Mission & history

Mission
Serono Symposia International Foundation (SSIF) is a Swiss non-profit organization dedicated to the Continuing Medical Education (CME) of scientists, physicians, nurses, pharmacists and other healthcare professionals. Our mission is to provide state of the art educational activities designed to enhance patient care and improve health outcomes, to health care professionals from Europe, Asia, Africa, Oceania, Central and South America, Canada and Mexico.

History
We have a proud tradition dating back to the early 1970s of encouraging excellence in medical education all over the world. The Foundation was created to honor the memory of Professor Cesare Serono, an Italian-born scientist who dedicated his life to improving health and patient care.
In our 40 years of history SSIF has organized more than 1500 international scientific congresses with more than 500 proceedings appearing in leading international publications.
SSIF conferences and workshops provide a unique opportunity for physicians and healthcare professionals to meet with the world’s leading experts. They keep up to date with the latest scientific developments as well as exchange ideas in an open and stimulating environment. The Foundation’s educational programs are produced to the high scientific and ethical standards expected in the practice of medicine.
SSIF has its headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland and its Representative Office in Rome, Italy.
Olivier Dunant (President of the Board of Directors)

Olivier Dunant is Board Member and trustee of several international charitable and philanthropic organizations and chairs Serono Symposia International Foundation’s Board of Directors. Originally from Sevenoaks, Kent, England, Olivier Dunant is a graduate of the University of Geneva Law School and the Southern Methodist University Law School, Dallas, Texas, joining Borel & Barbey in Geneva (1974) as an associate. He has been a partner since 1980. He is a member of the Board of Directors of the Southern Methodist law school, a member of the Geneva Business Law Association, the Swiss Lawyers Federation, the Geneva Bar Association and the Suisse Romande Branch of the Society of Trust and Estate Practitioners (STEP).

He has been a General Honorary Consul of Norway since 1986. Olivier Dunant focuses his practice on banking, finance and securities law, commercial and business law, corporate law, mergers and acquisitions, trusts and estates and international taxation.
Jean-Daniel Baki  (Secretary and Member of the Board of Directors)
Jean-Daniel Baki brings a vast experience in the administration of non profit organizations. From the Leman Lac area of Geneva, Jean-Daniel Baki has more than 30 years experience in accounting and management, working with large corporations including Ralston Purina, Union Carbide and Serono. He was responsible for transferring the Worldwide Financial Consolidation Department of Serono from the USA to Switzerland. Subsequently he has been in charge of the Ares- Serono Foundation and Finance Director of the Bertarelli Foundation. He is government representative for the Geneva Canton for young financial and accounting apprentices.

Sophie Caillat (Member of the Board of Directors)
Sophie Caillat was born in 1982 in Basel (Switzerland). She graduated from Geneva Law School in 2007, after spending one academic year at Universitat Pompeu Fabra, in Barcelona, Spain. Sophie Caillat did her two years Bar Training at Borel & Barbey Law Firm, in Geneva and was admitted to the Bar of Geneva in 2010. She first worked as a lawyer in the pharmaceutical field, particularly as legal support, advising on Swiss Labour Law and Commercial Law as well as on International Distribution Law. Since November 2010, she has been an associate of the Law Firm Ducrest Heggli Avocats LLC, in Geneva, where she practices in all areas of Swiss Law with an emphasis on litigation. She is a member of the Swiss Lawyers Federation and the Geneva Bar Association.

Maria Grazia Cali (Member of the Board of Directors)
Maria Grazia Cali has acquired a long experience in the pharmaceutical and chemical industry. She joined Serono in 1979 working in communication and organization of international conferences for the medical community. Maria Grazia Cali has established a proven track record of excellence in medical education and congress management and has developed an international network with acknowledged academics in various scientific fields.
The high standards of Serono Symposia International Foundation (SSIF) are upheld both by our Board of Directors and by our prestigious international Scientific Committee which guarantees the scientific status and quality of our educational activities. The Scientific Committee is composed of respected academics from a range of scientific fields.

Giancarlo Comi (President of the Scientific Committee)

Giancarlo Comi is Professor of Neurology at the University Vita-Salute San Raffaele and Chairman of the Department of Neurology at the Scientific Institute San Raffaele, Milan. In 2004 he founded the Institute of Experimental Neurology (INSPE), for research into translational medicine. He is also the Scientific Director of the Multiple Sclerosis (IMS) Centre of San Raffaele Hospital, the largest centre in Italy, and of the MS centre in Gallarate, the oldest Italian MS centre. Giancarlo Comi is an active member of a number of neurological societies and Steering Committees, and is currently Vice President of the European Charcot Foundation, Past President of the European Neurological Society (ENS) and President-elect of the Italian Society of Neurology. He is the Managing Editor of Topics in Neuroscience and a member of the editorial boards of several international scientific indexed-journals. Giancarlo Comi has published more than 600 papers, mostly in the area of multiple sclerosis and clinical neurology. His most recent interest is in the area of clinical trials. He continues to serve as principal investigator for a number of multicentre international clinical trials, mostly within MS.

