

CONFERENCE REPORT

The Seventh Libyan Diabetes and Endocrinology Conference (LDEC2009), April 7-9, 2009, Tripoli, Libya

Amna Salhin^{*1}, Tawfek A Besheya², Salem A. Beshyah³

¹Diabetes and Glandular Disease Clinic, San Antonio, Texas, USA

²Medical Department, Meitiga Hospital, Tripoli, Libya;

³Center for Diabetes and Endocrinology, Sheikh Khalifa Medical City, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

*Corresponding author: A Salhin Email: asalhin@hotmail.com

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Abstract

The Libyan Association for Diabetes and Endocrinology (LADE) held its annual conference LDEC2009 over three days on April 7-9, 2009, in Tripoli. This was the seventh in the series of Libyan diabetes and endocrine conferences. It was the fourth conference held in the extended three-day format. The program targeted consultants and specialists in diabetes and endocrinology as well as other branches of general internal medicine who practice in hospitals and polyclinics. It included many primary health care providers. The conference seems to be emerging as the key “national” event in Libyan diabetes and endocrine circles. Many delegates attended from various parts of the country. Some delegates came for the first time from Sebha, Zliten, and Sirte. The representatives of the National Ministry of Health and The Libyan Board for Medical Specialties also acknowledged its status in their introductions during the opening ceremony. LDEC2009 had more satellite events than previous conferences the festival nearly an entire week. Two of these were outside Tripoli for the first time. “Sebha

Diabetes Review 2009” was held jointly by the LADE and the Faculty of Medicine, University of Sebha. The “Zawia Diabetes Review 2009” was jointly organized by LADE and the Faculty of Medicine, 7th April University, Zawia. We received comprehensive press coverage throughout the three days. Unique new features included international speakers, the LADE Clinical debate, attendance by Libyan physicians in training from the UK and Italy, and notably that it was officially held under the auspices of LADE and included its AGM with a healthy and transparent discussion as well as accountability of the board to the General Assembly.

The Scientific Program

The Main Lectures

The program was well balanced between diabetes and endocrinology. It included nine main lectures. For the first time the main program was privileged to include participation from international speakers (1). By his keynote address, Dr. Tarek Fiad kicked off the program with a comprehensive overview of current

positions on pre-diabetes in guideline, clinical practice, and research designs. Dr. Mahmoud Benbarka revisited Graves' disease in his Ibnosina Medal Lecture. In his Al-Fitouri Medal Lecture, Professor Elmahdi Elkhammas, from The Ohio State University, USA, gave an evidence-based analysis of pancreatic and islet cell transplantation. Professor Elkhammas is a senior transplant surgeon who has been involved with pancreatic transplantation from its early days. A special lecture delivered by Professor Don Chisholm addressed the topic of "Diabetes Pandemic: Genes versus Environment" summarizing the current positions as of 2009. The Memorial Lecture of this year was dedicated to honor the memory of the late Dr. Ahmed Hassuna, a fine physician who achieved a lot in improving the health care services in his own city of Misurata in the early 1980's. Dr. Amna Salhin covered the issues of diabetes and pregnancy. She gave a masterly overview of the subject from the physiological and metabolic price of pregnancy to screening, diagnosis and management of various glucose intolerance states and finishing by postnatal assessment and counselling. The remaining plenary and state of art lectures were shared between members of the association and guest speakers which covered a fine blend of subjects; Some insights into male hypogonadotrophic hypogonadism and Kallman's syndrome covered by Dr. Richrd Quinton who did some of the original work on the subject in the early 1990's and continue to be quoted as national authority on the subject in the UK. Professor Don Chisholm discussed the topical issue of glycaemic control and vascular disease and Dr. Salem Elhabroush from Tripoli presented clinical review of hypoglycaemia in diabetes. As it was previously established, "The LADE Annual Lecture" has been reserved for younger physicians and the winner for this year was Dr. Hawa Sherif from Tripoli Medical Center on her chosen subject of "Hypertriglyceridaemia: Does it really matter?". The special addition to this year's program was the first LADE clinical debate. Two senior members of the Association were asked to address a difficult question on "Glitazone controversy." Mahmoud Benbaraka (Sheikh Khalifa Medical City, Abu Dhabi) and Abdulfattah Lakhdar (Whipps Cross Hospital, London) debated clinical safety and usage of glitazones in today's clinical practice. Salem Beshyah, who planned the debate and proposed the motion "This house believes that Glitazones are unsafe and should be abandoned", moderated the debate. The statement itself implied that both currently used Glitazones are identical. Salem Beshyah in his opening statement stressed the fact that the debaters should not necessarily uphold the side of the debate they are assigned.

Benbarka began his presentation by summarizing the data from manufacturer reports, trials, and meta-analyses. Lakhdar responded by stressing the central position of insulin resistance in type 2 diabetes and defended Glitazones by citing several published articles and interim reports. An intellectual and evidence-based discussion followed with delegates supporting either side of the argument. At the end of the day, it was a "hung" parliament with one third in favor, one third against, and one third undecided. The debate was well-received and lasted more than 90 minutes, undoubtedly extending into the Gala Dinner of the conference which followed after the LADE Annual General Meeting.

