarashi (Japan), Kai Simons (Germany) and Vesa Olkkonen (Finland).

In addition to the plenary lectures, we heard many great student talks covering a broad range of recent findings in lipid research, from lipid micrometric domains and proapoptotic mitochondrial lipids to the lipid-dependence of transmembrane protein-helices and the study of lipids by imaging mass spectrometry. Also more than 100 posters were presented during the conference. All the talk abstracts and poster abstracts were published in the special supplement issue of *Chemistry and Physics of Lipids* (*Chem Phys Lipids* 163S (2010) S1-S68).

During the meeting, we also had time to enjoy the Basque culture and cuisine by visiting the Guggenheim Bilbao Museum and some restaurants to get a taste of traditional “pintxos” (Basque tapas) and “txakoli” (Basque wine). We also made a trip outside Bilbao through the countryside to the beautiful Oriñon Beach at the coast of the Bay of Biscay. At the beach, which is located between two big mountains, we could experience the high tide of the Atlantic Ocean.

I participated in the conference by giving a short student talk (20 min) about my research project that aims to determining the effects of ceramide acyl chain methyl-branching on the membrane properties of ceramides in model bilayer membranes. This conference offered a friendly environment for giving my first talk for an international audience in a big meeting. I am glad that I had this opportunity to present my data and to make a note for the kind of research going on in our research group at the Åbo Akademi University. Therefore, I would like to thank **ISB** for the funding I received for participation in this conference. I greatly acknowledge the financial support that the graduate school granted for me.



The giant flower-puppy at the Guggenheim Bilbao Museum, and the Oriñon Beach.

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