Daniel Cohen (Member of the Scientific Committee)

Daniel Cohen is Professor of Medical Genetics at the University of Paris. Together with Nobel Prize winner Jean Dausset he founded the Centre d’Etude du Polymorphisme Humain (CEPH) in 1983 - the first institution to organize an international focus on the Human Genome. In 1993 at Genethon (France) and CEPH he completed the first generation physical map for the entire Human Genome. In 1996, he joined the French company Genset and discovered genes for complex traits by LD-based mapping of SNPs. Daniel Cohen performed the very first whole genome association scans across multiple sclerosis, lupus and psoriasis. He is, at present chairman and CEO of Pharnext, a biopharmaceutical company based in Paris. He is an author and co-author of more than a hundred peer-reviewed publications and patents. For his accomplishments in science, book writing and as a musician, Daniel Cohen received several awards including the French “Légion d’Honneur”.

Robert Fischer (Member of the Scientific Committee)

Robert Fischer is co-founded the first private outpatient IVF Unit in Hamburg in 1983. In 1998 he co-founded the ISO certified and accredited Fertility Center Hamburg (FCH) and is one of its medical directors. The center is one of the largest and most respected German IVF centres. Author of numerous publications in national and international scientific journals and books, as well as a lecturer at conferences worldwide, Robert Fischer is an active member of the American Society of Reproductive Medicine (ASRM), and a founding member of the European Society of Human Reproduction (ESHRE). He is also founding member of the DG für Gynäkologische Endokrinologie und Fortpflanzungsmedizin (DGGEF) and “Berufsverband Reproduktionsmedizinischer Zentren” (BRZ), both in Germany.
Christoph Zielinski (Member of the Scientific Committee)

Christoph Zielinski is Professor of Internistic Experimental Oncology, Deputy Head of the Clinical Division of Oncology at Vienna University Clinic of Internal Medicine, and Vice-Dean of the Medical School of Vienna University. Additionally, he is Director of the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute of Clinical Experimental Oncology in Vienna. Christoph Zielinski has been working mainly in the fields of oncology, hematology, and clinical immunology. One of the main topics of his research groups is diagnosis and treatment of breast cancer. He is also co-coordinator of the Cooperative Group on Clinical Molecular Oncology and President of the Central European Cooperative Oncology Group (CECOG), a collaboration of academic oncological centres from twelve central and south-east European countries. Christoph Zielinski is a member of the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO), the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) and the European Society for Medical Oncology (ESMO). He is on the editorial board of a series of peer review journals and has published over 290 original research papers and reviews in peer-reviewed journals.

The Advisory Committee

The Advisory Committee supports on a non recurring basis the Board of Directors and the International Scientific Committee in its activities and on specific projects. The Advisory Committee is composed of internationally acknowledged experts working in different fields of scientific interest.

Nenad Blau (Member of the Advisory Committee)

Nenad Blau is head of the laboratory for the diagnosis of tetrahydrobiopterin and neurotransmitter disorders at the University Children’s Hospital in Zürich, Switzerland. He is a senior lecturer in biochemistry and metabolic disorders at the University of Zürich and author/senior researcher in the field of tetrahydrobiopterin and phenylketonuria. He is the editor of more than 200 research publications, including the standard books Physician’s Guide to the Laboratory Diagnosis of Metabolic Diseases, Physician’s Guide to the Treatment and Follow-up of Metabolic Diseases and Laboratory Guide to the Methods in Biochemical Genetics. Nenad Blau is an honorary member of the Italian Society for Pediatrics. Nenad Blau is a curator of several metabolic databases including BIODEF and BIOPKU. He received the Horst-Bickel Award in 2001 and in 2005 was honored with the Gowland Hopkins Award.
Continuing medical education live activities

Medical and scientific advances are providing patients with ever more opportunities to improve their quality of life. Serono Symposia International Foundation (SSIF) keeps pace with the evolving educational needs of healthcare professionals, offering a range of learning approaches for the healthcare community. SSIF is particularly active in the areas of neurology, endocrinology and metabolism, reproductive medicine, dermatology, immunology and genetics.

Accredited Continuing Medical Education (CME) live events offered by SSIF include:

• **International conferences** - providing updates and critical evaluation of the newest scientific topics
• **Academia** - International training courses focusing on junior scientists and physicians wanting to specialize in a certain field
• **Preceptorship**: International workshops based on theory and practice sessions. Tutors and participants are able to share directly their knowledge and practice.
• **Postgraduate scholarships and fellowships**

SSIF encourages feedback from all participants on its educational activities. The program evaluations ask participants to rate the educational activity in terms of satisfaction and key learning, as well assessing the content for balance and lack of bias. SSIF activities regularly receive satisfaction ratings over 95%. Such participant feedback helps SSIF to continually improve and enhance its educational programs.
Continuing medical education online activities

Serono Symposia International Foundation [SSIF] educational activities online combine timely, insightful content with the convenience of studying in your home or workplace. Whether it can be e-learning courses, highlights of live events, medical reports, literature reviews, or e-newsletters, all combine to reinforce the Continuing Medical Education [CME] pathway. Courses are available online free of charge at www.seronosymposia.org to any healthcare professional wishing to participate.
Commitment to quality education

With guidance from the Serono Symposia International Foundation (SSIF) Board of Directors and International Scientific Committee, all educational programs are submitted to nationally and internationally recognized Continuing Medical Education (CME) accreditation bodies to evaluate their scientific and educational content.

