

Editorial

Ninth International Symposium on Recent Advances in Environmental Health Research

Paul B. Tchounwou

National Institutes of Health RCMI-Center for Environmental Health, College of Science, Engineering and Technology, Jackson State University, 1400 Lynch Street, Box 18750, Jackson, MS 39217, USA; E-Mail: paul.b.tchounwou@jsums.edu; Tel.: +1-601-979-2153; Fax: +1-601-979-0570

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This special issue of *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* is dedicated to the publication of selected papers presented at the Eighth International Symposium on Recent Advances in Environmental Health Research. The Symposium was organized by Jackson State University (JSU) from 16–19 September, 2012 at the Marriott Hotel in Jackson, Mississippi, USA. It was built upon the overwhelming success of seven previous symposia hosted by JSU.

The program of the *Ninth International Symposium on Recent Advances in Environmental Health Research* provided a strong forum to discover the latest scientific advances in the areas of environmental science and public health. The Symposium's program had continued to have a special appeal to scientists and engineers who have been committed to bioenvironmental and public health research; studying the toxic mechanisms of action of various environmental agents, developing new approaches for detecting or remedying environmental damage, identifying and characterizing genes involved in the manifestation of environmentally-related diseases, conducting basic and translational research, and providing the public and policy makers with scientific tools that are critical for environmental and human health decision-making [1,2]. Hence, the symposium was of special interest to toxicologists, environmental chemists and biologists, epidemiologists, public health officials, and civil and environmental engineers interested in environmental and public health research and education. Also, the symposium series continued to offer unparalleled opportunities for networking and exchange of ideas, leading to scientific collaborations, resources sharing, and strategic planning for multi- and inter-disciplinary approaches to environmental and public health research [1–3].

Building on the foundation of the first (2004), second (2005), third (2006), fourth (2007), fifth (2008), sixth (2009) seventh (2010) and eighth (2011) symposia, the *Ninth International Symposium*

on Recent Advances in Environmental Health Research (2012) served as a platform to exchange innovative ideas and communicate the latest advances in scientific research and new developments on important environmental and human health topics including: Emerging Topics in Computational Biology and Environmental Modeling; Environmental Toxicology and Health Risk Assessment; Health Disparities and Environmental Security; Medical Geology and Human Health; Nanoscience, Nanotechnology and Nanotoxicology, Natural Resources Damage Assessment and Management; and New Frontiers in Environmental Health Research [1–3].

The symposium attracted 298 participants from 22 countries representing all five continents. A total of two hundred twelve scientific presentations including 46 platform/oral and 166 poster presentations were made across the disciplines of environmental health, biomedical and clinical sciences, and public health. The scientific program included seven plenary sessions where oral/plenary presentations were given by forty six invited speakers. In addition, there were two poster sessions—one for faculty and professional scientists, and one for students that included awards for best posters presentations at four levels of the educational pipeline including high school, undergraduate, master and doctorate levels. Three certificates and monetary prizes (first, second and third) were awarded for each education level.

Original contributions were solicited on relevant topics of the Symposium. As in the past, authors were asked to access the journal's website and submit their full length manuscripts. Submitted manuscripts were processed and sent out for peer-review by environmental and public health experts in their respective fields. A rigorous peer-review process was conducted as previously described [1], and according to the high publication standard of International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health-IJERPH [4]. With its recent (2012) first impact factor of 1.998, IJERH has emerged as one of the premier journals advancing scientific research that addresses critical issues related to environmental quality and public health. This high quality journal is now covered by leading indexing services including PubMed (Medline) and the Science Citation Index Expanded (Web of Science), EMBASE and Scopus (SciVerse). Full-text articles are also available through PubMed Central [4].

