



MEDIA ALERT

Tuesday, October 7, 2008

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The American Society of Human Genetics Hosts 58th Annual Meeting in Philadelphia

World's Top Genetics Researchers Convene at ASHG 2008 Meeting

• *November 11-15, 2008* • *Pennsylvania Convention Center* •

BETHESDA, MD – October 7, 2008 – The world's top scientists and clinicians in the human genetics field will gather in Philadelphia to present their latest research findings at the 58th Annual Meeting of The American Society of Human Genetics (ASHG) from Tuesday, November 11, through Saturday, November 15, 2008, at the Pennsylvania Convention Center.

Founded in 1948, ASHG is the primary professional membership organization for human genetics specialists worldwide, representing nearly 8,000 researchers, academicians, clinicians, genetic counselors, nurses and others with a special interest in this area. The Society's Annual Meeting is the world's largest gathering of human genetics professionals and a forum for renowned experts in the field.

With more than 286 platform and plenary presentations, 2,329 posters, 26 invited sessions and special symposia, and four press briefing events (two of which will be webcast *live* to the media), the 2008 ASHG Annual Meeting will provide journalists with a rich resource of new information about cutting-edge developments in human genetics and genomics research. In addition, nearly 250 U.S. and international exhibitors will offer an unprecedented opportunity to view the latest advances in genetics-related products and services derived, in part, from work presented at previous ASHG meetings.

PRESS BRIEFING SESSIONS

ASHG has planned four press briefing events that will be held in the Pennsylvania Convention Center during the week of the Society's 58th Annual Meeting. For the first time, the Society will be webcasting *two* of this year's press briefing sessions *live*, allowing [credentialed members of the media](#) who are unable to attend the ASHG 2008 meeting to view the sessions in real time by linking to live online webcasts.

If you cannot attend this year's Annual Meeting in Philadelphia, but still wish to receive embargoed press releases from ASHG and/or register to view the live webcast(s) of either of the Society's two press briefing events scheduled for *Thursday, November 13, 2008* (see details below), please e-mail your request to ASHG Press Office at press@ashg.org, and *remember to include your contact information.*

The press briefing sessions at the ASHG 2008 meeting will feature presentations from prominent experts in the field on a diverse range of "hot" topics and issues in human genetics, including the following:

Wednesday, November 12, 2008:

- **“Advancing Our Understanding of Genetic Disease: New Findings from Genome-Wide Association Studies”** will highlight a selection of the most interesting and exciting GWAS abstracts presented at the ASHG 2008 Meeting. This session will feature a panel of top scientists in the field discussing their novel GWAS findings that help advance our understanding of the many different genetic variants associated with common complex genetic diseases, including autism, type 2 diabetes, and inflammatory bowel disease.

Thursday, November 13, 2008: (WEBCAST SESSIONS)

- The recently-appointed ASHG Ancestry Testing Task Force Committee plans to unveil the Society’s new **“ASHG Ancestry Testing Statement and Recommendations: Guidelines for Understanding the Issues and Implications Involved”** at the 2008 Annual Meeting in a press briefing session featuring principal members of the Task Force Committee, including the current president of ASHG, [Aravinda Chakravarti, PhD](#), and president-elect, [Edward McCabe, MD, PhD](#).
- [Francis Collins, MD, PhD](#), world-renowned author, physician-geneticist and former director of the National Human Genome Research Institute at the National Institutes of Health, will moderate a press briefing session on **“Genome-Wide Association Studies and the 1000 Genomes Project: Implications and Clinical Applications.”** This session will feature the following panel of distinguished speakers discussing GWA studies’ impact on health care practice, and the ethical, legal, and social consequences of this type of research:
 - [David Altshuler, MD, PhD](#) – “The 1000 Genomes Project”
 - [David Valle, MD](#) – “Translating GWAS Data: Bridging the Gap Between Scientific Discovery, Clinical Research and Health Care Practice”
 - [Kathy Hudson, PhD](#) – “GWA Studies’ Impact on Society: An Overview of Ethical, Legal and Social Implications and the Influence on Public Attitudes About Genetic Research”

Friday, November 14, 2008:

- **“Novel Genetic Disease Treatments and Therapies: From Scientific Discovery to Medical Delivery”** will highlight some of the most exciting new scientific research on successful genetic disease treatments and therapies presented at the ASHG 2008 meeting, including: the results of a genome-wide association scan for genetic determinants of warfarin dosage, a successful enzyme replacement therapy for Type I Gaucher Disease, and breakthrough research on a new treatment that has the potential to be the first successful therapy for Huntington’s Disease.

