Meeting Report

Kinetoplastid Internet Symposium: A KISs for 2002

Kevin M. Tyler, Amitavo Ganguli and Alberto M. R. Dávila

The Kinetoplastid Internet Symposium was held online from 18 to 22 February 2002, at http://www.trypanosome.com/

It was always going to be difficult to repeat the success of the 3rd Internet Conference for Trypanosomes and Trypanosomatids (TICSTT) [1,2]. Nevertheless, it was imperative not to squander momentum, and the trypanosome research community seemed worth courting with a smaller follow-up symposium. Valentine's day launched the week long KISs – The Kinetoplastid Internet Symposium – conceived as a short meeting, focusing on the control of kinetoplastid diseases. One successful aim of this meeting was to provide high quality reviews and scientific articles for the launch of a new e-journal *Kinetoplastid Biology and Disease*. During the symposium, 615 attendees from 36 countries racked up ~20 000 hits and 1340 visits to the web site.

Aims and objectives

The aim of Internet conferences and *Kinetoplastid Biology and Disease* are ostensibly the same: To provide vehicles for high quality science related to kinetoplastid disease, which can be relayed for free to anybody with a networked computer. Furthermore, it is hoped to promote communication between disciplines working on closely related pathogens and to give a focus for the scientific community on the problems faced by clinicians, veterinarians and public health workers in the field. These aims are compatible with the stated aims of PubMed Central, which will archive relevant papers and provide direct access to these articles from PubMed.

Highlights

Wanderley de Souza (Universidade Federale do Rio de Janeiro, Brazil) offered to head up the scientific agenda with a comprehensive description of how breakthroughs in the study of trypanosome cell biology could be translated into new drug targets and into affirmative action in combating disease. Kwang-Poo Chang (Chicago Medical School, IL, USA) and Brad McGwire (University of Illinois, IL, USA) focused on pathoantigenic determinants and their role in determining the virulence and pathogenesis of leishmaniasis, particularly on the complex interactions between multiple determinants, which can lead to various outcomes. The online discussion forum was then used to explore the importance of these antigenic determinants in the fabrication of immunoprophylactics, especially with regard to live attenuated *Leishmania* vaccines.

Serap Aksoy (Yale University School of Medicine, CT, USA), Zhengrong Hao (Yale University School of Medicine) and Patricia Strickler (Yale University School of Medicine) authored an intriguing discussion on the importance of molecular studies directed at dissecting tsetse–trypanosome interactions. The response role of insect defensins and the possible use of paratransgenic tsetse with transformed *Wolbachia* (rendering tsetse refractory to trypanosome infection) were discussed in the article and online.

João Carlos Dias (Oswaldo Cruz Foundation, Belo Horizonte, Brazil) and Christopher Schofield (London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, UK) presented a fascinating report highlighting the current status of Chagas disease control throughout Latin America. The report emphasized the need to capitalize on recent gains made by regional programs, such as the Southern Cone Initiative, in order to prevent the disease re-emerging in areas where transmission has effectively been eliminated. Moreover, such programs should be extended into regions where the disease is still endemic. In particular, the report highlighted research areas that are most likely to produce significant steps forward in combating Chagas disease including triatomine sampling, migratory behavior and epidemiological analysis, improved serological tests, new drug designs and analysis of regional program structures.

Finally, a strong poster session covering advances from the fields of diagnostics and chemotherapy was presented online. One significant presentation from Wendy Gibson *et al.*, (University of Bristol, UK) described markers that identified *Trypanosoma brucei rhodesiense* from other members of the *Trypanosoma brucei* complex. Other presentations covered the phylogenetic identity of *Leishmania mexicana* (Amalia Monroy-Ostria and Omar Hernandez-Montes, Col. Casco de Santo Tomas, Mexico) and the *T. brucei* genome initiative using single nucleotide polymorphisms (SNPs) suitable for population analysis in African trypanosomes (Emmanuelle Bart-Delabesse *et al.*, University of Cambridge, UK). The use of internal transcribed spacer ribosomal DNA (ITS-rDNA) for diagnosing *Trypanosoma lewisi* in laboratory animals was also described by Marc Desquesnes and colleagues (Centre International de Recherche-Développement sur l'Elevage en zone Subhumide, Burkina Faso). Posters on veterinary chemotherapeutics by Alain Bourdichon *et al.*, (Atarost, Hamburg, Germany) discussed the efficacy of diminazene against *Trypanosoma evansi* in combination with antipyrine or Trypan (procaine) and using liposomes as a delivery vehicle.

Until the launch of *Kinetoplastid Biology and Disease*, articles from the conference will remain online at http://www.trypanosome.com. We invite volunteers interested in co-ordinating further Internet meetings or developing integrated Internet resources for kinetoplastid diseases to contact us.

References

1 Davila, A.M.R. and Tyler, K.M. (2001) Preface. *Int. J. Parasitol.* 31, 5–6

2 Davila, A.M.R. and Tyler, K.M. (2001) The net closes on trypanosomatids. *Mem. Inst. Oswaldo Cruz* 96, 1025–1028

3 Roberts, R.J. (2001) PubMed Central: The GenBank of the published literature. *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. U. S. A.* 98, 381–382

Kevin M. Tyler*
Northwestern University Medical School, Dept of Pathology, 303 E. Chicago Ave., Chicago, IL 60611, USA.
*e-mail: ktyler@trypanosome.com

Amitavo Ganguli
Stonesoft, Lauttasaarentie 9 A 15, 00200 Helsinki, Finland.

Alberto M.R. Dávila
Departamento de Bioquimica e Biologia Molecular, Instituto Oswaldo Cruz, Fiocruz, Av. Brasil 4365, Rio de Janeiro, RJ 21045-900, Brazil.

 1471-4922/02/$ – see front matter PII: S1471-4922(02)02285-7