I wish to extend special thanks to Dr. Billy Thomas (Vice-Chancellor for Diversity and Professor of Pediatrics at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, Little Rock, Arkansas, USA) for serving as Distinguished Speaker for the Biomedical Sciences and Health Information Lecture Series that is held in conjunction with the Symposium. Dr. Thomas presented an historic perspective of the health care system as it relates to health issues associated with health disparities and discussed the benefits of increasing the diversity of the biomedical workforce. He also provided some key recommendations that will move us towards a culturally competent health care system and a robust biomedical workforce development. Other plenary presentations and keynote addresses were made by prominent biomedical and environmental health scientists and engineers with research expertise in cancer, diabetes, HIV/AIDS, infectious and parasitic diseases, cardiovascular diseases, neurodegenerative diseases, gene-environment interactions, nanoscience and nanomedicine, emerging technologies, health disparities and other environmentally-related illnesses. These important health issues were associated with the symposium topics [1–3].

Session chairpersons included Dr. Mario Azevedo, Jackson State University, College of Public Service, Jackson, Mississippi, USA; Dr. Gloria Calaf, University of Tarapaca, Arica, Chile; Dr. Jose Centeno, Joint Pathology Center of Malcom Grow Medical Clinic, Department of Biophysical

Toxicology, Maryland, USA; Dr. Edmond Creppy, University of Bordeaux, Faculty of Pharmacy, Bordeaux, France; Dr. Jimmy Efirid, Brody School of Medicine, Center for Health Disparities Research, Greenville, North Carolina, USA; Dr. Carolyn Howard, Jackson State University, School of Science and Technology, Jackson, Mississippi, USA; Dr. Ramzi Kafoury, Jackson State University, School of Science and Technology, Jackson, Mississippi, USA; Dr. Joseph Landolph, University of Southern California, School of Pharmacy, Los Angeles, California, USA; Dr. Danuta Leszczynska, Jackson State University, School of Engineering, Jackson, Mississippi, USA; Dr. James Maddirala, Jackson State University, Jackson, Mississippi, USA; Dr. Mahmoud Manzoul, Jackson State University, School of Engineering, Jackson, Mississippi, USA; Dr. Dora N. Mbanya, University of Yaounde, Faculty of Medicine, Yaounde, Cameroon; Dr. Loretta Moore, Jackson State University, School of Engineering, Jackson, Mississippi, USA; Dr. Marinelle Payton, Jackson State University, School of Health Science, Jackson, Mississippi, USA; Dr. Monica Paoliella, State University of Londrina, Department of Toxicology, Clinical Studies and Pathology, Londrina, Brazil; Dr. Hector Rubio-Arias, Autonomous University of Chihuahua, College of Science, Chihuahua, Mexico; Dr. Daniel Sarpong, Jackson State University, RTRN-Data Technology Coordinating Center, Jackson, Mississippi, USA; Dr. Gordon Skelton, Jackson State University, School of Engineering, Jackson, Mississippi, USA; Dr. Karam Soliman, Florida A&M University, College of Pharmacy, Tallahassee, Florida, USA; Dr. William M. Southerland, Howard University, College of Medicine, Washington DC, USA; Dr. Jacqueline Stevens, Jackson State University, School of Science and Technology, Jackson, Mississippi, USA and Dr. Hongtao Yu, Jackson State University, School of Science and Technology, Jackson, Mississippi, USA.

I would like to commend the authors for their involvement and cooperation, and for their outstanding contributions to advancing scientific research and facilitating informed decision making in the critical area of environmental sustainability and public health protection. Special thanks are also extended to all the peer-reviewers who took time from their busy schedules to carefully and critically review each of the manuscripts. Special appreciations are also extended to all my colleagues and staff who worked very hard to make the symposium a total success.

Special thanks are extended Dr. Carolyn W. Meyers (President), Dr. James C. Renick (Interim Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs), Dr. N. Radhakrishnan (Acting Vice President for Research and Federal Relations), and Dr. Mary Myles (Director of Title III Program) for their administrative support. On behalf of the entire organizing committee, the greatest acknowledgments go to our major symposium sponsors including the National Institutes of Health (NIH) RCMI-Center for Environmental Health, the U.S. Department of Education Title III Graduate Education Program, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the JSU Office of Academic Affairs, and the JSU Office of Research and Federal Relations.

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