The Foundation is pursuing the harmonization of CME and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) systems across different nations and the development of such systems in countries where none yet exist.

Since 2003, SSIF has organized and supported the Rome Group meetings, bringing together the most important contributors to CME from both sides of the Atlantic.

The object is to identify and agree on common values in CME, enabling common educational standards and credits which are universally recognized. These meetings have delivered key documents endorsed by all the Rome Group participants:

- A “Consensus Paper” that underlines basic values common to all CME programs;
- “Standards for commercial support”;
- “Distance-learning CME guidelines”;
- and a “Glossary on CME”.

[Image of meeting attendees]
Since 2010, Serono Symposia International Foundation (SSIF) has provided, in partnership with international medical societies, a prestigious award recognizing and rewarding excellence in medical education. The SSIF Award is open to candidates with a high level of medical expertise, who are driving medical education forward.

The Award highlights the importance of medical education today, and recognizes those who are helping to broaden tomorrow’s scientific horizons. It encourages greater opportunities to share thoughts and opinions in a stimulating environment within the scientific community. SSIF launched a dedicated website [www.ssifaward.org](http://www.ssifaward.org).

Every year, SSIF awards a recognized expert in a different specialist field. The first SSIF Award competition took place in 2010 in partnership with European Society of Human Reproduction and Embryology (ESHRE) covering the field of reproductive medicine. The second SSIF Award competition has been launched in May 2011 with European Neurological Society (ENS) in the field of neurodegenerative diseases.
Scientific fields of interest

Neurology

Multiple sclerosis (MS), as a chronic neurodegenerative disease, is another area of huge medical and scientific challenges. MS has several forms and can progress in different ways. It always represents a severe burden for people affected and for their relatives. Even in the milder forms, the relapsing remitting one, the central nervous system damages progress, both during relapses and asymptomatic phases, and physical and cognitive disabilities increase accordingly. For many years, there was little understanding of how best to manage this disease. Thanks to the efforts of neurologists involved in clinical practice, of geneticists, immunologists and many other scientists working in this field, new diagnostic and therapeutic tools have been developed.

Since the 1990s, SSIF has provided MS specialists with educational activities to help improve their knowledge and share expertise. SSIF aims to encourage the good interaction between physicians, other health care professionals and patients, which is vital in diagnosis and treatment of MS. Success in developing educational tools for treating MS has encouraged SSIF to extend its work to other neurodegenerative diseases such as Parkinson’s and Alzheimer. In these fields, SSIF offers the same balanced and unbiased quality content. Two symposia in South America and Canada have been organized, consolidating in this way, the role of SSIF as a worldwide medical education provider.

Reproductive medicine

Infertility issues have been significant in developed countries for some time and are now becoming relevant across much of the world. Besides being a challenging medical problem, infertility can also have profound psychological effects, such as influencing dynamics within a couple, and affecting quality of life. Infertility also has ethical, social and economic implications, which have generated heated debates among experts. Reproductive health, the branch of medicine concerned with infertility treatments is continually exploring new techniques to address the problem. Health care professionals working in this field need access to regular updates and training.

Serono Symposium International Foundation (SSIF) realized the importance of developing medical education in this area at an early stage and pioneered the first symposium in reproductive medicine more than 30 years ago. SSIF organized events with Robert G. Edwards, a british physicist and pioneer in reproductive medicine and in-vitro fertilization (IVF). Robert Edwards successfully pioneered conception through IVF, which led to the birth of the first test-tube baby in 1978) and other scientists making available ground-breaking research in laboratory and clinical procedures. From these beginnings to the present day, SSIF has offered high level educational events, ranging from training for young specialists to updating scientists on advanced areas of research. Courses on the most relevant topics are now posted on the SSIF website.

SSIF’s expertise in medical education, combined with the work of one of the most renowned experts in reproductive medicine has made its educational events a byword for quality.

In 2010, SSIF continued to offer a range of ever developing educational tools for specialists in reproductive medicine. For example, live events have focused on particular aspects of infertility management, such embryo implantation, the topics of the symposium held in Lyon. Other events have included comprehensive coverage of current hot topics.

Our mission is to provide quality medical education such as we offer, available worldwide. This has led to successful meetings not only in Europe but also in South America and Canada. Following on from several online courses posted on the SSIF website, we launched in 2010 the first CME online symposium. It enabled web users to attend lectures online in real time from eminent speakers, whilst seeing their slides and gaining Continuing Medical Education (CME) credits.
Endocrinology and metabolism

In the fields of endocrinology and metabolism, SSIF is also encouraging dialogue between scientists and researchers and health professionals in clinical practice. Again, such is the rate of innovation that the latest knowledge is vital.

SSIF educational events have covered such areas as growth disorders and diabetes with its cardiovascular complications and thyroid disorders. Recently SSIF addressed phenylketonuria (PKU), a rare disease where there is much debate about how best to manage it. Following the popularity of symposia on the subject, SSIF decided to launch in 2010 a dedicated website www.pkuacademy.org with educational tools ranging from basic to advanced.

