SNM Members Participate, Receive Honors at RSNA’04; SNM Wins Press Coverage in Major News Outlets

A number of Society of Nuclear Medicine members participated in RSNA’04—the world’s largest medical meeting, held annually by the Radiological Society of North America—resulting in press coverage of their accomplishments and scientific findings and of SNM.

Press Reports Nuclear Medicine Can Trigger Security Alarms

During one of nearly 20 news conferences held on site at RSNA, SNM member Lionel S. Zuckier, M.D., addressed “Thyroid Treatment Can Trigger Homeland Security Detectors” on Nov. 30. His findings—and mentions of SNM—were reported on MSNBC and through Reuters (an international multimedia news agency) and in publications such as USA Today, Newsday and the Record (Hackensack, N.J.) and their associated Web sites. Through these news outlets, more than 27 million persons read about or heard about SNM and may visit the society’s Web site for additional information.

Zuckier, a radiology professor at the New Jersey Medical School–University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey and director of nuclear medicine and PET at University Hospital in Newark, N.J., explained that nuclear medicine patients who travel may set off extremely sensitive portable Homeland Security radiation detectors. His report estimated that nuclear material used as tracers in some scans to detect cancer is gone in less than 24 hours, while material used for bone and thyroid scans can last for three days. Thallium used in cardiac exams can be detected for up to 30 days, and iodine used as therapy for thyroid problems can be traced up to three months later. The study’s authors include SNM member Michael G. Stabin, Ph.D., and associate member Venkata K. Lanka, M.S.

The press reports indicated that patients should follow SNM and U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission recommendations and carry an official letter or card indicating what type of nuclear medicine procedure was received, the date of service and a phone number to call for verification. Additional information on these procedures can be found by clicking on the “Travel Security” icon on SNM’s home Web page.

SNM Members Receive RSNA’s Highest Award

RSNA’s highest honor, the Gold Medal Award, was presented to SNM members Alexander Gottschalk, M.D., and John G. McAfee, M.D., during a Nov. 30 awards ceremony. Gottschalk, a pioneer researcher and author who helped shape modern medical imaging, worked with the first clinically useful prototype Anger scintillation camera and performed with first dynamic camera studies of the brain and heart using technetium-99m. Gottschalk, an SNM past president, also made the first dynamic camera studies of the kidneys and was one of the principal investigators in the prospective investigation of pulmonary embolism diagnosis study.

Gottschalk, who is currently professor of diagnostic radiology at Michigan State University in East Lansing, began his career as a research associate at Donner Laboratory at Lawrence Radiation Lab at the University of California, Berkeley. He continued his career at the University of Chicago (where he helped form the university’s first section of nuclear medicine) and Yale University School of Medicine, New Haven, Conn. (where he worked with colleagues from cardiology to establish a pioneering cardiovascular nuclear medicine operation). For a decade, Gottschalk was editor-in-chief of the “Yearbook of Nuclear Medicine.” He served on committees for the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute and national committees for the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, the National Institute of General Medicine Sciences and the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education.
McAfee, a retired researcher and scholar in nuclear medicine, did groundbreaking work that led to significant medical advances, especially in blood cell labeling. McAfee helped develop the first technetium-99-labeled phosphate bone scanning agents. He has also found other radioactive agents with SNM President Mathew L. Thakur, Ph.D., which irreversibly labeled blood cells for imaging organ distribution. These have become among the most widely used procedures in both nuclear medicine and radiology.

The native Canadian completed internships at Victoria Hospital and Westminster Hospital, both in London, Ontario. He completed radiology residencies at Victoria Hospital and the Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, Md. McAfee remained at Johns Hopkins for more than a decade as a staff radiologist, becoming chief of diagnosis and later overseeing nuclear medicine. He then spent 25 years as chair and director of radiologic sciences at the State University of New York Health Science Center in Syracuse. During that time, he and SNM Past President Henry N. Wagner Jr., M.D., imaged the kidneys with radiomercury-labeled chloromerodrin—an event listed by the society as a historic moment in nuclear medicine. McAfee was a professor of radiology at the George Washington University Medical Center in Washington, D.C. He was a consultant to the National Institutes of Health Clinical Center in nuclear medicine and then became a full-time staff member there in charge of radiopharmaceutical research.

