

# Greetings from the New President of the World Association of Radiopharmaceutical and Molecular Therapy



Dear Friends and Members of World Association of Radiopharmaceutical and Molecular Therapy (WARMTH),

First of all, I want to thank my predecessors, the Immediate Past President of WARMTH, Suresh Srivastava, Brookhaven, USA (2016–2017) and the Past President of WARMTH Richard Baum, Bad Berka, Germany (2014–2015), who both have contributed significantly in different ways to our success after the sudden demise of our dear WARMTH Founding President Ajit Padhy, Singapore, on August 22, 2013. Furthermore, I am also very grateful to all of our Executive and Governing Board Members all of whom have continuously served and contributed to the success of WARMTH over the past years.

Within only a few years of our creation, WARMTH has grown in status and respect, with presently approaching 500 members from all over the world. As the President of WARMTH, it is my privilege and pleasure to congratulate all the new selected members of the Executive and Advisory Board of WARMTH (2018–2019). The current version of our WARMTH Constitution was presented to, and subsequently approved and adopted by, the General Assembly of WARMTH, which was held on May 7, 2015, during the 10<sup>th</sup> ICRT-2015 at Innsbruck, Austria.

## The Governing Board Structure of World Association of Radiopharmaceutical and Molecular Therapy 2018-2019

### The Executive Board

- President Irene Virgolini, Austria
- President-Elect Partha Choudhury, India
- Immediate Past President Suresh Srivastava, USA
- Secretary Butch Magsombol, Singapore
- Treasurer Aviral Singh, Germany.

### Elected Advisory Board

- Sze Ting Lee, Australia.
- Kalevi Kairemo, Finland.
- Mike Sathekge, South Africa.
- Patricia Bernal Trujillo, Colombia.
- Raihan Hussain, Bangladesh.
- Knut Liepe, Germany.

### Adopted Advisory Board

- Chief Operating Officer Josh Mailman, USA
- ICRT 2019 Congress President Feng Wang, China.

### World Journal of Nuclear Medicine

- Editor-in-Chief John Buscombe, UK
- Editor-in-Chief-Elect Qaisar Siraj, Kuwait.

I want to thank all of the new Governing Board Members for taking up leadership with me and on my side and helping me in the continuation of our WARMTH's Friends Club! I am sure that in my presidency period and thereafter under our new President-Elect Partha Choudhury, WARMTH will grow even stronger and reach even greater heights with our collective wisdom and efforts. Welcome in the Ajit Padhy's Friends Club, the WARMTH!

WARMTH initiatives comprise of the advances in science and education in therapeutic nuclear medicine and radiopharmaceutical therapy including dosimetry, treatment evaluation, radiation physics, radiation biology, and radiation protection. WARMTH is the only worldwide organization founded to promote the use of radionuclide molecular therapy and of the relatively novel paradigm of "*Thera (g) nostics*" worldwide. WARMTH experts in nuclear medicine belong to more than fifty countries from around the globe, and all of our experts dedicate their time in the implication of new therapeutic methods and they do this almost always on a charity basis. The success of nuclear therapy in the global sphere will depend on all of you, dear WARMTH members from around the world!

I have known Ajit Padhy since his time at the IAEA in Vienna, and also working also with him on different projects over almost 20 years. After Ajit Padhy's sudden demise, we all have continuously endeavored towards our collective goal of making WARMTH grow into a great international organization. During one of his many lectures, Ajit Padhy had stated *"WARMTH is not the domain of one person. I am happy I was able to realize my dream and create a world-class product. We all have to move on and so does the WARMTH. Irrespective who is running it, I am sure it will continue to grow. Hiccups, we can all have in life, but we all should learn from them and move on. WARMTH too will overcome its hiccups and will continue to warm our hearts. And yes, I am very much a part of it-and it's a part of me which will never go away."*

Today, WARMTH has all the attributes of a credible international organization, and our young organization is transitioning from its "childhood" to its "adulthood:"

WARMTH is duly registered as an international association in India under the Societies Registration Act XXI, Government of Delhi, on August 25, 2010. In order to facilitate and streamline our finances, the Governing Board of WARMTH 2016-2017 has decided to newly register WARMTH's new registration as a nonprofit scientific entity in the USA. The constitution has been adapted and the Assembly of WARMTH in the 2018 Annual Meeting in Melbourne shall be solicited to agree on this action.

WARMTH official journal, the World Journal of Nuclear Medicine, has gained enough credibility to be indexed in the PubMed. We are very grateful to our Editor-in-Chief John Buscombe, UK (2014-2018), and our Senior Editor, Savvas Frangos, Cypress. We look forward to continued growth of our journal under its incoming new Editor-in-Chief Qaisar Siraj, Kuwait (from 2019). Based on our financial limitations, the Governing Board has decided that we maintain the journal online only, and that both paper submission and access remain free. Savings should help towards increasing the number of issues from three to four a year and also reducing the time from acceptance to publication.

WARMTH's main scientific activity, the ICRT (International Conference on Radiopharmaceutical Therapy), has become an annual global event with unforgettable meetings in Limassol, Cyprus (2005), Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia (2007), Goa, India (2008), Cartagena, Colombia (2009), South Africa (2010), Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam (2011) and Kuwait (2011), Levi, Finland (2012), Manila, the Philippines (2013), Cancun, Mexico (2014), Innsbruck, Austria (2015), Kochi, India (2016), Vienna, Austria (2017), Melbourne, Australia (2018). The "Ajit Padhy Memorial Oration"

was implemented during the ICRT-2015 in Innsbruck and its first presentations were delivered by Hossein Jadvar, USA (ICRT-2016, Kochi) and Stanley Goldsmith, USA (ICRT-2017, Vienna).

