

Welcome to the special edition of Metabolic Brain Disease dedicated to the most recent International Society for the study of Hepatic Encephalopathy and Nitrogen metabolism (ISHEN) symposium held in London in 2014.

The meeting was a great success, drawing scientists and clinicians from every part of the globe to present and discuss the latest research in hepatic encephalopathy (HE) and related conditions.

Following the meeting in London we elected to prepare and publish the proceedings of the meeting, and are very grateful to Professor Konat and the team at Metabolic Brain Disease for providing this opportunity and their help in bringing this special edition together.

However, rather than simply compiling the presentations from the conference speakers we have attempted to capture the essence of the meeting, both in considering the current practice and knowledge and in considering what may be just around the corner. As such, we have articles from recognised world leaders looking at where we are now, and fascinating insights into emerging technologies and prospective novel therapies.

Therefore, this special edition comprises articles based upon the sessions and workshops held at the meeting. These were divided into clinical aspects exploring current diagnosis methodology and therapy, and best experimental practise to explore the pathophysiology of the condition. In addition, there are a number of original articles presenting the latest research in this area. In several cases, the original symposium presentation showed only a small part of what has gone on to become exciting and interesting research.

We also remembered the passing of two great figures who had worked in this area for many years. Professor Andrés Blei (Groszmann 2009) was a leading figure in HE research who was inspirational to many others following in his footsteps. We were very proud to name a lecture in his honour, and delighted to invite his friend and colleague Professor Roger Butterworth to be the first to give the Andrés Blei lecture. The article contributed by Roger in this edition captures the ethos of their discussions over many years, and investigates the concept of synergy in factors leading to HE.

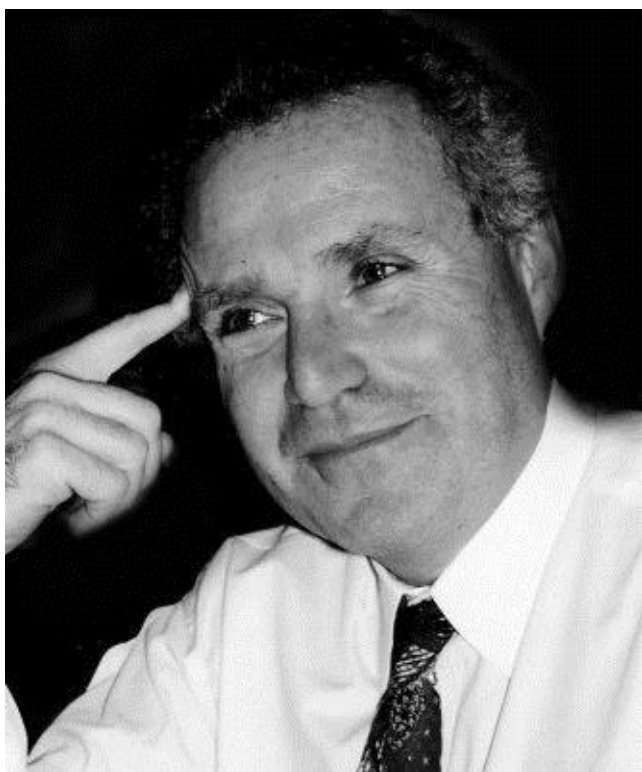
Professor Joan Cordoba (Jalan and Estoban 2014) was another world leading clinical scientist who had been a keen supporter of ISHEN through many years. Joan was wonderful mentor and an inspirational figure for many younger scientists and as such we felt it appropriate to create a young investigator prize in his honour. The first recipient of this award, Dr Rune Kristianson, was invited to prepare an article for this special edition based upon his novel work on hyperammonaemia therapy.

I hope that you will enjoy the articles presented here, and ISHEN will be very pleased to welcome you to the next meeting to be held in India and all future symposia ([www.ishen.org](http://www.ishen.org)).

## References

Groszmann R. (2009) Andres T. Blei, M.D. (October 19, 1949–October 1, 2008). *Heptology* 49 (2): 339-40

Jalan R and Estoban R (2014) Joan Cordoba Cordona (1964–2014): A dedicated clinician, great scientist, mentor, friend, collaborator, critic... *J Hepatology* (60): 1105-07.



Andres Blei



Joan Cordoba