

Introduction

Open Access

Bioinformatics in Italy: BITS2006, the third annual meeting of the Italian Society of Bioinformatics

Rita Casadio*¹, Manuela Helmer-Citterich² and Graziano Pesole³

Address: ¹Department of Biology, University of Bologna, Italy, ²Centre for Molecular Bioinformatics, Dept of Biology "Enrico Caffè", University of Rome Tor Vergata, Rome, Italy and ³Dept of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology "Ernesto Quagliariello", University of Bari, Italy

* Corresponding author

from Italian Society of Bioinformatics (BITS): Annual Meeting 2006
Bologna, Italy. 28–29 April, 2006

Published: 8 March 2007

BMC Bioinformatics 2007, **8**(Suppl 1):S1 doi:10.1186/1471-2105-8-S1-S1

This article is available from: <http://www.biomedcentral.com/1471-2105/8/S1/S1>

© 2007 Casadio et al; licensee BioMed Central Ltd.

This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

Overview

The Italian Society of Bioinformatics (BITS, <http://bioinformatics.it>) was founded in 2003, after five years of constructive and pleasant informal meetings. Since then, there has been a growing interest in the discipline that involves Italian groups working in different fields, including molecular biology, genetics, structural biochemistry, mathematics, physics and informatics. The 3rd Annual BITS Meeting, <http://www.biocomp.unibo.it/bits2006/>, was held in Bologna, Italy, on April 28-29 2006, in a beautiful historical building, the Convento di San Domenico. Over 200 scientists actively working in the field or strongly interested in its development met and discussed their work, state of the art and future perspectives. A total of 115 abstracts were accepted and presented in the poster session and 24 of them were selected for oral presentation.

Distinguished scientists were invited to give lectures at the BITS 2006 Conference: Alfonso Valencia, Spanish National Cancer Research Center, Madrid, gave the "Giuliano Preparata" Lecture. Anna Tramontano, University of Rome "La Sapienza", Dominic Clark and Dietrich Rebholz-Schuhmann, both at EBI, Hinxton, were invited as keynote speakers.

A round table discussion on the most timely and important problems of Bioinformatics and its development in Italy was also held. Participants were: Cecilia Saccone (CNR/University of Bari and honorary President of BITS), Lilia

Alberghina (University of Milano Bicocca), Alberto Albertini (CNR ITB, Milano), Aldo Tagliabue (ALTA/Chiron Siena), Corrado Priami (Centre for Computational and Systems Biology, University of Trento), Enrico Nardelli (Computer Science, University of Roma "Tor Vergata").

The conference was organized into six thematic sessions: i) Genome Screening and Prediction; ii) Computational Proteomics; iii) Microarray and Genome Analysis; iv) Protein Structure and Function; v) Genomes and Evolution; and vi) Networks and Systems Biology.

From these conference sessions, 36 papers were submitted for publication in this *BMC Bioinformatics* supplement. We adopted a stringent reviewing procedure, based on selected Associated Editors handling the process according to their recognized knowledge in specific subjects of Bioinformatics and following a peer review procedure.

After this process, 23 papers were accepted. They cover different aspects of theoretical and applied Bioinformatics, such as: sequence and protein analysis, analysis of gene expression, molecular evolution, databases, informatics tools for biology, text mining and systems biology.

Whether this will help in encouraging scientists involved in biological and/or medical researches in our country to plan, merge and spread their knowledge by means of Bioinformatics is left to the future and to the availability of national grants specifically devoted to this.

In this presentation, we gratefully acknowledge the patience and help of our colleagues around the world who helped in the process of reviewing as Associate Editors:

Alex Bateman, Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute, UK

Alvis Brazma, European Bioinformatics Institute, UK

Peter Clote, Boston College, USA

Joaquin Dopazo, Centro de Investigación "Príncipe Felipe", Valencia, Spain

Dan Gusfield, Department of Computer Science, UC, Berkley, USA

Des Higgins, University College Dublin, Ireland

Ivo Hofacker, Institute for Theoretical Chemistry, University Vienna, Austria

David Jones, University College, London, UK

Misha Kapushesky, European Bioinformatics Institute, UK

Reinhard Laubenbacher, Virginia Bioinformatics Institute at Virginia Tech, Virginia, USA

Stefano Lonardi, Department of Computer Science and Engineering, University of California at Riverside, USA

Wojciech Makalowski, Penn State University, PA, USA

Arthur Lesk, Penn State University, PA, USA

Giovanni Parmigiani, The Sidney Kimmel Comprehensive Cancer Center at Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD, USA

Peter Rice, European Bioinformatics Institute, UK

Marie-France Sagot, BAOBAB Team, INRIA Université Claude Bernard, Lyon I, France

Luis Serrano, EMBL, Heidelberg, Germany

Alfonso Valencia, Centro Nacional de Investigaciones Oncológicas, Madrid, Spain

Next meeting

The next Annual meeting of the Italian Society of Bioinformatics will be held in Naples, April 26–28, 2007. Further information about BITS2007 will be available on our web site at the address <http://bioinformatics.it>.

Acknowledgements

We are grateful to the referees for their dedication and effort in peer reviewing the abstracts and manuscripts submitted by the attendees. We acknowledge the support of the Giuliano Preparata Foundation. We also thank the BMC Bioinformatics Editorial Office for their efficient and kind support.

This article has been published as part of BMC Bioinformatics Volume 8, Supplement 1, 2007: Italian Society of Bioinformatics (BITS): Annual Meeting 2006. The full contents of the supplement are available online at <http://www.biomedcentral.com/1471-2105/8?issue=S1>.

Publish with **BioMed Central** and every scientist can read your work free of charge

"BioMed Central will be the most significant development for disseminating the results of biomedical research in our lifetime."

Sir Paul Nurse, Cancer Research UK

Your research papers will be:

- available free of charge to the entire biomedical community
- peer reviewed and published immediately upon acceptance
- cited in PubMed and archived on PubMed Central
- yours — you keep the copyright

Submit your manuscript here:
http://www.biomedcentral.com/info/publishing_adv.asp

