

Welcome messages

Message from the Chairman of the Organizing Committee

Dear Participants,

On behalf of the Turkish Federation of Thalassaemia (TFT), we are honoured to invite you to the 12th International Conference on Thalassaemia and the Haemoglobinopathies and the 14th International Conference for Patients and Parents, which will be held in Antalya, Turkey in May 2011.

Very important steps for Thalassaemia and the Haemoglobinopathies have been taken in Turkey since the year 2000, as a result of the activities of the TFT. These new measures have resulted from the "Law of Struggle Against Thalassaemia" published in 1993, and they include:

- New regulations in 2002 which have led to the establishment by the Ministry of Health and the National Council of Thalassaemia, in May 8th 2003, of the Haemoglobinopathy Control Programme. This programme is implemented in 33 different cities with high prevalence of the disease and includes the establishment of new thalassaemia centres and mandatory pre-marital screening. In this programme, 30% of new couples have been tested in 2003 but the rate has risen to 80% in 2008 and as a result there has been an 80% reduction in new affected births.
- International Thalassaemia Summer Schools are being held biannually for patients, and National Thalassaemia Youth Camps are being held every year since 2000.
- In the 33 cities mentioned above, diagnostic centres and laboratories for follow-up of Thalassaemia patients, have been established.
- The expenses for blood transfusion and iron chelation are covered by the government. This is a collaboration between the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education and the Turkish Red Crescent, both for the prevention of thalassaemia and the patients' management.

In 2005, the National Council of Thalassaemia was replaced by the Thalassaemia Federation of Turkey, which unites 19 different societies in one federal group. This new group became a member of TIF in 2006. Our country is a bridge that connects Asia to Europe. We wish to serve as a bridge to unite all thalassaemics of the world in 2011 at this Congress, organised together with TIF. We believe it will be a step forward for a better future for thalassaemia patients. The conference will be held in Antalya, which is the capital of tourism on the Mediterranean coast, also known as the Turkish Riviera, and has a rich history, culture and nature. You will have the opportunity to see the history and natural beauties of Antalya and benefit from its sun and beaches.

Apart from the rich scientific sessions which will include the latest updates, there is a rich social programme, organised both at the congress hotel and in the city of Antalya. Also, excursions will be organised in order to provide opportunities to visit the historical, cultural and natural attractions of our country.

There will be simultaneous translation at the patient and families programme if the number of participants from one country are over 70. The official language of the congress is English. We anticipate that there will be translations to Turkish, Greek, Italian, Russian and Arabic. The message of our congress is "knowledge is our power" and we believe that we would be able to take the patients, families, technicians, nurses, doctors and scientists one step further in the next decade, which we wish to be a decade of progress and perhaps of a cure.

We are looking forward to hosting you in Antalya, Turkey.

Duran Canatan
Chairman of the Organising Committee
President of the Thalassaemia Federation of Turkey

Message from the President of the Thalassaemia International Federation

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Thalassaemia International Federation (TIF), I would like to extend a warm invitation to you to attend the 12th International Conference on Thalassaemia and Other Haemoglobinopathies, and the 14th TIF Conference for Patients and Parents, to be held on 11–15 May in Antalya, Turkey. Most of you are already familiar with this flagship biennial conferences, which are being organised in the context of TIF's global educational programme since 1999. These, have been held simultaneously for health professionals and for patients, and each time they attract hundreds of delegates from all corners of the world. TIF has had impressive results over the years with regards to the impact these conferences have had on awareness and education of both health professionals, patients and parents.

These two simultaneous conferences, aim on providing the latest scientific and medical updates to both health professionals and patient and their families and exchanging knowledge and experiences. Above all and very importantly, these conferences serve as great opportunity to built up new and strengthening existing relations and collaborations. It is only by working together, by being partners in the effort, that we can achieve our common aim: the best possible quality of care for every patient with thalassaemia wherever in the world he or she may live.

Turkey is a very appropriate venue for our next conference. It is a country highly affected by thalassaemia and other abnormal haemoglobin disorders and one which has well recognised and spent significant focus and efforts, for sometime now, on improving their control at the national level. Turkey, as a country is full of cultural interest and is characterised by exemplary hospitality and natural beauty.

Antalya, our venue, situated on the coast of southwestern Turkey, is a famed holiday resort and offers interesting natural and cultural sights as well as the highest standard in holiday accommodation. I am confident that in such beautiful surroundings right next to the Mediterranean Sea, together with the support and commitment of our partners, the Thalassaemia Federation of Turkey and the medical community, will make these biennial conferences the best yet.

I strongly invite you to spread the word and I very much look forward to meeting you all in Antalya next May.

Panos Englezos
President
Thalassaemia International Federation