Immunology

MS educational events run by SSIF opened up other fields such as immunology and autoimmune diseases’ pathophysiology. As a result of health care professionals’ feedback, it was clear that high level medical education was needed to help clinicians understand the work of scientists in clarifying pathophysiology and defining therapeutic targets. As a first step, a dedicated area was created in the SSIF website with a specific online course, a glossary in immunology and autoimmune diseases and a literature review including reports on autoimmune diseases. Educational events have enabled experts on different autoimmune diseases to share present and future lines of research and the best means to manage conditions.

In 2010, following the success of its online course, SSIF widened its activities in this field, organizing in Milan a symposium on autoimmune diseases. SSIF also participated in the 9th International Congress on Systemic Lupus Erythematosus, in Vancouver, Canada. The positive feedback confirms that this is a valuable area in which SSIF can contribute CME support.
During 2008, Serono Symposia International Foundation (SSIF) organized 23 Continuing Medical Education (CME) live events, all submitted to the European Union of Medical Specialists (UEMS) as well as to the national authorities in the countries where the events took place.

Feedback from participants underlined the state of the art nature of the clinical and scientific activities, the effective management of the scientific program, and the well organized logistics surrounding each event.

- 98% of participants who filled in evaluation forms were very satisfied with the event;
- 95% found that the scientific program met the objectives of the course;
- 95% declared that the program was free of commercial bias;
- 97% declared that the program will be very useful in their day-to-day practice and help to improve patient care.

**Average rates 2008 (%)**

- Satisfaction: 98%
- Met objectives: 95%
- Free of commercial bias: 95%
- Benefit to patients: 97%

Source: SSIF Evaluations Forms 2008

SSIF’s educational activities outside Europe continued to expand including:

- a pre-congress event at the Asia Pacific Initiative on Reproductive Endocrinology (ASPIRE) on polycystic ovarian syndrome in Singapore on April 11, 2008;

Consolidating 5 years of work, SSIF supported third party organizations and scientific societies to submit 18 scientific programs of congresses for accreditation to national and international accreditation authorities including the:

- European Society of Pediatric Endocrinology (ESPE);
- European Neurological Societies (ENS);
- European Society for Human Reproduction and Embryology (ESHRE);
- European Stroke Conference (ESC).

SSIF also increased its range of distance learning courses via the internet, with eight new online courses on its website, via CD ROMs, DVD and via publications of proceedings and newsletters from the symposia.

As part of its commitment to agreeing common international standards for CME, SSIF organized the seventh meeting of North America EU: “Sharing the educational effort” (The Rome Group) in Rome in April 2008. Leading international representatives in CME met at this workshop, including the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCMCE), the American Medical Association (AMA), European Union of Medical Specialists (UEMS), the Spanish Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (SACCMCE), the CME Commission of the Italian Ministry of Health and the Federation of Royal Colleges of Physicians (RCP). The group consolidated the work begun in 2007 on the creation of a common international glossary of CME / Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and on the definition of common guidelines for commercial support and conflict of interest.
2008 educational activities

Neurology

More than 650 neurologists, multiple sclerosis (MS) specialists and scientists from around the world attended “The changing face of MS: understanding populations, treating individuals”, Serono Symposia International Foundation’s (SSIF) annual meeting dedicated to MS, held in Berlin. A key topic was how available data on MS pathogenesis, genetics and therapy, gathered from large populations of patients and large-scale epidemiological studies, can be used to individualize MS management. Also in Barcelona at the Cem-Cat Center, Val d’Ebron Hospital, during the MS Preceptorship, the patient’s role in optimizing the management of their condition was emphasized.

A role play session, with an MS patient discussing with a doctor, psychologists and participants, the best strategies of interaction, was one of the most successful sessions of the course, which covered all the aspects of MS management.

MS academia and the MS nurses workshop, held before the European Committee for Treatment and Research in Multiple Sclerosis (ECTRIMS) Congress, provided participants with comprehensive overviews of all the relevant topics related to MS. At the MS Nurses workshop, the views of neurologists and nurses on the main issues of MS patients’ management highlighted the role of nurses in supporting patients.

SSIF organized a satellite symposium within the congress of the European Neurological Society (ENS) with three outstanding lectures on imaging and neurophysiological techniques used to study and diagnose neurodegenerative diseases. In Latin America, an MS meeting was organized in Sao Paulo on MS treatment optimization. In addition, online courses covering multiple sclerosis in its progressive forms and optimization of MS treatment were posted on the SSIF website.

Reproductive medicine

The first symposium of 2008 in this scientific area focused on how environmental factors and life styles affect reproductive function. Specialists in infertility management, geneticists, scientists and researchers from all over the world convened in Malmö, Sweden to discuss the largely underestimated impact of pollution on fertility, outcomes of shared studies and future lines of research. In Buenos Aires, a symposium addressed cryopreservation techniques and their role in assisted reproduction techniques (ART). In Rozzano, Italy, at the Humanitas Clinic’s Fertility Center, the symposium “From infertility treatment to reproductive health” addressed hot topics on reproductive medicine, from oocyte and sperm quality to future cell therapy.

