

## Medicinal chemistry within the Atlantic Arc and collaboration within Franco-Belges pharmacology

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The “Groupement des Pharmacochimistes de l’Arc Atlantique” (GP2A, the Atlantic Arc) aims to reflect the breakthroughs and on-going work in medicinal chemistry and pharmacology within Schools and Faculties of Pharmacy in Western European Universities. This consortium represents a loose group of Departments on an arc drawn along the Atlantic Coast.

In particular, by regular meetings, we report our recent research results using oral and poster presentations. These joint meetings are organised and co-ordinated by colleagues in Faculties of Pharmacy on an annual basis, and nine successful international conferences have already taken place and the next three are now in the planning stage. The next meeting will be held at the University of Bradford, in early September, followed by a meeting in May 2002 in Caen.

Our main aims for the future of GP2A are to provide a forum for an exchange of ideas, personnel, techniques and strategies in medicinal chemistry. Some of the work discussed in the meeting can be read in the papers published in previous special issues of *Pharmacy and Pharmacology Communications* and in this issue of the *Journal of Pharmacy and Pharmacology*. In particular, there are many papers from a number of different Universities (including Angers, Bath, Bordeaux, Caen, Liège, Lille, Nantes, Orléans and Rennes) that provide a representation of the geographical and scientific breadth of the science reported at our recent meetings. During the two days of our symposium, the conception of new chemical entities is explained on the basis of actual case studies, reported from on-going work in the Universities or in the Pharmaceutical Industry as formal lectures, oral free communications or poster sessions. The meetings are informal and great emphasis is placed upon oral presentations by postgraduate students which gives them valuable experience in communicating their science to their peer group.

By way of a brief history, The Atlantic Arc, based upon the concept of “an alternative to the strengthening of centralism”, originates from the work of Professor Loic Sparfel. In 1990 Professor Sparfel, as a member of the Regional Council of Pays de Loire, mobilized French colleagues in the Faculties of Pharmacy in Angers, Bordeaux, Caen, Limoges, Nantes, Poitiers, Rennes, and more recently Lille and Orléans into a group of medicinal chemists for collaborative studies in pharmacology with colleagues in Schools of Pharmacy in Portugal, Spain and the UK. The members of this scientific group carry out research in related areas of synthetic organic chemistry, phytochemistry and analysis. The GP2A meets at least every two years, at the current time it meets annually, with emphasis upon poster and oral free communications by postgraduate students together with a theme from invited plenary lecturers. The informal nature of the meetings has often been generously supported by local City Councils as several of the venues (Cardiff, Angers, Glasgow, Rennes, Caen) have been held in “twinned” cities.

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The so-called “Journées Franco-Belges de Pharmaco-chimie” originated from the wish of four Professors in Medicinal Chemistry, Daniel Lesieur and Jean-Pierre Hénichart (Institut de Chimie Pharmaceutique Albert Lespagnol, Lille), Jacques Poupaert (School of Pharmacy, Université Catholique de Louvain, Bruxelles) and Jacques Delarge (Institut Gilkinet, Liège) to promote the methods of drug design by a non-classical way.

An annual symposium was organised alternately in Northern France or Belgium. These symposia provided an ideal medium for young researchers (postgraduate students and young managers of the pharmaceutical industry) to meet known experts of medicinal research and discuss current research topics with them.

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cases reported at the University or in the Pharmaceutical Industry as lectures, oral communications, or poster sessions and, moreover, two prizes are attributed to young researchers to encourage them in their work in the field of drug design. Since 1987, the JFBP took place in Lille, Bruxelles, Liège, Luxembourg, and for the first time in Caen in 1998, at the initiative of Professor Sylvain Rault, allowing the combination of the JFBP with the GP2A conferences.

We are delighted to continue our good relationship with the editors of the *Journal of Pharmacy and Pharmacology* and welcome the desire on their part to maintain and strengthen the medicinal chemistry component of this publication. We look forward to seeing readers of the Journal at future Atlantic Arc meetings.