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Second Day of Third SCBA International Symposium at CUHK

How does our body immune system selectively attack and destroy foreign substances while avoiding destruction of the body's own tissues and organs? This has been one of the main questions that scientists discussed yesterday at the "Third International Symposium and Workshop" co-organised by the Society of Chinese Bioscientists in America (SCBA) and The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK). Dr Tak W Mak of the Department of Medical Biophysics and Immunology of the Ontario Cancer Institute Canada, a world leader of the study of antigen receptors (lymphocyte surface molecules which recognize antigens), described the discovery of a new class of receptors. Dr Mak said "the definition of the receptor interaction with self and non-self antigens should aid in our understanding in autoimmune, transplantation rejection and anti tumour situations" There were five papers presented on this topic yesterday.

Environmental issues were also dealt with yesterday. Dr Louis Chang, Professor of Pathology, Pharmacology and Toxicology and the Director of Interdisciplinary Toxicology Program, University of Arkansas College of Medicine, addressed the symposium on Heavy metals toxicology. "While heavy metals have many important uses in industries and in agriculture, many metal salts and their compounds are highly toxic," said Professor Chang. Topics on chemicals in drinking water and carcinogens in the environment were also discussed.

The symposium, a five-day event (June 25-29) jointly organised by SCBA and CUHK, will have its third day programme held today (June 27) in CUHK.

(For further information, please contact Miss Celia Poon at telephone: 6952876)