General information

Organiser: Motor Neurone Disease Association
Host: AISLA (Associazione Italiana Sclerosi Laterale Amiotrofica)
Venue: ATA Hotel Quark, Via Lampedusa, 11/A – 20141 Milan, Italy
Tel: + 39 02 84431, Fax: 39 02 8464190

The symposium proceedings will be in English.

Milan has three airports:
Milano Linate (LIN) 7km from the city centre.
Milano Malpensa (MXP) 45km from the city centre.
Bergamo Orio al Sero (BGY) 50km from the city centre.

All three are connected to the city by dedicated buses or trains. Alternatively taxis, car hire and car hire with driver are available at the airports.

Further information on accommodation will be published on our website in March.
Visit www.mndassociation.org/symposium

Full details will also be included in the full symposium programme available in August.

Follow symposium deadlines and news on Twitter **#alssymp**

Please return to:

Conference Team
MND Association UK
PO Box 246
NORTHAMPTON
NNI 2PR
UK

mnda motor neurone disease association

24th international symposium on ALS/MND

6 – 8 December 2013

Milan
ITALY

First announcement
Call for papers

Host: AISLA (Associazione Italiana Sclerosi Laterale Amiotrofica)

Organised by the MND Association in co-operation with the International Alliance of ALS/MND Associations

Biomedical meeting

Chair: Caterina Bendotti
Mario Negri Institute for Pharmacological Research, Milan

The discovery, twenty years ago, of the first genetic defect causing a familial form of ALS/MND has brought major advances in understanding disease pathogenesis. The development of cellular and animal models has highlighted the complexity of this disease but has also provided the tools to unravel the specific components of such complexity. We now know that the massive loss of the motor neurons associated with ALS/MND is the result not only of aberrant mechanisms in these cells but perhaps, and even more importantly, of an imbalance in the interaction between motor neurons and other cell types in both the central and peripheral nervous system. In the last few years, major advances have been made in understanding the potential roles of astrocytes, oligodendrocytes, microglia and neuroinflammation in general.

In addition, the massive recruitment of immune competent cells raises novel potential targets for therapeutic intervention. This disease, unlike other neurodegenerative disorders, involves peripheral systems that are not immune-privileged, like the CNS. Targeting these specific peripheral compartments in addition to preventing the toxic mechanisms in the motor neuronal cell bodies is likely crucial to obtain a therapeutic effect.

Other important research advances are emerging from molecular genetics, highlighting the involvement of diverse ALS-linked gene products with distinct functions, but converging on a few common pathological mechanisms. The impairment of protein degradation with the consequent accumulation of inclusions represents a major facet of ALS pathophysiology. Targeting these mechanisms is presumably a key strategy to prevent the accumulation of misfolded proteins as well as their intercellular spread and we expect to see interventions in this direction in the near future.

Great expectations derive also from the research on the pathogenic mechanism associated with the noncoding hexanucleotide repeat expansion in the C9ORF72 gene. Of course, the rapid progress of genetics is going to identify many other genes linked to the ALS, presumably in association with other diseases such as FTLD. ALS cannot be considered only a monogenic disease but a complex inheritance of risk variants in multiple genes that may act in concert to determine the pathological process. Thus, in line with the complexity of the disease, it is likely that a successful treatment for ALS will have to be directed at multiple targets.

The symposium will bring together basic researchers and clinicians to discuss and debate on the new findings, advance knowledge and generate novel ideas that hopefully will allow us to progress more rapidly toward our primary objective: the prevention and the cure of the disease.

Proposed platform session themes include:

- **Disease modelling**
- **Small molecule screening**
- **Genetics and genomics**
- **Glial biology and pathology**
- **Protein misfolding and degradation**
- **RNA processing and dysregulation**
- **Stem cell biology**
- **Axonal degeneration**
- **Cell stress mechanisms**
- **Neuroinflammation**

Clinical meeting

Chair: Vincenzo Silani
University of Milan Medical School at IRCCS Istituto Auxologico Italiano

The recognition of the clinical variability underlying ALS/MND challenges the scientific community to identify novel therapeutic strategies for the treatment of clinically heterogeneous groups and, more broadly, to design better assistance models for both patients and caregivers. Distinct pathomechanisms have been identified in the last few years, mainly due to genetic studies in patients with familial ALS/MND, with major implications for understanding sporadic forms of the disease.

Moreover, the discovery of a shared pathological signature and a genetic overlap in ALS and FTLD have cemented decades of clinical observations of cognitive involvement in ALS and reinforced the evidence of common bases for the two disorders, both tragically lacking effective therapies. Novel biomarkers are urgently needed to define each patient's complexity due to the emerging extramotor involvement. Stratification of ALS/FTLD patients into more homogeneous subgroups thus will have a direct impact not only in the design of clinical trials, but also in the identification of novel assistance models. If the conceptualization and management of ALS/MND as a pure motor system disorder needs a radical overhaul, the assistance model deserves equally to be redesigned according to the different clinical phenotypes, with a subsequent large impact on healthcare organization.