Three symposia were organized in conjunction with international congresses: in Singapore a meeting on polycystic ovarian syndrome addressed all aspects of this disorder, from the genetic background to the management options. Prior to the European Society for Human Reproduction and Embryology (ESHRE) congress, SSIF proposed an advanced course in human reproduction and embryology. A series of key note lectures provided participants with updated reviews of aspects of infertility management. A symposium included in the 11th World Congress on Controversies in Obstetrics, Gynecology & Infertility (COGII) celebrated 30 years of IVF reviewing the most updated procedures implemented in ART.

Amongst events organized on a regular basis, the symposium “Regulation of follicle development and its clinical implications”, then in its third edition, went through some of the most challenging aspects of ART, such as oocyte quality definition and ovarian stimulation personalization. Two preceptorships took place. The first in Madrid, in collaboration with the Instituto Valenciano de Infertilitat (IVI) Center in Madrid, focused on infertility management and how to improve interaction with patients. The second, held in Milan, discussed implanting biobanking in obstetrics and gynecology.

An online course covering the diffusion of assisted reproduction techniques in the world was posted on the website.
Endocrinology and metabolism
A successful symposium was held in Latin America on growth hormone deficiencies and metabolic syndrome. A further meeting on endocrinology and metabolic disease was organized in Paris, stressing the advantages of an integrated approach to managing endocrine and cardio-metabolic disorders.

Immunology
Four meetings in 2008 focused on autoimmune (AI) diseases. Two of them addressed pathophysiology and practical aspects of psoriasis management. The third one looked at the pharmacogenetics of autoimmune diseases, gathering together the most renowned experts in genetics, pathophysiology and the pharmacogenetics of AI diseases. The meetings gave the opportunity to discuss differences and similarities, emerging from researches on rheumatoid arthritis, systemic lupus erythematosus, psoriasis, MS and Crohn’s disease.
Online courses on the immune system and on the pathophysiology of autoimmune diseases were posted on the SSIF website.
2008 conference list

- Gene, environment, lifestyle interaction and human reproduction, February 7-8, Malmö, Sweden
- The changing face of MS: understanding populations, treating individuals, February 23-24, Berlin, Germany
- Treating Psoriasis as an inflammatory chronic system disease, February 29 - March 2, Athens, Greece
- Cryopreservation of human oocytes, ovarian tissues and in vitro maturation (IVM), March 13-15, Buenos Aires, Argentina
- La pma cambia volto nel XX secolo, April 11-12, Naples, Italy
- Polycystic ovarian syndrome (Pre-ASPIRE), April 11, Singapore, Singapore
- Nuovo Paradigma nel trattamento della psoriasi, April 18-19, Rome, Italy
- Treating individuals with MS: can we do better with what we have?, May 15-17, Sao Paulo, Brazil
- A new era in management of psoriasis, May 22, Istanbul, Turkey
- Regulation of follicle development and its clinical implications, May 23-24, Beaune, France
- Just because we can, May 28, Toronto, Canada
- Pathophysiology and diagnosis of dementias: role of functional and structural techniques (ENS satellite symposium), June 8, Nice, France
- GH/IGF-I/IGFBP-3: metabolic syndrome and chronic diseases, June 12-13, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- Integrated approach to disease management: endocrinology and cardio-metabolic disorders, June 28-29, Paris, France
- Advanced course in human reproduction and embryology (Pre-ESHRE), July 4, Barcelona, Spain
- MS Academia (Pre-ECTRIMS), September 16, Montreal, Canada
- MS Nurse (Pre-ECTRIMS), September 16, Montreal, Canada
- From infertility treatment to reproductive health, October 3-4, Rozzano (Milan), Italy
- Celebration – 30 years of IVF: new technology in reproductive medicine, November 29, Paris, France
- Genetics of autoimmune diseases, December 12-13, Barcelona, Spain
- Le biobanche in ostetricia e ginecología Preceptorship, October 24-25, Milan, Italy
- MS Preceptorship, June 30-July 2, Barcelona, Spain
- IVF Preceptorship, October 10-11, Madrid, Spain
In 2009 Serono Symposia International Foundation (SSIF) organized 19 Continuing Medical Education (CME) live events targeted to scientists, physicians, nurses, pharmacists and other healthcare professionals covering reproductive medicine, endocrinology, neurology, genetics and auto-immune disease.

SSIF continued to expand in Asia organizing an international conference on reproductive medicine “Advances in infertility: the Asian perspective”, held in Hangzhou (China). SSIF also organized an international conference on stem cells “Progress in stem cell biology and medical applications”, held in Stresa (Italy) on May 14-16 with the participation of Sir Martin J. Evans, winner of the Nobel Prize in 2007 for his studies on stem cells.

All the programs reached very high level key success indicators with participants:
- 98% of participants who filled in evaluation forms were very satisfied with the event;
- 93% found that the scientific program met the objectives of the course;
- 97% declared that the program was free of commercial bias;
- 96% declared that the program will be very useful in their day-to-day practice and help to improve patient care.

All these SSIF programs were accredited by the European Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (EACCME) and by national accreditation authorities.

SSIF continued to increase its educational activities online through its website, including two new online courses and one glossary covering reproductive medicine.