WARMTH has been able to forge an alliance with the Society of Nuclear Medicine and Molecular Imaging (SNMMI), and hence, in conjunction with the Annual Meeting of the SNMMI, WARMTH has co-sponsored a number of joint sessions in the Continuing Medical Education program during both the SNMMI Mid-Winter and SNMMI Annual Meetings since 2013, as well as by participation in the Categorical Seminars on Theranostics during the SNMMI Annual Meetings in Baltimore (2015), San Diego (2016), Denver (2017) as well as Philadelphia (2018). Great beginnings of WARMTH's collaboration with the new SNMMI "Therapy Center of Excellence" have been implemented by the Immediate Past President of WARMTH Suresh Srivastava who also served as President of the "Therapy Center of Excellence."

In addition, WARMTH members have served and continue to serve in a number of international and national societies and organizations such as the WFNMB, AOFNMB, SNMMI, or the IAEA. We hope to continue our collaborations for everybody's mutual success.

WARMTH's research activities over the last years concentrated on liver cancer therapy using Re188-Lipiodol, with its availability in generator form and similar chemistry to Tc99m. With more than 70% of the world's liver cancer in Asia—where the vast majority of patients do not have any health insurance—it is imperative that a cost-effective palliation procedure would be available. During the Manila ICRT-2013, Ajit Shinto, India, took lead of this project which had started in summer 2013 in Coimbatore shortly before the sudden demise of Ajit Padhy, resulting also in the WARMTH-sponsored World Rhenium Congress in Coimbatore 2016 and 2017, along with the WARMTH Theranostic Academy. With the help of many faculties, further development in radiochemistry, pharmacy, and dosimetry for Re188 was achieved, resulting also in projects for pain palliation, synoviorthesis, neuroendocrine tumor therapy (NET), and even prostate-specific membrane antigen (PSMA) labeling. Lined-up centers for the Re188 projects include India, China, Mongolia, Pakistan, the Philippines, Vietnam, South Africa, and Myanmar. I like Ajit Shinto's quotation of Saint Francis of Assisi *"We started by doing what is necessary, we are doing what is possible and then with your continued support we will be soon doing the impossible!"*

Recent years have brought up a number of very promising data on PSMA Theranostics. Hojjat Ahmadzadehfar, Germany, took lead of organizing a retrospective WARMTH-sponsored study on the currently available

response data after treatment of prostate cancer patients with Lu117-PSMA-ligand, and a couple of WARMTH centers have already accepted to participate in this evaluation.

Furthermore, under the lead of Sabina Dizdarevic, UK, a WARMTH multicentric study on thyroid cancer therapy has been proposed and will be presented soon.

A multicentric retrospective evaluation on the role of F18-FDG-PET in somatostatin receptor PET-positive NET patients is currently initiated under the supervision of WARMTH.

WARMTH's educational endeavors include the WARMTH Theranostic Academy. There are many ways that WARMTH may participate in the global health work. Offering training programs for doctors, medical physicists, and technicians is one way. Universities can invite and sponsor health workers for training. Such training courses can also be in the online distant learning mode of the WARMTH website. Sending "visiting professors" to train local doctors in developing countries or continued support through "Telenuclear Medicine" is another possibility.

IAEA's support for WARMTH was repeatedly ensured by Diana Paez, Section Head of Nuclear Medicine at the Division of Human Health, IAEA. In collaboration with the IAEA, WARMTH's participation in IAEA projects – or vice versa – our educational program have to be imparted need to be thoroughly discussed *de novo*.

What will be new and how will we proceed?

I will continue, and kindly ask all of you to help to obtain sponsorship of as many industrial companies as possible to support our scientific and educational activities. We should attract additional WARMTH Corporate Members who can support our needs. We have to set aside some kind of "Educational Fund" in order to support our young scientists to present their results, network and interact with fellow nuclear medicine members at our future ICRTs. We also have to appoint a new permanent WARMTH secretariat, following the old one in Singapore, and express our thanks for the devotion of our Chief Operational Officer Josh Mailman, whose help has been inestimable, and also acknowledge the continued assistance by my own secretaries Gertraud Buchberger

and Anna Meister since then. We are constantly taking steps to improve our website to provide relevant information and facilitate communication.

On behalf of the members of the Organizing Committee and the Scientific Committee of the WARMTH and the WFNMB, I would like to extend my cordial invitation to all of you to attend and participate in our 13<sup>th</sup> ICRT-2018, which will take place on April 20, 2018, in Melbourne, Australia, held as pre-congress meeting of the 12<sup>th</sup> WFNMB Congress. The ICRT-2018 reflects WARMTH's mission with the goal of providing the best treatment and care for our patients, and as in the past, there is no registration fee for the members of WARMTH!

I am looking forward to your active participation in the 13<sup>th</sup> ICRT-2018 and all other activities of WARMTH and to meet and interact with friends and colleagues from all over the world.

At last, I would like to thank each and every one of you, WARMTH members, for your continued support and for your help in ensuring a brilliant future for WARMTH!

Yours warm(th)ly.

**Irene Virgolini**

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<b>Quick Response Code:</b> 	<b>Website:</b> <a href="http://www.wjnm.org">www.wjnm.org</a>
	<b>DOI:</b> 10.4103/wjnm.WJNM_27_18

**How to cite this article:** Virgolini I. Greetings from the new president of the world association of radiopharmaceutical and molecular therapy. *World J Nucl Med* 2018;17:67-9.