



Pathogens' Survival Strategies

from fundamentals to field

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Second announcement ITM colloquium 2012

Dates: 3-5 December 2012.

Place: The Institute of Tropical Medicine, Antwerp, Belgium.

This colloquium is organized by the Antwerp Institute of Tropical Medicine (ITM) with support of the Flemish Ministries of Sciences and Education, the Research foundation for Flanders (FWO) and the Belgian Directorate General for Development Cooperation (DGD).

Background

Infectious diseases are the result of an evolutionary arms race between pathogens and their hosts. As the Red Queen who taught Alice to run ever faster in order to stay in the same place, most infectious microorganisms have developed intricate strategies to survive as colonists of their hosts whereas the latter have evolved by equally clever adaptations to destroy or fence off these intruders. In many cases, millennia of arms race have led to a mutual non-destruction pact, resulting in peaceful cohabitation as long as a biological equilibrium is maintained. Understanding these survival strategies and underlying interspecies interactions offers a unique insight in the fundamentals of the biology of pathogens and their hosts. This knowledge can lead to the development of new tools to cure or control infectious diseases. However, as shown by the rapid development of drug resistance and the emergence of new diseases, including HIV/AIDS, medical interventions and other ecological interferences will inevitably lead to a new episode in the competition between pathogens and their hosts.

Objectives

The main objectives of the colloquium are:

- to provide an update and new angles on research into host-pathogen relationships and their consequences for science and medicine
- to promote interdisciplinary and cross-thematic interaction between scientists working on different pathogen models and disciplines
- to translate basic research on the host-pathogen models in new approaches to cure and control infectious diseases
- to create a platform for novel collaborative links between scientists across the world and across disciplines.



Programme

The colloquium will be held along two lines.

On the one hand, **experts** in various fields will give short eye-opener talks in order to **provide a comprehensive view on the potential of evolutionary infectiology**, including viruses (HIV, HTLV-I), bacteria and mycobacteria, protozoa and helminths. These oral sessions will be grouped in 6 themes and a general discussion will be held at the end of each of them:

1. Pathogen survival in vertebrate hosts (confirmed speakers: Etienne Pays, Joel D. Ernst, Tine Verdonck, Dissou Affolabi)
2. Adaptation of the vertebrate host to pathogens (confirmed speakers: Martin Ota, Guido Vanham, Stefan Magez, Wim Jennes, Anna Rosanas Urgell)
3. Drug resistance (confirmed speakers: Coralith Garcia, Jean-Claude Dujardin, Didier Ménard, Sébastien Gagneux, and Kevin Ariën)
4. Adaptation of pathogens to invertebrate hosts (confirmed speakers: Benjamin Gourbal, Shaden Kamhawi, Guy Caljon, Isabel Roditi and Didier Fontenille)
5. Interaction between pathogens (confirmed speakers: Nicolas Fasel, Pauline Mwinzi, Martin Antonio, William Worodria and Sarah Knowles)
6. Transmission dynamics in the evolutionary survival of pathogens (confirmed speakers: Martine Peters, Martin Eichner, Dionicia Gamboa Vilela, Lies Durnez and Tine Huysse)

On the other hand, interactive and 'mix and mingle' lunches will be organized on Day 1 and 2, followed by poster sessions. All participants are encouraged to contribute, the poster sessions are open to all participants through a call for posters (deadline: September 30, 2012). Each selected proposal will allow the submitting research groups to present their main research lines and to interact with the speakers and other participants.

A **limited number of scholarships are available** to participants from developing countries. These scholarships will be awarded on the basis of a poster abstract submitted by the candidate and cover flight costs, a subsistence allowance, hotel costs and the registration fee (including walking dinner). Poster abstracts will be selected on excellence and links with the colloquium themes. If you wish to apply for a scholarship, please visit our website:

<http://www.itg.be/internet/colloq2012/ScholarshipContest.html>

Participants

We expect about 200 participants, representing:

- Researchers of infectious diseases and host-pathogen relationships
- Other scientists interested in a look beyond their own expertise or model
- Biomedical students and research fellows
- World-wide experts with special emphasis on scientists from tropical and developing countries
- International, European, Belgian and Flemish authorities and policy makers



Registration

The registration fee covers entry to the colloquium, 30 networking cards per participant, an abstract book of the presentations and lunches and coffee breaks on the colloquium days.

Registration fee for regular participants: € 40

ITM staff and Master students have free access.

On Tuesday December 4, 2012 we will hold the colloquium dinner from 7 p.m. until 10.30 p.m at the Palace on the Meir' in Antwerp. The colloquium dinner consists of a reception, followed by a walking dinner that caters to vegetarians and various food preferences. You will have the opportunity to follow a guided tour (Dutch, English and French) of what used to be the residency of Napoleon in Antwerp.

Would you like to participate to the walking dinner? Regular participants pay a contribution of € 40, ITM staff and Master students € 15.

Please register online: www.itg.be/colloq2012 no later than the 31st of October 2012. For group bookings, please e-mail the group's name, number of participants and the organization that you pertain to, to colloq2012@itg.be, you will be helped with the registration by our colloquium secretariat.

Organizing committee

Jean-Claude Dujardin, Nadine Van Peer, Ann Verlinden and Andrea Zavala (Institute of Tropical Medicine)

Scientific committee

Jean-Claude Dujardin, Jan Van den Abbeele, Guido Vanham, Bouke de Jong, Luc Kestens, Marc Coosemans, Leen Rigouts (Institute of Tropical Medicine/University of Antwerp)
Frans Van Meir, Louis Maes (University of Antwerp)
Tine Huyse (Institute of Tropical Medicine/KU Leuven)
Jorge Arévalo (Instituto de Medicina Tropical Alexander von Humboldt, Peru)

Colloquium Secretariat

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Website: <http://www.itg.be/colloq2012> Travel, hotel and practical information can be found on the colloquium website, see practicalities.

