

30th Skin Research Day in Finland

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The Skin Research Day was held on 11 January 2010 in Helsinki. For the 30th time researchers in the field of Dermatology from all over Finland gathered and presented their work. Apart from Finnish researchers, Alain Hovnanian from Paris and Thomas Bieber from Bonn were invited and gave lectures on highly interesting topics.



An annual Skin Research Day has been organized in Finland for the last 30 years. The event was initiated in 1980 by three Associate Professors, *Christer Jansén* from Turku (Åbo), *Jaakko Karvonen* from Oulu (Uleåborg) and *Timo Reunala* from Tampere (Tammerfors) (Fig. 1). These seniors have now retired, but Timo Reunala took on the responsibility of organizing the jubilee symposium in Helsinki in January 2010. The aim of this symposium has always been to bring together researchers in the field of dermatology from all over Finland, and to give everyone an opportunity to present the results of their scientific work or patient cases. Five university clinics in the country have taken turns to organize the event. The programme includes one or two guest lectures by prominent Finnish scientists, followed by 10–15 short, 7–8 min presentations by younger researchers. The seminar is a good opportunity for specialists, residents, and younger students to practice their oral presentation skills, while giving the audience an overview of dermatological research in Finland. One or two presentations are presented with awards. The symposium is

usually held in the autumn, most recently in association with the autumn meeting of the Finnish Dermatological Society, and it attracts a large audience, including dermatologists and local researchers.

The 30th Skin Research Day was held in Biomedicum in Helsinki on 11 January 2010. For the 30th anniversary, two top dermatologists were invited from abroad. Professor *Alain Hovnanian* (Fig. 2) from Paris gave an excellent talk entitled “Skin allergy by protease dysregulation: from Netherton syndrome to atopic dermatitis”. He offered the audience a journey with translational views from scaly patients to the *SPINK5* gene and *LEKTI* proteins, and back to the inflammation in atopic dermatitis. Professor *Thomas Bieber* (Fig. 2) from Bonn gave a lecture on the topic “Atopic dermatitis in the emerging era of personalized medicine”. He presented highly interesting views on the evolution of medicine, from individually tailored treatments to the present trend of creating diagnostic and treatment guidelines. He also anticipated a new increase



Fig. 1. Professors Timo Reunala (left), Jaakko Karvonen and Christer Jansén initiated the annual Skin Research Day in 1980.



Fig. 2. Professors Alain Hovnanian (second from left) and Thomas Bieber (second from right) gave lectures at the 30th Skin Research Day in Helsinki on 11 January 2010. The guests with their hosts Sakari Reitamo (left), Timo Reunala and Annamari Ranki.

in more personalized approaches to the treatment of dermatological diseases.

The subjects of the 15 short presentations varied from basic and translational science to clinically-oriented topics. Two talks were given awards: *Nanna Fyhrquist* from Helsinki (“The role of CD4+ and CD8+ in contact hypersensitivity responses”) and *Katja Vähävihi* from Tampere (“UVB light and vitamin D in skin”) (Fig. 3).

The Skin Research Day has promoted Finnish dermatological research by offering a forum for presentations, discussion and informal communication. It also provides a natural annual deadline for research reports to be completed prior to grants being awarded in January.



Fig. 3. Katja Vähävihi's presentation (*left*) won an award. The prize was sponsored by Orion Pharma, represented by Anja Koskinen (*right*). Professor Aarne Oikarinen (*middle*) represents the jury.