

Conference report

## The 7th International Mycological Congress, Oslo, 2002

This major event for mycologists was held in Oslo (Norway), 11–17 August 2002. The organizing committee, chaired by Leif Ryvarden, had arranged the congress themes in five major topics: (1) Biodiversity and conservation. (2) Systematics, phylogeny and evolution. (3) Pathogens and nuisances, food and medicine. (4) Population dynamics and ecology. (5) Cell biology and physiology. Yeasts played a minor, but pivotal role at this meeting, which was dominated by non-yeast mycologists.

However, several aspects of yeast biology, particularly of *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* and *Candida albicans*, were treated in various molecular-biological symposia, such as 'Molecular organization and biosynthesis of cell walls', 'Fungal pathogenicity and pathogenicity factors' and 'Regulation of carbon metabolism in liquid culture of filamentous fungi'. The systematics of basidiomyceteous yeasts was treated in the symposium on the Heterobasidiomycetes.

The evolution of the yeast genome was extensively discussed in the session on 'Clues to fungal biology from comparative sequence analysis'. The ancient duplication of the genome played a central role in these discussions, and this will probably continue for a while. From my personal perspective, it is clear that the interface between yeast evolution and comparative genomics is a very fruitful field, generating many new insights into the origin of

our 'love babies'. Because the genomes of various filamentous fungi have almost been sequenced, I expect that this research will soon be followed in the mycological field. Yeasts also played a central role in the symposium on 'Experimental population genetics and evolution', which is not very surprising, given the good science being done in the field.

Finally, yeasts had their own meeting, 'Molecular systematics and ecology of yeasts'. In this symposium, various aspects of yeast biology ranging from 'What makes a species?', 'Generic relationships as deduced from multi-gene datasets', 'The diversity and ecology of the plant pathogenic genus *Taphrina*', 'Biogeography of floricolous yeasts', 'Molecular ecology of marine basidiomyceteous yeasts' to 'Systematics of *Cryptococcus neoformans*' were treated. These contributions, as well as those presented in the other symposia, made clear that many so-called 'non-conventional yeasts' exhibit many interesting biological properties, which may lead to further scientific and application surprises in the future.

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