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Editor's Corner

Udine Sleep Conference 2002

In this and the following two issues we are introducing a special section of the journal dealing predominantly with articles on the restless legs syndrome (RLS) and extrapyramidal diseases. These are derived from presentations at the Fifth International Symposium on Sleep Medicine (Sleep Udine) held in Udine, Italy on June 27–29, 2002, during which many experts in the field came together for a stimulating and thought provoking experience.

The guest editors for this special section are Gian Luigi Gigli, Luigi Ferini-Strambi and Marco Zucconi. You will find their editorial on the next page.

Ms Priscilla Smith, the editorial assistant of *Sleep Medicine*, deserves special thanks for her extensive attention to grammatical and syntactical aspects of these manuscripts.

I believe this special section makes an important and timely contribution to our understanding of RLS—a neglected and often undiagnosed problem, which is, however, the most common movement disorder in the world.

Sudhansu Chokroverty, MD
Editor-in-Chief

Udine Special Section Guest Editorial

Introduction

In recent years restless legs syndrome (RLS) has acquired a considerable interest among both clinicians and researchers. This sleep disorder has been clearly defined clinically, thanks to the remarkable work of the International Restless Legs Syndrome Study Group (IRLSSG), and has been recognized as a fairly common disorder, especially among the elderly, in its primary form; in its secondary form it is a symptom of many other diseases. Although variable in frequency and severity, RLS can subvert sleep and considerably reduce the quality of life of affected patients.

Important contributions to the pathophysiology of this disorder have come from studies that have begun to unveil the modalities of genetic transmission of familial forms, and others that have explored the frequency of RLS among patients suffering from Parkinson's disease, along with the therapeutic properties of dopaminomimetic drugs that are able to dramatically change the quality of life of severely affected patients. However, other factors, such as iron metabolism and changes caused by uraemia and dialysis, need to be considered for a better understanding of this disorder.

Thanks to the contribution of several scholars, some of whom are pioneers in this field, the present special section of *Sleep Medicine* examines the most relevant issues of

RLS, with particular emphasis on clinical aspects, the results of genetic and pathophysiological studies, associated conditions, and pharmacological treatment.

We are very grateful to all those who contributed their papers to this special section. A particular note of thanks to Dr Pierluigi Dolso for his assistance in the preparation of SleepUdine 2002, the meeting that occasioned bringing together a group of very qualified experts, and for his invaluable help in collecting the manuscripts included here.

We are grateful also to Ms Francesca Leita for her precious review of the English language of several manuscripts.

A very special thanks to Pharmacia Upjohn (now merged with Pfizer) who so generously sponsored SleepUdine 2002, held in the beautiful city of Udine, Italy, and to Dr Sudhansu Chokroverty, who kindly accepted to publish the edited papers of the meeting. Finally, we thank *Elsevier* for its editorial assistance.

Gian Luigi Gigli,
Luigi Ferini Strambi,
Marco Zucconi
Guest Editors