

From the President's Desk

"Building resilience at ISCT"

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Anyone might be forgiven for observing that the world seems unusually unstable these days. Turmoil seems to be swirling around every corner of the globe. There is political instability and civil unrest along with challenges to scientific research in places such as Syria, Bolivia, Sudan, Iran, Chile, Ecuador, Lebanon, Venezuela, Hong Kong and Catalonia (Nature 576, 382, December 2019). There is the conclusion of the fraught Brexit process and the third impeachment in history. There is a new coronavirus of potentially pandemic proportions and devastating climate change affecting so many countries including the bushfires affecting my beloved Australia. Young people in our societies are confused for their future and often feeling unbalanced due to this uncertainty. How can ISCT help to support individuals and provide, in its own small way, some reassurance?

While ISCT monitors the developing travel restrictions affecting international flights, we remain confident that the ISCT 2020 Meeting in Paris will be our most successful yet. Our programme at a glance has been completely redesigned to make it more accessible and user friendly: [ISCT 2020 website](#). The main programme in the beautiful conference centre in Paris will bring four full days of cutting edge scientific discussion, including over 85 expertly curated scientific sessions with global opinion leaders within the cell and gene therapy arena. The abstract submission process is now complete for ISCT 2020, and abstract notifications will be sent out to presenters via email by the middle of February 2020. ISCT will be holding a late breaking abstract submission period from March 2nd to 8th, 2020, to allow research teams the opportunity to submit their high-impact, innovative clinical data that would otherwise not be submitted in time for the ISCT Annual Meeting. The [early registration](#) deadline for the Paris meeting is February 25. Please note that a variety of registration options are available to meet your needs. ISCT offers [student registration](#), group discounts, reduced rates for eligible countries, and conference bundle rates so you can get the most out of your experience at ISCT 2020. Importantly, ISCT has secured preferred rates at two *très comfortable* Paris hotels – The Hyatt Regency and Le Meridien. Both of these hotels are only two minutes from the convention centre and limited rooms are now available to book at <http://www.isct2020.com/housing/>. The booking deadline is March 23, 2020.

One of the great ways ISCT can support its members is via the connections and regular communications we offer, including *Telegraft*, which you are now reading. Our flagship journal *Cytotherapy* offers strong professional incentives for ISCT members to publish. Please don't forget to renew your membership for 2020 to ensure your member benefits are not interrupted. The ISCT Regional Executive Committees are looking for volunteers within the respective regions who are keen to share their experience and knowledge in assisting with region-specific projects. I would encourage anyone interested in working with your Regional Executive Committee to please contact ISCT at isct@isctglobal.org.

It is very pleasing to note the continued success of the Commercialisation Signature Series. Members of the ISCT industry community gathered in Miami on January 21 for this highly successful series. This meeting provided an intimate day of education, networking and discussion around the year's theme of Clinical Breakthroughs: Transforming the Standard of Care. Additional comparable Commercialisation Signature Series meetings are planned for the future.

So, how do we build resilience in the International Society for Cell & Gene Therapy? By connecting individuals who share a common goal to improve the health and wellbeing of individuals with unmet medical needs, we hope to support and transform each other. Any setbacks or challenges also provide the opportunity for learning and compassion. The ability to adapt to adversity, trauma or threat is a strength we should pursue as individuals and as a group. We hope that anyone suffering with challenges that seem daunting right now can hope that the future may offer solutions. ISCT prides itself on offering a resilient community, and our regular opportunities for communication via various media and through our regular regional and international meetings should provide a source of support for those members in need. I would be personally happy to receive any communication for anyone seeking help or advice. Building resilience starts with individuals like us. As we have done since 1992, ISCT members will continue to share a vision to translate cell and gene therapies into safe and effective treatments to improve patient's lives worldwide.