

# Abstracts of the Tenth International Pathogenic Neisseria Conference

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# The Tenth International Pathogenic Neisseria Conference

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#### Preface

The emphasis of the Tenth International Pathogenic Neisseria Conference is the public health impact of the pathogenic *Neisseria* in both developed and developing countries, and how basic and applied research are contributing to the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of diseases caused by these bacteria. This is the major international conference in the field attracting over 300 scientists and public health officials from over 30 countries. The first conference in the series was held in San Francisco in 1978, and dealt primarily with *Neisseria gonorrhoeae*. The conferences have been held every two years since then, alternating between Europe and North America, and have resulted in the fruitful interaction of physicians, basic scientists, public health officers, and epidemiologists. The ninth conference was held in September 1994 in Winchester, England, and over 320 individuals attended.

A goal of these conferences has been to bring together investigators, from universities, governments and the biologics industry, who are involved with or are interested in *N. gonorrhoeae* and *N. meningitidis* and the diseases they cause. Over two million cases of gonococcal disease occur in the United States and Europe each year. Pelvic inflammatory disease in women exceeded \$5 billion in health care costs in the U.S. in 1993 and is the leading cause of ectopic pregnancy and tubal infertility in much of Africa. *N. meningitidis* causes outbreaks or epidemics in many countries causing major problems within the public health system. It is therefore of major importance to understand the mechanisms by which these pathogenic *Neisseria* are able to invade and evade the host immune system. These conferences have resulted in dissemination of important new findings concerning the pathogenic mechanisms and epidemiological surveillance of these organisms, and will provide the information to improve control through immunization. Furthermore, developments in our understanding of how the pathogenic *Neisseria* express, through up-regulation, an array of new surface proteins for acquisition of iron from human iron binding proteins, and for *in vivo* survival has contributed greatly to our understanding of other invasive bacterial pathogens.

These conferences have clearly demonstrated the application of molecular biology and immunology to the analysis of gonococcal and meningococcal physiology, structure, pathogenicity and epidemiology, and have presented new developments in vaccines against gonococcal and meningococcal disease. The Tenth International Pathogenic Neisseria Conference extends these observations and provides the latest information about studies now in progress to control and prevent the morbidity and mortality associated with these organisms. Lectures and posters were submitted in nine broad areas, including over 40 oral presentations and 220 posters.

Carl E. Frasch Ph.D. Chairman, Conference Organizing Committee

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