As an international CME provider, SSIF submitted for national and international accreditation 18 scientific programs of congresses organized by international medical societies, including:
- European Congress on Treatment of Multiple Sclerosis (ECTRIMS);
- World Congress of Neurology (WCN);
- European Neurological Societies (ENS);
- European Society for Human Reproduction and Embryology (ESHRE);
- European Stroke Conference (ESC);
- World Congress on Men’s Health (WCMH).

SSIF organized three Rome Group meetings in 2009, on identifying common international standards for CME. These workshops gathered major representatives of the world of CME including representatives from the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCMCE), the American Medical Association (AMA), European Union of Medical Specialists (UEMS), the Spanish Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (SACCME), the Federation of Royal Colleges of Physicians (RCP) and the CME Commission of the Italian Ministry of Health.
2009 educational activities

Endocrinology and metabolism

2009 saw Serono Symposia International Foundation (SSIF) launch its educational activities in phenylketonuria (PKU) with a meeting in Barcelona, gathering together all the top experts in the field. Along with comprehensive overviews of advanced research, outcomes solutions for PKU management in practice were discussed in lively interactive sessions.

Neurology

The multiple sclerosis (MS) annual meeting engaged almost six hundred participants with the mechanisms of neural damage and repair that determine the course of the disease. There were also sessions on practical issues in the clinical management of MS. Following high subscription levels for the MS Preceptorship, it was decided to run a spring and autumn edition, enabling SSIF to still offer the restricted participant numbers which are an essential part of its character along with the valued partnership with the Cem-Cat Center in Barcelona. Neurology events in 2009 also included the satellite symposium of the European Neurological Society (ENS) congress, focusing on the genetics of neurodegenerative diseases, and the MS academia and MS nurses workshop held before the European Congress on Treatment of Multiple Sclerosis (ECTRIMS) congress.

Reproductive medicine

New frontiers in fertility, the SSIF annual meeting dedicated to infertility treatment provided participants with a series of lectures addressing some of the most debated topics in the field. It also offered an overview of research outcomes influencing the management of infertility in next years. A symposium on individualizing infertility treatment according to the couple’s infertility profile, was held in Stockholm. While a symposium held in Prague, gave reproductive medicine specialists from Central and Eastern Europe reviews of the most recent research outcomes plus interactive sessions debating clinical issues.

China is one of the countries where research in reproductive medicine is growing fast and SSIF organized a symposium in Hangzhou enabling European, US and Chinese experts to share knowledge and research outcomes, along with differences and similarities in approaches to infertility.

In partnership with the International Society of Fertility Preservation, SSIF organized the World Congress on Fertility Preservation in Brussels. This built on a successful meeting in 2006 and matches well with SSIF’s mission to educate health professionals to improve patients’ health and quality of life in areas such as Assisted Reproductive Techniques (ART). Restoring fertility in a cancer survivor is not only an outstanding medical and scientific success, but a huge boost for a person affected by a very severe disease.

Two serial events, the pre-ESHRE symposium and the IVF Preceptorship and a meeting on quality management system in ART completed the calendar of SSIF’s reproductive medicine events.

Stem cells

Stem cells are being suggested in the treatment of many severe chronic diseases and for infertility too. For this reason SSIF organized a symposium in Stresa (Italy) specifically on this topic. The meeting was opened with an outstanding key note lecture “The structure and the function of the body depends on lineages of differentiated cells” delivered by Sir Martin J. Evans, Nobel Prize winner in 2007 for his studies on stem cells. In the sessions which followed all the main lines of research in the field were reviewed.
2009 conference list

- Advances and challenges in PKU, January 16-17, Barcelona, Spain
- New frontiers in fertility, February 13-14, Lisbon, Portugal
- Multiple sclerosis: translating pathophysiology into clinical practice, March 13-14, Paris, France
- Progress in stem cell biology and medical applications, May 14-16, Stresa, Italy
- MS Preceptorship, June 9-11, Barcelona, Spain
- Alzheimer, Parkinson, Multiple Sclerosis: role of genes [satellite symposium ENS], June 21, Milan, Italy
- Fertility Academia [Pre-ESHRE], June 26, Amsterdam, Netherlands
- Growth hormone deficiency: transition from adolescence to adulthood, July 16-18, Panama City, Panama
- MS Academia [Pre-ECTRIMS], September 8, Dusseldorf, Germany
- MS Nurse [Pre-ECTRIMS], September 8, Dusseldorf, Germany
- Defining patient’ subgroups to personalize infertility treatment, September 11-12, Stockholm, Sweden
- Fertility treatment: from the past to the future, October 2-3, Prague, Czech Republic
- Il Sistema di Gestione della Qualità nei Centri di PMA: Cosa si fa e cosa si dovrebbe fare nella realtà italiana, October 9-10, Florence, Italy
- MS Preceptorship [Fall edition], November 3-5, Barcelona, Spain
- IVF Preceptorship, November 13-14, Madrid, Spain
- Advances in infertility: the Asian perspective, November 21-22, Hangzhou, China
- New insights into MS, November 26-28, Mexico City, Mexico
- World congress on fertility preservation, December 10-12, Brussels, Belgium
In 2010 Serono Symposia International Foundation (SSIF) organized 20 Continuing Medical Education (CME) live events targeting physicians, healthcare professionals, scientists, pharmacists and others. Feedback from participants highlighted the following:

- 97% of participants who filled in evaluation forms were very satisfied with the event;
- 95% found that the scientific program met the objectives of the course;
- 97% declared that the program was free of commercial bias;
- 96% declared that the program will be very useful in their day-to-day practice and help to improve patient care.

