

Takehiko Nohmi
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Dear IAEMGS members,

The International Association of Environmental Mutagenesis and Genomics Societies (IAEMGS) is a global organization of societies promoting research on measures to prevent genomic DNA of human and other organisms from natural and man-made environmental factors, and basic research on molecular mechanisms of mutagenesis and DNA repair. IAEMGS (initially named the International Association of Environmental Mutagen Societies, IAEMS) was established in 1973 during the first International Conference on Environmental Mutagens (ICEM). In the past 40 years, the association has substantially expanded and currently includes 13 regional and national societies of EMS or Environmental Mutagenesis and Genomics Societies (EMGS). In 2013, IAEMS changed its name from IAEMS to IAEMGS to embrace a wider range of research on genome safety, such as genomics and epigenomics. The total number of members in IAEMGS societies is now about 5,000.

One remarkable feature of the current IAEMGS status is that several distinct research activities are on going under the same umbrella. These include regulatory genotoxicology (IWGT), human biomonitoring (HUMN), antimutagenesis or nutrigenomics, the ICEM on Human Populations (ICEMHP), and the Alexander Hollaender courses. Basic research on DNA repair and mutagenesis is also a core part of environmental mutagenesis and genomics research.

Therefore, the first task for IAEMGS is to enhance these activities and to improve opportunities for research groups to meet each other. New directions of research sometimes occur when distinct research groups meet and challenge the same problem from different points of view. Another remarkable feature of recent trend of IAEMGS is the appearance of new initiatives in China, India and Brazil, for example, in environmental mutagenesis and genomics. It is not surprising that environmental problems such as air and water pollution and safety of foods have become of increasing concern in these countries, as indicated by increased basic and applied research in the fields of environmental mutagenesis and genotoxicology. Consequently, the Asian Association of Environmental Mutagen Society (AAEMS) has been organized in 2005. The 11th ICEM in Brazil in 2013 was the first ICEM held in Latin America. The 12th ICEM will be held in Seoul in Korea in 2017. Thus, a second important task of IAEMGS is to establish opportunities where young scientists in developing countries can collaborate with and be trained by experienced scientists in the industrialized countries. Nevertheless, these two tasks, i.e., (1) enhancement of interdisciplinary research on environmental genomics and (2) the mingling of people from developing and industrialized countries, are not easy given the current financial status of the IAEMGS, which leads to the third challenge.

The annual income of IAEMGS is about US\$ 3,000 from subscription fees from the member societies; however, the Society spends more than US\$ 7,000 per year to support some workshops and courses. Therefore, the third and the most important task for IAEMGS is to improve the financial balance sheet so that it can provide significant support for the various activities outlined above.

These three tasks are interrelated, complex, and not easily achievable. However, I believe that we can achieve these goals because all the IAEMGS members are collaborative, dedicated, and have a strong passion for "science for genome safety." I invite you to communicate to me your thoughts and ideas for the financial stability and further growth of the IAEMGS in the 21st century.

Sincerely,

Takehiko Nohmi, PhD
President of IAEMGS