

Tuesday morning included a session on new NF mouse models. Michel Kalamarides reported his mouse model of NF2 meningioma, in which these tumors can only develop if the NF2 gene is inactivated at a certain point in embryonic development.

Larry Sherman described his newly developed mouse model in which the schwannoma-related Brg1 gene is mutated. Schwann cells derived from this mouse are hyperproliferative (divide too much) and make abnormally high levels of a growth factor BDNF; he is investigating whether this could potentially contribute to pain and a schwannomatosis phenotype.

Yuan Zhu presented a new mouse model that develops NF1 related of plexiform neurofibromas, dermal tumors and MPNSTs that are progressive and somewhat mimic the human state.

The final session of the conference included presentations on new NF drug targets. Ronen Marmorstein is using structural design to optimize novel PAK inhibitors; this is partly in conjunction with Joe Kissil through a recently funded Children's Tumor Foundation DDI Award which will test them in animals with NF2 tumors.

Best 2009 Posters were a coup for Finland: Minja Laulajainen, University of Helsinki won Basic Science category for a merlin-focused study, and Lotta Alivuotila, University of Turku won Clinical category for a cognitive-focused NF1 study. The 2009 NF Conference closed with the announcement of the 2011 NF Conference Chairs, Nancy Ratner and Michel Kalamarides. Before then of course, the 2010 NF Conference ('NF- Back to the Future') - will take place in Baltimore, MD June 5-8, 2010 and will be co-chaired by Sue Huson and Filippo Giancotti.