The disappointment generated in January 2013 by the failure of one of the more promising drugs after riluzole, namely dexpramipexole, may represent the final act of an old-fashioned therapeutic strategy. A more effective and personalized healthcare is an emerging need, requiring also a careful revision of the clinical diagnostic criteria. In this perspective the symposium in Milan may represent an unprecedented opportunity to re-think an 'old' disease by focusing on a more personalized healthcare inspired by biological evidence, and to redesign both therapeutic and assistance models with large impact on the multidisciplinary team in charge of the ALS/MND patients.

Proposed platform session themes include:

- **Clinical phenotypes**
- **Patient autonomy and decision making**
- **Cognitive change**
- **Biomarkers**
- **End of life care**
- **Care education and practice**
- **Respiratory and nutritional management**
- **Epidemiology**

Call for abstracts

Milan, Italy 6 – 8 December 2013
Summary of conditions for acceptance

- All abstracts must be submitted online, via a link on the MND Association's website **www.mndassociation.org/symposium**. Abstracts submitted via fax or email cannot be accepted.
- Abstracts must be in English, and be no longer than 450 words.
- Authors may submit abstracts outlining ongoing work but **they must be submitted as 'Work in Progress'.** Unless so submitted, abstracts may be rejected if they do not contain sufficient data and conclusions.
- Case studies will be treated as 'Work in Progress' unless, in the opinion of the Programme Committee, they add significant new knowledge to the field.
- Abstracts will be published in an open access supplement to the journal *Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis and Frontotemporal Degeneration*, except abstracts accepted as 'Work in Progress'. These will not be published, but will be published on the MND Association's website only. All abstracts will be made available to download one month prior to the symposium.
- Authors must provide telephone and email contact details, to which all symposium correspondence will be sent.
- Instructions and full Conditions of Acceptance are available on the website **www.mndassociation.org/symposium**
- Any queries regarding the submission of abstracts should be sent to **abstracts@mndassociation.org**.
- **Formal acceptance of an abstract and reservation of a poster board, if appropriate, is conditional upon payment of the registration fee.**

Deadline for abstract submission is 10 May 2013

Scan the QR code and go straight to the Symposium website

Milan

Milan is one of the most important historical and stylish cities in Italy. One of Europe's four fashion capitals, Milan is also famous for its cuisine, opera, churches, museums and football!

Although it is a working city, as the country's business and financial capital, visitors come in droves for the shopping, eating and nightlife. Milan is known throughout the world for its high fashion and design excellence. Shopping opportunities are at their very best in the Golden Quad area, where streets are filled with leading fashion houses.

The city and its surrounding areas also offer a wide range of museums from major art galleries to museums of science and technology. The Duomo is the fourth largest Gothic cathedral in Italy and its construction was spread over five centuries. The inspiring cathedral is Italy's last Gothic work and is accentuated by 135 marble spires, 3,400 statues and 96 gargoyles.

Milan is full of wonderful and exciting places to eat out, with a wide choice of every kind of food imaginable. The many

Milan

stylish locations in Milan offer a wide variety of superb, mouth-watering menus, often with an emphasis on fish and pasta combined with excellent local produce, which make Milan dining an enjoyable experience.

Outside of the city centre, Lake Como, one of the largest and deepest lakes in Italy, is just 40km north of Milan and famous for its villas, picturesque mountains and valleys.

Milan has an efficient transport system which allows you to get around the city quickly and cheaply. Unlimited tourist travel passes allow you to move around without having to worry about buying more than one ticket.

Milan is easily accessible with three airports: Milano Linate (LIN) 7km from the city centre, Milano Malpensa (MXP) 45km from the city centre and Bergamo Orio al Sero (BGY) 50km from the city centre.

Milan information:

www.aboutmilan.com
www.milancity.com
www.milan.world-guides.com

Registration

Online registration is available immediately at **www.mndassociation.org**
The full International Symposium Programme and Registration will be available in August.

Fees:

Early Bird Registration	(until 14 July):	**£390.00**	payable in £ Sterling
Standard Registration	(15 July – 13 October):	**£450.00**	payable in £ Sterling
Late Registration	(14 October – 17 November):	**£520.00**	payable in £ Sterling
Onsite	(18 November onwards):	**£900.00**	payable in £ Sterling

Information request

☐ Please forward the International Symposium Programme and Registration when available.

Title: First name: Last name:

Department:

Job title:

Organisation/Company:

City: State/County:

Zip/Post Code: Country:

Telephone: Fax:

Email:

Data Protection: The MND Association complies with the Data Protection Act. Your details will be added to our database. You may inform us at any time if you do not wish to receive mailings from the MND Association or the organisations with whom we co-operate.

Please return to: **Conference Team, MND Association UK, PO Box 246, Northampton NN1 2PR, UK**
Fax: (+) 44 (0) 1604 611858 Email: symposium@mndassociation.org

Information is also available at www.mndassociation.org/symposium