OTHER ASHG 2008 MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

- *Presidential Symposium: “[Human Genome Stories](#)”* featuring presentations from four distinguished invited speakers, including [Craig Venter, PhD](#), founder of The Institute for Genomic Research, who played a central role in the race to map the human genome.
- *Presidential Address: “[Principia Genetica: Our Future Science](#)”* presented by the current president of ASHG, [Aravinda Chakravarti, PhD](#), Johns Hopkins University Medical School.
- The ASHG Communications Office will host an *Invited Education Session* intended for Society members and press attendees titled, **“[Genetics Education by the News and Entertainment Media: Paradox or Paradigm?](#)”** A panel of four expert speakers will address how geneticists can improve the way they communicate complex scientific research results to the media. This session will also provide press attendees with tips on how to more accurately cover topics and issues related to human genetics, and how to avoid the biases and inaccuracies that are commonly found in news and “infotainment” media coverage.

To view a complete listing (and the full-text abstracts) of all scientific sessions and posters presented at the 2008 meeting, visit: <http://www.ashg.org/2008meeting/pages/sessionlisting.shtml/>.

GENERAL PRESS INFORMATION AND ONLINE REGISTRATION

The ASHG 2008 Annual Meeting is open to print, online and broadcast news media, all health, medical and science reporters, and freelance writers on a verifiable assignment from an established news source. Complimentary meeting registration will be available to [members of the media](#) who provide [appropriate press credentials and identification](#). The Society offers reporters many resources onsite at the meeting, including news releases, press conferences, media interviews with top experts in the field, and a press room with free Internet access and complimentary refreshments.

Press attendees are strongly encouraged to [pre-register online](#) for the 2008 meeting in advance, however, we will continue to offer [onsite press registration](#) in the ASHG Press Office as well (located on the third floor of the Pennsylvania Convention Center, in Room 304). * To pre-register for the ASHG 2008 meeting, please complete the online press registration application form located at the following URL: http://www.ashg.org/2008meeting/pages/press_register.shtml/.

For more information about ASHG's press guidelines, policies, and online press registration for the 2008 Annual Meeting, as well as details about this year's press briefing sessions, webcasts, speakers and experts available for interview, and other special media events and opportunities at the meeting, please visit: <http://www.ashg.org/2008meeting/pages/press.shtml/>. For general information on the 58th Annual Meeting, please visit <http://www.ashg.org/2008meeting/>.

Please direct all media inquiries to: ASHG Press Office, ASHG Communications Manager, via e-mail at press@ashg.org, or by phone at 301-634-7307 (o) or at 240-281-2386 (c). For all onsite media inquiries during the ASHG 2008 meeting, Ms. Long can be reached via cell phone at .

ABOUT THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF HUMAN GENETICS

Founded in 1948, The American Society of Human Genetics (ASHG) is the primary professional membership organization for human genetics specialists worldwide. The nearly 8,000 members of ASHG include researchers, academicians, clinicians, laboratory practice professionals, genetic counselors, nurses and others involved in or with a special interest in human genetics.

The Society's mission is to serve research scientists, health professionals and the public by providing forums to: (1) share research results through the Annual Meeting and in [The American Journal of Human Genetics \(AJHG\)](#); (2) advance genetic research by advocating for research support; (3) educate future genetics professionals, health care providers, advocates, teachers, students and the general public about all aspects of human genetics; and (4) promote genetic services and support responsible social and scientific policies. For more information about ASHG, please visit <http://www.ashg.org/>.

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**Please note that all onsite press registrants will be required to provide [appropriate press credentials and identification](#) to ASHG Press Office staff before receiving a press badge to access meeting events.*

ASHG EXPERTS & PRESS BRIEFING SPEAKERS AVAILABLE FOR INTERVIEW
Please contact ASHG Press Office at press@ashg.org, or by phone at 301-634-7307 (o) or