9. Jerusalem 1994

The 9th International Workshop on Surfactant Replacement was held in Jerusalem, a holy city for Judaism, Christianity and Islam. This was a fitting location for sharing science in the heady, optimistic days following the 1993 Oslo accord between Israel and the Palestinians. Peace was on the horizon, science and technology were flourishing and the "New Middle East" was almost within our grasp, thus 150 neonatologists and researchers from 36 countries in Europe, Asia, North and South America gathered to discuss the latest exciting clinical and basic science findings regarding surfactant and, at the same time, to taste the special flavour of this unique setting. The meeting was opened by the late Rabbi Jakobovits, former Chief Rabbi of Great Britain and a renowned authority on medical ethics, who discussed the ethical and moral issues that stem from life-saving therapeutic advances such as surfactant replacement therapy. Later the same day, we visited Abu Ghosh, a Christian and Moslem Arab village that has been a long-standing symbol of peaceful co-existence. To complete the spiritual aspect of the meeting, after the science was completed, many stayed to tour historical sites such as Capernaum, Tiberias and Bethlehem.

A LARGE CUROSURF FAMILY
POSING OUTSIDE THE LECTURE ROOM

NILS SVENNINGSEN AND OLA SAUGSTAD
ENJOYING THE SCIENCE

MICHEL SCHIMMEL AN FRIENDS LISTENING INTENTLY

The science was as uplifting as the setting. Tore Curstedt and Bengt Robertson reported on a new surfactant preparation based on synthetic lipids and a recombinant fraction of SP-C. This exciting new approach offers the prospect of efficacy that is similar to that of natural surfactant preparations, but without the potential risks of exposure to animal products.A population-based national study of very low birth weight infants from all the neonatal units in Israel showed that the widespread introduction of surfactant replacement therapy was associated with a significant reduction in mortality in infants with RDS. This was particularly marked in the <1000 gram birth weight group. However, three studies from the United Kingdom raised doubts as to the efficacy of surfactant replacement in infants at or around the limits of viability. These studies laid the groundwork for the for the landmark EPICure study that provided, for the first time, reliable large scale outcome data for infants born at 25 or less weeks of gestation. Studies of the optimal mode of surfactant administration included one from Denmark that was before its time by suggesting that many infants with RDS could be satisfactorily managed with nasal CPAP after an early endotracheal dose of surfactant. A Swedish study of pulmonary function after surfactant replacement showed that the rapid improvement in oxygenation was not accompanied by improved compliance or total lung capacity, but increased FRC may reflect increased stability of already open air spaces. A summary of the papers presented at the Workshop was published in Biology of the Neonate [9].

I conclude with a personal prayer that peace will reign and we will be able some day soon to welcome the Curosurf family back to Jerusalem.

Note 9: **go to References**