

Talking About Lasers: NAALT Conference Review

By Phil Harrington, DC

The North American Association for Laser Therapy (NAALT) 10th Annual Conference was held June 4-6, 2010 at the Palm Beach Gardens Marriott Hotel in West Palm Beach, Fla. Approximately 100 clinicians and researchers, representing a wide range of human and veterinary fields and utilizing various forms of laser and light therapy devices in practice, attended the annual event.

World-renowned laser therapy researcher Dr. Lars Hode and outgoing NAALT President Dr. Steve Liu opened the conference with a presentation titled, "Introduction to Low-Level Laser Therapy." They discussed laser history, the discovery of photobiomodulation, mechanisms of action and current research.

Ten vendors displayed acupuncture lasers, light-emitting diode (LED) systems, and class 3 and class 4 therapy lasers. A particularly interesting display utilized 650 nanometer, 5 milliwatt laser light delivered through an optical fiber inserted directly into the cephalic vein at the elbow to directly illuminate the bloodstream. Intravenous laser irradiation of the bloodstream has been researched extensively in Russia and is purported to boost immune function.

Day two kicked off with a keynote address by Dr. Jackson Streeter, a medical doctor who has worked extensively with stroke patients and is managing a clinical trial investigating the use of transcranial infrared laser. The first session focused on laser therapy and cancer, with Dr. Hode discussing three important questions: Can laser cause cancer? Can laser aggravate an existing cancer? Could laser therapy be used to cure cancer? Dr. Michael Weber described his intravenous blood irradiation technique for enhanced immune function, and Dr. Tomas Hode concluded the session with a description of a clinical trial using laser immunotherapy on breast cancer tumors.

The afternoon session that day featured four presentations on the use of laser therapy in veterinary practice. Dr. Richard Godine of the Ruckersville Animal Hospital and Veterinary Laser Therapy Center, located just outside Charlottesville, Va., described laser therapy as a palliative treatment for canine urinary bladder

transitional cell carcinoma. Dr. William Draper of the University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine answered the question, "Can laser therapy aid in acute spinal cord injury in the dog?" And Dr. David Bradley of Stuart, Fla., spoke on the use of class 4 therapy lasers in pain management and wound healing for animals. The session concluded with a presentation on infrared laser-light penetration through equine tendons and a discussion of appropriate treatment dosages and schedules for veterinary conditions.

The late-afternoon session featured four presentations on laser therapy for the treatment of pain. Low back pain, craniofacial pain, chronic pain of VA hospital patients, and laser needle acupuncture were all discussed. Day two closed with two presentations on enhanced sperm motility in the treatment of infertility for both humans and racehorses.

Sunday morning's first topic was "Central and Peripheral Nervous System Light Therapy Applications," which was chaired by world-renowned laser researcher and past NAALT President, Dr. Juanita Anders. Dr. Margaret Naeser delivered a talk on improved cognition in chronic, mild traumatic brain injury following treatment with transcranial red and infrared LED therapy. Next, Dr. Jeri-Anne Lyons described the potential for treatment of multiple sclerosis patients using infrared LED therapy.

The chiropractic profession was represented by Dr. Joseph Costello and Dr. Joseph DiDuro. Dr. Costello presented two cases; the first on treatment of acute disc herniation resulting in radiculopathy and foot drop using high-power class 4 laser therapy, and the other on long-term management of diabetic neuropathy with class 4 laser therapy. Dr. DiDuro spoke on high satisfaction in neuropathy patients treated with infrared LED therapy.

Dr. Terrance Baker, a medical doctor, presented an inspirational and motivational lecture on the use of therapeutic lasers in the office/hospital setting. Dr. Sollay specializes in the use of phototherapy, including class 3 and class 4 therapy lasers and laser acupuncture, in the treatment of medical conditions. The flagship Sollay location is at the Good Samaritan Hospital in Baltimore, an affiliate of Johns Hopkins.

"Imagine if you were parachuted into a remote jungle in Africa, with a generator and two lasers, one red and one infrared. Within 30 minutes you could be treating almost any medical condition and improving the quality of life of all those you treat." Dr. Baker said. He went on to list conditions from acne to pain to zoster that have shown improvement with laser therapy. "I envision a day when all medical practices will have a laser as standard equipment," he predicted.

The weekend concluded with a closing address by newly elected NAALT President, Dr. Brian Bennett. The next NAALT annual conference will be held in the fall of 2011, with the location yet to be determined. For more information on the North American Association for Laser Therapy, visit www.naalt.org.

Dr. Harrington recently authored a "Physics for Chiropractors" series for DC, discussing laser therapy from a physics perspective. Search DynamicChiropractic.com (enter "Harrington" or "Physics for Chiropractors" as search terms) to access this three-article series.

Dr. Phil Harrington is a certified medical laser safety officer and serves on the subcommittee reviewing the [ANSI Standards for Safe Use of Lasers in Health Care Facilities](#). He is a 1996 [Palmer](#) graduate and also holds a bachelor's degree in physics. Dr. Harrington is the senior vice-president of K-Laser USA (www.k-laserusa.com).



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