Symposia

The program included three symposia; Advances in Diabetes Management was the symposium on the first day. Soad Bosseri gave a philosophical presentation on "Ethics" and "Etiquettes" in diabetes care. Following this, Kamal Abougilila gave a detailed account on the newer oral anti-diabetic drugs focusing in particular on the Incretin-based therapies. Mohsen Eleidrisi finished by an excellent overview of practical insulin therapy. On day 2, an update on the modern management of pituitary tumors was reviewed. Abdel Salam Abougrara set the scene by a heavily illustrated presentation on imaging of the pituitary and hypothalamic region and with some very useful practical tips to the clinicians. Salah Gwaider followed and spoke on the contemporary management of prolactinomas. After a coffee break, Tarek Fiad presented acromegaly update for 2009, and Fellani A. M. Zwei reviewed investigation and management of Cushing's disease. As usual, "Current Perspectives in Adolescent Endocrinology Symposium" was the theme of the morning session on day 3. Asma Deeb kicked off by presenting a series of real clinical cases to support her argument that diabetes mellitus in children is not just type 1. Endocrinopathy seen in non-endocrine disorders was reviewed by Faten Ben Rajab and after a coffee break, Abdel Hadi Habeb gave a comprehensive review of "Growth Hormone Deficiency in Children & Adolescents: Diagnosis, Treatment". All the symposia were very well attended and the presentations stimulated many interesting questions.

Interactive Sessions

In these sessions, each delegate had an opportunity to choose two options out of four parallel 40 minutes sessions. There was a pediatric session daily, which attracted 20-25 delegates. A panel of experts directed the sessions in the form of case-based interactive discussions. Subjects included hirsutism, thyroid nodules, osteoporosis, and male hypogonadism.

The new choices included peri-operative care for pituitary and adrenal tumours and the comprehensive discussion of interesting and complex endocrine cases (in the style of what would the expert do?). The attendance at the latter sessions was very good and planners agreed this should become a regular feature of future meetings.

Free Communications: A Few Select!

A total of 23 abstracts were submitted to the committee. 19 were accepted but one was withdrawn. Six abstracts were presented as oral communications and twelve as posters. During the oral session, a prediction rule to identify adults with diabetic ketoacidosis at increased risk of death was presented by Dr. Rafik Elmehdawi. An assessment of patients' diabetic education in Benghazi was presented and discussed by Dr. Suhair Jaber. Co-morbid depressive symptomatology in diabetic patients in Derna was presented by Dr. Monsef Al Okaly. In the pediatric group, Outcome of growth hormone therapy in short stature children was discussed by Dr. Naema Dafer. Dr. Salha Gliwan presented data demonstrating that flexible insulin therapy being more useful than conventional insulin therapy in glycemic control of type 1 diabetic children at Al Jala Hospital. Dr. Miasoon Elhemri from Benghazi presented a case of a Libyan family with familial hypercholesterolemia with a literature review. The posters were displayed throughout the conference period and included a wide variety of subjects in both clinical and basic research such as; blood glucose in ICU in Benghazi, a Middle Eastern experience with Sitagliptin, serum prolactin in SLE, fasting of Ramadan in people with diabetes in Benghazi and insulin pump experience during Ramadan in UAE. Some basic work such as serum Selenium in diabetes and Cord blood copper, zinc, calcium, phosphorus and magnesium in infants of diabetic and non-diabetic mothers was included too. Molecular and animal work included transforming growth factor beta-1 5' and 3'-untranslated regions and their contributes to its postranscriptional regulation in proximal tubular epithelial cells and use of phage display to isolate peptides that bind and inhibit the function of a mouse monoclonal thyroid stimulating antibody, evaluation of hypoglycemic and hypolipidemic effects of "coenzyme Q10" in streptozotocin-induced diabetic rats and the influence of diabetes on Acetoaminophen-induced hepatotoxicity In Albino Wistar rats. Three prizes offered by LADE were awarded during the closing ceremony to the best three presentations: Maisoon Ehemri (Benghazi), Salha Gliwan (Tripoli) and Adela Elammami (Benghazi).

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The Lade Agm: Democracy At Its Best "Possible"!

The LADE' AGM was held on the second day. The conduct of the AGM was democratic and transparent. The outcome was a good review of the LADE in its very first year. Its modest budget was reviewed and ratified. The Board was expanded to 12 members and four new members were elected to fill the new vacancies. A creation of a branch in Benghazi was approved and the board left it to the local members to elect those officers. The working relationship between the branches was discussed. It was agreed to hold the LDEC on an annual basis. LDEC2010 will hopefully be held in Benghazi. Types of membership (full, associate and honorary) were approved subject to ratification by the NISR. Emails were agreed upon as the method of communication between the board and its members. Funding support for members to attend the annual meeting was agreed in principle. The board agreed to sort out the mechanism. Two ways were thought possible: 1) set grants for each presenting delegate or members to attend, and 2) secure funding and management through the event organizer. The AGM authorized the Board to pursue membership of regional and international bodies such as the IDF.

Final Remarks

The Conference was unconditionally supported by; three golden sponsors (Lilly, Sanofi Aventis, Libya oil/Harvard/Hess Corporations), one silver sponsor (Novo Nordisk), and the revenue from the 20 exhibitors. Glaxo-Smith-Kline kindly sponsored the gala dinner. LTT Technical Translations provided free wireless Internet for the conference area as well as conference bags and gifts.

The conference was well attended and provided an excellent opportunity for all delegates to catch up on the latest updates in the field of diabetes and endocrinology, and have a chance to interact with colleagues in a friendly atmosphere. The feedback and comments received were positive and commended both the organizing and scientific committees for the success of the conference.

References

1. Salhin A, Beshyah S. Abstracts of the Seventh Libyan Diabetes and Endocrinology Conference 2009. *Ibnosina Journal of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences* 2009; 1(1):24-42.