Steven M. Larson Named 2004 RSNA Outstanding Researcher

SNM member Steven M. Larson, M.D., one of the world's foremost experts in targeted radiotherapy and molecular imaging, was named the 2004 RSNA Outstanding Researcher. This honor recognizes an individual who has made original and significant contributions to the field of radiology or radiologic sciences throughout a career of research.

Larson’s research, which spans three decades, has resulted in many novel findings especially in understanding cancer. Using carbon-14-labeled media and a sensitive radiodetector system, Larson was able to rapidly identify bacterial and cell growth, a technology that is used widely today for detecting mycobacterium tuberculosis, including assessing drug sensitivities.

Chairman of SNM’s Publications Committee and an ex officio member of the society’s board of directors, Larson has successfully tackled the problems of antibody production, radiolabeling, humanization of the antibody, minimizing host immune response and developing methodologies to quantify response. His research in detection of colorectal cancer has been successfully applied in the treatment of patients with advanced tumors.

As an expert on translational aspects of nuclear medicine, he has made significant contributions to the advancement of positron emission tomography as a clinical tool for oncology. He was recruited to the National Institutes of Health in 1983, in part to establish a state-of-the-art PET center for NIH researchers. His success in this endeavor led to an NIH Directors Medal in 1987 for him and his colleagues.

While conducting cutting-edge research in targeted therapy and related molecular imaging, Larson continues to be heavily involved in teaching, administration and clinical care. He currently serves as chief of the nuclear medicine service at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York, director of radiology research in the department of radiology and director of the PET Center at MSKCC. He is also a professor of radiology at Cornell University Medical College.

Larson has authored or co-authored 430 manuscripts in major peer-reviewed journals, including “Science,” “Nature Medicine,” “Nature Biotechnology,” “Radiology,” “The New England Journal of Medicine” and “The Journal of Nuclear Medicine.” He has also served on several governmental advisory
committees and study sections at NIH, the Department of Energy and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

SNM Member Delivers Annual Oration
RSNA selected SNM member Michael E. Phelps, Ph.D., to deliver the Eugene P. Pendergrass New Horizons lecture Nov. 29. The Norton Simon professor and chairman of the department of molecular and medical pharmacology at the University of California Los Angeles addressed “Molecular Imaging: From Nanotechnology to Patients.” Phelps helped bring radiology into the 21st century as the co-inventor of the positron emission tomography scanner.

Phelps discussed the revolutionary changes that are occurring through the merger of physical, biological and medical sciences that focus on new approaches to molecular diagnostics and therapeutics and the benefit they will provide to molecular imaging. He described molecular and structural imaging techniques—including PET, magnetic resonance imaging, computed tomography and optical imaging—that are helping physicians and scientists to gain access to the molecular basis of disease for diagnostics and to guide the discovery and assessment of drugs. Phelps also described the merger of multiple imaging technologies into single devices to consolidate structural and biological information for molecular imaging diagnostics.

Phelps, director of the Institute for Molecular Medicine and the Crump Institute for Molecular Imaging, has published more than 640 peer-reviewed scientific articles, books and book chapters, has been the principle investigator of more than $225 million in grants and has been recognized through numerous national, international and presidential awards.

More SNM Members at RSNA
- **James H. Thrall, M.D.**, lectured on the myths and realities of globalization during RSNA’s opening session.
- **Michael F. Hartshorne, M.D.**, delivered the plenary session, “Fusion Imaging: Changes in the Way We See Things.”
- **Leonard Berlin, M.D.**, coordinated a special session that allowed attendees to get a glimpse inside a mock medical-legal jury trial.
- SNM members participating in the Dec. 3 session, “PET/CT: A Practical Approach,” included moderator **Steven M. Larson, M.D.**, and panelists **Homer A. Macapinlac, M.D.; Dominque Delbeke, M.D.; and Richard L. Wahl, M.D.**
- **William R. Eyler, M.D.**, was recognized Nov. 28 for his long-term commitment to RSNA publications—specifically to more than 20 years of work on the “RSNA Index to Imaging Literature,” the index to about 40 peer-reviewed radiology journals.

Nearly 60,000 individuals attended the Nov. 28–Dec. 3 meeting at McCormick Place Lakeside Center in Chicago, Ill. There were more than 3,000 scientific research presentations and education exhibits covering the latest basic and clinical research developments in radiology and related imaging technologies dealing with diagnosis and treatment.

“These events represent distinguished honors to and vital recognition of nuclear medicine contributions,” said SNM President Mathew L. Thakur, Ph.D., who attended the RSNA conference.