



## Responsible Stem Cell Research



The Third International Congress on Responsible Stem Cell Research was held in Padua, Italy, on November 16-18, 2016.

The Congress was sponsored by the Pontifical Academy for Life and the Pediatric Clinic in the Department of Women's and Children's Health at the University of Padua, Italy. It was organized under the leadership of Professor Katarina Le Blanc of the Karolinska University Hospital in Huddinge, Stockholm, Sweden, and Professors Giorgio Perilongo, and Maurizio Muraca of the Department of Women's and Children's Health at the University of Padua. Special support was provided by the Fondation Jérôme Lejeune, of Paris, and the Comité Consultatif d'Ethique en Matière de Recherche Biomédicale of the Principality of Monaco

There were more than 150 participants, coming from all over the world, and 42 different presentations were delivered.

The Congress opened with a video presentation from Japan by the 2012 Nobel Laureate in Medicine, Professor Shinya Yamanaka, famous for his breakthrough research into induced pluripotent stem cells (iPCS). He reported on the findings of work carried out by four hundred experts at the University of Kyoto to broaden the possibilities for the use of stem cells, increasing their therapeutic effectiveness and solving the

various difficulties connected with their use, such as timing, costs and actual results. Professor Yamanaka's program has been structured to be implemented over a period of twenty years,

After that presentation, the Congress analyzed the development of therapeutic uses for stem cells, which has become common at the tissue level but is still problematic with respect to organs. The analysis reflected a number of different points of view, particularly with respect to the possibility of taking up and replicating certain molecular potentialities of stem cells. They have recently been shown to be capable, by releasing certain substances, of inducing the regeneration of parts of damaged organs, notwithstanding the death of cells themselves.

Monsignor Renzo Pegoraro, Chancellor of the Pontifical Academy for Life and Moderator of one of the Sessions, commented on the work of the Congress: "The Congress has made it possible to present and discuss, in a very professional way, the state of research and clinical art in the use of stem cells in a calm and fruitful dialogue among science, medicine and ethics. This all took place with common sense, accepting the difficulties that still exist but at the same time recognizing the tireless efforts and the support of so many researchers and practitioners,"

The last session of the Congress was open to the public and was addressed by the President of the Pontifical Academy for Life, Archbishop Vincenzo Paglia. His presence reflected the desire of the Congress to give explicit consideration to the social and ethical aspects of therapeutic practice in this area, considering not only the governmental regulations, the role of the media, and economic concerns, but also the Church's vision of the dignity of human life in the border areas of medical and scientific research and practice.

Official site of the Congress