This was followed by tours to the biomedical research facilities at the Biopolis international research and development hub, including the Genome Institute of Singapore and Institute of Bioengineering and Nanotechnology. The HSA organized a special half day symposium as part of its HSA Academy series on the 14th July, which focused on “Scientific Advances and Regulation in Blood and Cellular Therapy”. A post-symposium trainees session was also conducted for medical trainees by Dr Dayth Thomas and Dr Erica Wood, which focused on clinical aspects of transfusion medicine practice.

The conference dinner proved a most memorable experience for all. The warm and sunny weather in Singapore was beautifully reflected in the beach party held at the Asia Sands Resort overlooking the South China Sea. Everyone was encouraged to come in beach party attire, kick off their shoes and enjoy the sand between their toes. Our overseas guests were introduced to the different cultural costumes and songs of Singapore by a cheerful team from the blood service, as well as entertained by a gifted duo of singer and pianist who had joined us (voluntary non-reimbursed performers) for the occasion. The culinary highlights of Singapore were enjoyed in the relaxed and scenic beach setting which allowed everyone to relax, unwind and let their hair down. The highlight of the party must have been the “Happy Feet” competition, which allowed many of our distinguished colleagues to show off their skills outside of transfusion medicine, and dazzling the audience with their nattily dressed feet and impressive moves. The sight of such slick footwear just motivated everybody else to end the night dancing to the likes of Thriller, Kung Fu Panda and YMCA!

After three days of intense scientific discussion and sharing of knowledge, not to mention the networking (and of course the partying), it was sad to see our friends both old and new depart for home. But we were very happy for the success of the symposium, and very satisfied with the very strong scientific exchange their experiences allows new ideas and collaborations to form to benefit our patients.

The 7th International Alliance for Biological Standardization (IABS) Symposium on Advances in Transfusion Safety was held in Singapore from 15th July to 17th July 2011. This symposium was organized by the Health Sciences Authority (HSA) Blood Services Group in partnership with the Asia Pacific Blood Network (APBN) and the Singapore Agency for Science, Technology and Research. It was supported by the ISBT and the Singapore Red Cross, with participation from the International Plasma Fractionation Association, the Network for Advancement of Transfusion Alternatives, and the International Society for Cellular Therapy, as well as support from the industry. The IABS Symposium on Advances in Transfusion Safety is a series of biennial symposia dedicated to safety issues relevant to transfusion medicine from the perspective of both developed and developing countries.

The event was an excellent opportunity for transfusion specialists, clinicians, scientists, regulators, nurses, health service professionals, and industries to broaden their understanding of the different areas concerning transfusion safety and exchange their experiences. Thirty-one distinguished local and international speakers presented on a broad range of critical transfusion safety topics which ranged from cutting-edge technologies such as cellular therapies, pathogen reduction and RFID, to day-to-day issues of equal importance such as donor screening and infection risk, and the role of post-transfusion testing. The aim of the symposium was to bring together and share knowledge and ideas from the international community in the field of transfusion medicine, and to create a platform for the exchange of experiences and ideas.

This week, we have the pleasure of welcoming Eugene Zhibrut from Moscow, Russia to Transfusion Today’s In Focus column.

Eugene Zhibrut

Moscow, Russia

The Russian National Medical Surgical Center was named in honor of the famous surgeon Nicolay Pirogov (1810 – 1881). Nicolay Pirogov was named in honor of St. Nicholas. The Russian Orthodox Church has two days of St. Nicholas: on December 5th and in May. The seminar Dr Colin MacKenzie from Baltimore, gave a very interesting presentation on the USA experience of using the oxygen carrier Hemopure is registered for clinical use. During the seminar Dr Colin MacKenzie from Baltimore, gave a very interesting presentation on the USA experience of using Hemopure, an artificial oxygenator.

The seminar was supported by ISBT and we had speakers from five countries. Belarus, France, Russia, USA and UK.

The most questions were after the lecture “Application of Quality System Principles” given by Alan Slopecki, Head of Quality Assurance, NHS Blood and Transplant (England). The seminar went well, but the Operations Manager works to specification and identifies errors.

The Quality Manager:

• Ensures processes are validated and followed;
• Audits to confirm their effectiveness;
• Ensures that adverse events are learnt from;
• Can stop unsafe procedures and initiate a recall;
• Agree concessions with Clinical colleagues to release valuable components which don’t meet specification.

Quality management:

• Keeps an overview of the performance of the system and suppliers through real time analysis of data and audit;
• Ensures that validation and assessment are completed before they are put into use;
• Insists on realistic timescales for effective corrective and preventative action which addresses the root cause of human error;
• Act as the bridge between the organisation and regulators during inspections, good way of benchmarking your performance;
• Ensures the QMS is effective.

All colleagues are kindly invited to join blood transfusion workshop in Moscow in December (14-16) 2011 and in May 2012. Our winter workshop will be probably be devoted to blood service and transfusion medicine in emergencies.