Candidate: Regional Vice-President Elect, Europe

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Summary of academic and professional background:

I obtained my MD (1998) and PhD (2004) at the University of Salamanca (Spain) and completed the residency in Hematology at our University Hospital (2003). After working as a Research Scholar at the Center for Stem Cell Biology (Prof. P. Quesenberry), Providence, RI, USA, I returned back to Salamanca, where I am currently the Head of the Cell Therapy Area, Head of Section of the Hematology Department at the University Hospital of Salamanca, and Professor of Medicine (Hematology and Cellular Therapy) at the University of Salamanca, as well as Coordinator of the Gene & Cell Therapy and Transplant Area at the Institute of Biomedical Research (IBSAL).

In the cellular therapy area, I am member of the Executive Board of the Spanish National Cellular Therapy Network (TerCel) and of the Expert Panel for CAR-T Therapy of the Spanish Ministry of Health. My daily clinical activity is related to hematopoietic stem cell transplantation and advanced therapies (CAR-T, MSC) applied mostly in hematologic patients. My main areas of clinical and translational research are a) Study of normal and leukemic hematopoiesis (focused on the study of mesenchymal cells and their role in the microenvironment), b) Analysis of the therapeutic potential of MSCs (and their extracellular vesicles) in the setting of complications of hematopoietic transplantation and in other regenerative medicine applications (i.e. cardiovascular and osteoarticular) and c) Biosafety and optimization of advanced therapy drug production (MSCs, CAR-T).

Affiliated professional and commercial associations and any perceived or potential conflict of interests:

Employed by University Hospital of Salamanca, Spain (Since 2006)

Employed by University of Salamanca, Spain (Since 2009).

Member, International Society for Cell and Gene Therapy (ISCT)

Member, Spanish Society of Hematology (SEHH)

Member, European Hematology Association (EHA).

Member, European Society for Blood and Marrow Transplantation (EBMT)

No conflict of interest can be anticipated in a potential future role as officer or director of ISCT

List of top notable outputs (e.g., publications, patents, reports, etc.) from the last 10 years:

I have participated as PI or co-investigator in 43 competitive research projects at the European, national and regional levels, and have been PI or co-investigator in more than 60 clinical trials, both in hematological malignancies and cellular therapy. Co-author of >110 indexed papers (JCR & PubMed), with >4000 citations (H index: 35). Co-editor of 6 textbooks and contributor to 14 additional book chapters in other texts. Contributions to scientific meetings include more that 190 invited lectures and more than 350 co-authored abstracts. I have supervised 13 PhD thesis and over 30 master's or degree's thesis. Latest contributions (2020) include:

Sánchez-Guijo F, et al. Adipose-derived mesenchymal stromal cells for the treatment of patients with severe SARS-CoV-2 pneumonia requiring mechanical ventilation. A proof of concept study. EClinicalMedicine 2020; 25:100454

Yakoub-Agha I et al. Management of Adults and Children undergoing Autologous CAR-T cell therapy: Best Practice Recommendations of the EBMT and JACIE. Haematologica 2020; 105:297-316.

Garcia-Arranz M, et al. Autologous adipose-derived stem cells for the treatment of complex cryptoglandular perianal fistula: A randomized clinical trial with a long-term follow-up. Stem Cells Transl Med 2020: 9:295-301

Sánchez-Guijo F, et al. Spanish Cell Therapy Network (TerCel): 15 years of successful collaborative translational research. Cytotherapy 2020; 22: 1-5.

Lamo-Espinosa JM, et al. Phase II Multicenter Randomized Controlled Clinical Trial on the Efficacy of Intra-articular Injection of Autologous Bone Marrow Mesenchymal Stem Cells with PlateletRich Plasma for the Treatment of Knee Osteoarthritis. J Transl Med 2020; 18: 356

Sanchez-Luis E, et al. Deciphering master gene regulators and associated networks of human mesenchymal stromal cells. Biomolecules 2020; 10: 557

Summary of involvement with ISCT in the past five years:

In recent years, in addition to actively participating in the meetings of the ISCT, I have been involved as a representative of our society in the Executive Committee of JACIE (since January 2018).

In addition, since July 2020, I am the Europe-Co-chair of the ISCT Membership Recruitment and Retention Working Group.

I have also been involved as a mentor in the ISCT Mentoring Program for Early-Stage Professionals in the last two editions of this enriching and motivating initiative.

Finally, I have been invited to participate, representing ISCT in the following symposia of ISCT and EBMT annual meetings:

44th Annual meeting of the European Society for Blood and Marrow Transplantation (EBMT). Lisbon, Portugal, 17-21 March, 2018: Session: 20th Anniversary: JACIE, past, present and future.

2020 Annual Meeting of the International Society for Cell & Gene Therapy (ISCT). Paris (virtual), 28-29, May, 2020. Session “Safety Matters and Key Considerations for Regenerative Medicine Products”-Joint Session with EBMT and TERMIS EU

Summary of strategic vision for the Global Society:

We are living unique times in cell and gene therapy, with the arrival of the first commercial products, developed initially in an academic environment and later launched and distributed with the entry into the field of the big pharmaceutical companies. This initial breakthrough has changed this field and will push it to formidable levels.

The ISCT is destined to lead these changes since it is the unique international forum integrating of all the actors involved in the field of advanced therapies: academia, biotech companies, pharmaceutical industry, regulatory agencies and patient associations.

Many challenges remain to be addressed in the field, from translational research to answer clinical and biological questions that can help us improve current treatments, a better knowledge of regulatory and technical aspects that can help those involved in the clinical development of new therapies, and especially the unification of training in advanced therapies, an area of knowledge in biomedicine completely new, and that will be essential for the future. ISCT is an optimal platform to face them.

I believe that my perspective, that of a person with a clinical and translational research profile, who has worked on both sides of the Atlantic and is familiar with the regulatory aspects and the functioning of the pharmaceutical industry and the University, can be of help to the European section of ISCT and to the global Society in general. Knowing well the current project with the European team now coordinating the actions in Europe and with the present-day leaders of the ISTC, I could contribute with my effort to these objectives, if my colleagues and ISCT members consider so after the elections.