**Average rates in 2010 (%)**

- **Satisfaction**: 97%
- **Met objectives**: 95%
- **Free of commercial bias**: 97%
- **Benefit to patients**: 96%

Source: SSIF Evaluations Forms 2008

SSIF continued to expand in Canada, organizing two international conferences, one related to reproductive medicine “Treating the ovary to obtain better eggs” held in Toronto in November and one focusing on neurology “The Biological basis of progressive Multiple Sclerosis” (MS), held in Montreal also in November. All these SSIF programs were accredited by the European Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (EACCME), and by national accreditation authorities.

During the year SSIF provided healthcare professionals with 12 new online educational activities through its website, launching the first online symposium on “From ovarian stimulation to the laboratory: is there room for improvement?” prior to the Asia Pacific Initiative on Reproductive Endocrinology (ASPIRE) congress. SSIF also launched a new website (www.pkuacademy.org) dedicated to Phenylketonuria (PKU), offering an online educational pathway to healthcare professionals wanting to specialize in this field.

In 2010 SSIF launched the first SSIF Award recognizing individual expertise in bioscience leading to a significant contribution to medical education. This award was launched in partnership with European Society for Human Reproduction and Embryology (ESHRE) during the 26th ESHRE congress held in Rome in June. The winner will be announced during the next ESHRE congress which in Stockholm in July 2011. As an international CME provider, SSIF submitted for national and international accreditation 20 scientific programs of congresses organized by international medical societies, including:

- **European Congress of Endocrinology** (ECE);
- **European Congress on Treatment of Multiple Sclerosis** (ECTRIMS);
- **European Neurological Society** (ENS);
- **European Society for Human Reproduction and Embryology** (ESHRE);
- **European Stroke Conference** (ESC);
- **World Congress on Cancers of the Skin** (WCCS)

In 2010, SSIF continued to support and organize three Rome Group meetings, to expand the CME culture around the world and to identify common international standards for CME. These workshops brought together major representatives of the world of CME including representatives from the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME), the American Medical Association, European Union of Medical Specialists (UEMS), the Spanish Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (SACME), the Federation of Royal Colleges of Physicians (RCP) and the CME Commission of the Italian Ministry of Health.
2010 educational activities

Endocrinology and metabolism
Serono Symposia International Foundation (SSIF) continued its commitment to high profile medical education in phenylketonuria (PKU) organizing the second symposium in Munich. It provided a unique opportunity for updating knowledge on this rare disease, with lectures and workshops focusing on relevant aspects of practical management.

Neurology
The 2010 SSIF annual meeting on multiple sclerosis (MS) focused on evolving aspects of treatment particularly looking at the disease activity free therapeutic goal. A successful session involved case studies being discussed with the audience using the voting system. MS specialists from South America and Spain convened in Rio de Janeiro where differences and similarities in disease management were discussed, according to differences in diagnostic tools and treatment availability. The sixth edition of the MS Preceptorship, held at the Cern-Cat centre in Barcelona, again drew praise for its well balanced mix of outstanding lectures, working group sessions and visits to the centre’s premises.

At the congress of the European Neurological Society (ENS), SSIF organized a satellite symposium on Parkinson’s disease including three keynote lectures on pathophysiological mechanisms, stem cells treatment and future trends in research. In Gothenburg SSIF organized two serial events - “MS Academia and the MS Nurses workshop” - prior to the European Congress on Treatment of Multiple Sclerosis (ECTRIMS) congress. The Canadian SSIF symposium which focused on a niche topic: “Progressive forms of MS: updates on pathophysiology, diagnosis and treatments” were reviewed by excellent speakers.

The event closing the 2010 neurology calendar was a symposium held in Vienna dedicated to oral treatments being introduced in MS clinical practice. With its comprehensive reviews on new molecules and lively discussions on best use of present and future treatments the event provided a glimpse into the future of MS management.

Reproductive medicine
Educational events in 2010 started with the annual meeting dedicated to infertility treatment, which addressed all the most relevant topics in this fast changing field. In Panama City, SSIF organized a symposium “ART: Personalized approaches to improve outcomes”, dedicated to specialists in infertility management working in Central and South America.

The cancellation of the pre-ASPIRE symposium, planned in conjunction with the congress of the Asia Pacific initiative on reproduction, due to riots in Bangkok at the time, led to this live symposium being replaced with an online symposium, posted on the SSIF’s website. This was attended by many users from all over the world.

In Beaune (France) SSIF held the third edition of a meeting addressing selected topics in reproductive medicine and other disorders which influence reproductive function, such as cancer and obesity.

