

The Second European-American Intensive Course in PCR-Based Clinical and Forensic Testing

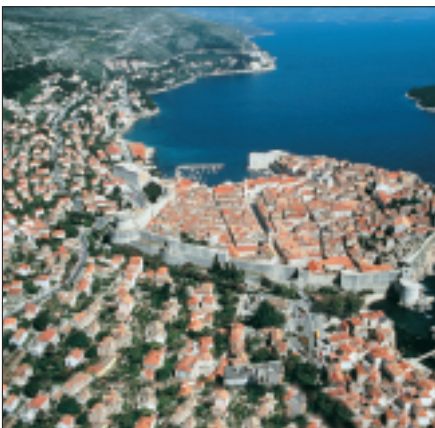
by Moses Schanfield¹ and Dragan Primorac²

¹Monroe County Public Safety Laboratory, Rochester, NY.

²University Hospital Split, Laboratory for Clinical and Forensic Genetics, Split, Croatia

In 1997 we organized the First European-American Intensive Course in PCR-Based Clinical and Forensic Testing. The objective was to have an intensive training session that would expose scientists from emerging Central and Eastern European countries to the latest knowledge and technology in clinical and forensic genetics. This was an opportunity for these scientists to have hands-on access to state-of-the-art laboratory equipment in PCR technology and to learn from scientists who use these technologies routinely. To our surprise, more than 150 participants from 30 countries attended. The first conference in Split, Croatia, was critical in understanding the current needs of scientists in the area (1).

The second conference will be held in Dubrovnik, Croatia, from September 3–14, 2001, and will again focus on two major topics: Forensic Identity Testing and Molecular Medicine. Referred to as the “Pearl of the Adriatic,” Dubrovnik is situated on the Dalmatian coast, surrounded by mountains and laced with the indigo waters of the Adriatic Sea. This excellent location is easily accessible for all participants, making Dubrovnik a marvelous place to enjoy and learn science.



Dubrovnik, Croatia.

Seventy-three invited lecturers from around the world, many of whom are leading scientists in their fields, will present cutting-edge information. The program is divided into plenary talks, workshops, mini-symposia and training programs. The meeting will include morning and evening sessions selected from the abstracts, principally on unpublished work. Altogether, the program will include more than 100 hours of intensive lectures. Promega, our principal sponsor, will also organize two training sessions—a clinical and a forensic session. There will also be two poster sessions.

This meeting aims to provide an up-to-date review of the scientific and medical aspects of human gene therapy and to examine conceptual and technical needs, as well as future directions.

The first week of the intensive course will address current issues in forensic identity testing. Lectures will include: crime scene investigation, identification of human remains by nuclear and mitochondrial DNA methods, short tandem repeat analysis, Y-chromosome testing, DNA in the courtroom and recent technological advances. One specially designed workshop will cover identification of human remains by DNA technology. Leading scientists in the field will organize all sessions.

The clinical section of the meeting will begin the following week and will address issues related to gene therapy of cancer and inherited diseases, microarrays and chip technology in clinical diagnostics and related fields, as well as poster presentations. There will also be a comprehensive educational program on the basic science and use of viral

and nonviral vectors for gene transfer and expression, sessions on the design and performance of gene therapy clinical trials, as well as a session on stem cell manipulation. This meeting aims to provide an up-to-date review of the scientific and medical aspects of human gene therapy and to examine conceptual and technical needs, as well as future directions.

The 2001 meeting will be filled with a combination of progressive scientific talks from invited investigators in forensic and clinical medicine, as well as poster presentations of scientific abstracts. Two specially designed issues of the Croatian Medical Journal will include all of the plenary talks.

Promega has established six European-American Intensive Course Awards to be given to emerging scientists to cover travel and lodging expenses for the conference. We are expecting 400–500 participants from over 40 countries. The Second European-American Intensive Course in PCR-Based Clinical and Forensic Testing was created for scientists, physicians, students and all parties who would like to learn about the latest advances in molecular medicine.

We believe that the combination of expert instructors and Dubrovnik's beautiful location will create a productive environment. We hope that this meeting will allow the interchange of information and foster professional partnerships that will endure into the future.

REFERENCES

1. Gardiner, G. (1998) The First European-American Intensive Course in PCR-Based Clinical and Forensic Genetics. *Gene Letter* Volume 2, Issue 2.

Details of the meeting can be found at the meeting web page: <http://www.european-american-genetics-meetings.org>.