Other serial events organized by SSIF in 2010 included the third edition of the “Advanced Course in Human Reproduction and Embryology” held before the Congress of the European Society of Reproductive Health (ESHRE). Also held in 2010 was the second international symposium on “Gene, Environment and Lifestyle Interaction in Human Reproduction”. The latter, a unique event in its field, gathered experts from all over the world discussing the effects of environment on reproductive function, through mutations and changes in the epigenetics of several genes. The last three SSIF events on reproductive medicine were symposia focused, respectively, on implantation, management of infertility complicated by other combined disorders and oocyte quality in in vitro fertilization (IVF).
Immunology

Some of the most renowned experts in genetics, pathophysiology and treatment of the main autoimmune diseases convened in San Raffaele Hospital in Milan for the SSIF’s symposium: “Autoimmunity and Immune Mediated Disorders”. The meeting achieved two goals: it provided a unique opportunity for experts on different diseases, who share a common pathogenetic background, to discuss research outcomes and compare experiences. It also gave participants the chance to attend outstanding state of the art lectures and be involved in lively debates on the most recent research outcomes.

Very successful also was the participation of the Foundation in the 9th International Congress on Systemic Lupus Erythematosus (SLE), in Vancouver, Canada. Many health care professionals showed a strong interest in SSIF’s educational activities. Patients too participated in the congress and visited the Foundation’s booth, confirming the need for high level medical education in the SLE field.
2010 conference list

- Advances and challenges in PKU, January 22-23, Munich, Germany
- ART: experimental bases for improving outcomes for the benefit of patients, February 19-20, Istanbul, Turkey
- Optimizing MS therapy: current treatment models and future options, March 12-13, Rome, Italy
- ART: personalized approaches to improve outcomes, March 25-27, Panama, Republic of Panama
- Autoimmunity and immune mediated disorders, April 23-24, Milan, Italy
- New therapeutic approaches for changing MS scenario, May 21-22, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- Regulation of follicle development and its clinical implications, May 28-29, Beaune, France
- MS Preceptorship, June 1-3, Barcelona, Spain
- Parkinson’s Disease: new insights in pathophysiology and treatment (ENS satellite symposium), June 22, Berlin, Germany
- Advanced course in human reproduction (Pre-ESHRE), June 26, Rome, Italy
- Gene, environment and lifestyle in infertility, August 27-28, Malmö, Sweden
- Endometrium and embryo implantation: the hidden frontier, September 24-25, Lyon, France
- IVF Preceptorship, October 7-8 Madrid, Spain
- MS Academia (Pre-ECTRIMS), October 12, 2010, Gothenburg, Sweden
- MS Nurse (Pre-ECTRIMS), October 12, 2010, Gothenburg, Sweden
- The Biological basis of progressive MS, November 6, Montreal, Canada
- Multiple sclerosis: future treatments and new goals, November 12-13, Vienna, Austria
- Challenging issues in Art, November 12-13, Barcelona, Spain
- Treating the ovary to obtain better eggs, November 26, Toronto, Canada
## Statement of activities

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<tbody>
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<td></td>
<td>ACTUAL 2010</td>
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<tr>
<td>Income from donations &amp; registration fees</td>
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- Fixed Costs
- Congress Costs
2011 sees Serono Symposia International Foundation (SSIF) launch activities in the field of oncology. SSIF will become the Continuing Medical Education (CME) provider of the Molecular Targeted Therapy of Cancer (MTTC) medical education initiative, established in 2001 and headed by the International Education Council (IEC) composed of internationally recognized experts in the field of medical oncology. The MTTC was developed to provide high quality medical education following CME guidelines, through a series of international, regional and national CME accredited workshops.

In 2011 SSIF will organize both the international MTTC Workshop in Rome in May and the Latin America Workshop in Colombia in November.

SSIF is also implementing preceptorships in oncology in partnership with the Hospital Paul Brousse in Villejuif (Paris) along with an international consensus meeting in Rome on the multidisciplinary approach to the treatment of metastasis in colorectal cancer, bringing together worldwide experts in the field of oncology.

SSIF will continue its commitment in other scientific fields of interest such as neurology, endocrinology and reproductive medicine, by creating and implementing live and online educational activities.

SSIF will launch the second SSIF Award in 2011 in partnership with the European Neurological Society (ENS) to recognize and reward excellence in medical education, rewarding an expert in neurology who is continuing to drive medical education forward.

SSIF will also continue the partnership with international medical societies that has evolved over many years.

With the rapid changes in the world of CME with the introduction of many different live and online formats, SSIF is continually trying to take the lead as an international CME provider. In 2011, SSIF will continue to develop the learning effectiveness program, including a structured series of evaluations of its educational activities, to provide cutting-edge learning activities designed to match the educational needs of healthcare professionals.
Serono Symposia International Foundation (SSIF) programs are organized solely to promote the exchange and dissemination of scientific and medical information. No form of promotional activity is permitted. The Foundation receives annual donations in the form of unrestricted educational grants to develop its numerous activities.

SSIF is grateful to the following donors who have enabled the Foundation to progress its long-standing tradition of excellence in medical education all over the world and to be of service to the healthcare community:

- Centre d’Esclerosi Multiple de Catalunya Val d’Hebron University Hospital
- ComtecMed
- Congrex Sweden
- Congrex Switzerland
- Cryo-Save
- Datanalysis
- Esaote
- European Society of Endocrinology
- Fundación IVI
- ISFP International Society for Fertility Preservation
- ISMH International Society of Men’s Health
- K.I.T.E.
- Merck Serono
- Ministry of Health of the State of Israel
- Sanofi-Aventis
- University of Catania