

# European General Practice Research Network National Representative Report 2003/4

**Dr Jean Karl SOLER**

*A major part of this report is paraphrased from a shorter report published by the author in the 'EGPRN News' section of the European Journal of General Practice of October 2004.*

The activities of the local European General Practice Research Network (EGPRN) National representative in 2003/4 included, in reverse chronological order, the organisation of the EGPRN October 2004 meeting in Malta, the organisation of an EGPRN Research Methods Course also in October, the foundation of the Maltese Family Practice Research Network and the production of the 2003 Maltese EGPRN National Report.

## **EGPRN Gozo meeting**

The European General Practice Research Network is the European network organisation of Wonca Europe. Its members include European Primary Care researchers, and meetings are organised twice a year in various European countries. The most recent EGPRN workshop, the 59<sup>th</sup>, took place from the 7<sup>th</sup> to the 10<sup>th</sup> October 2004, blessed by beautiful weather at the Ta' Cenc Hotel on the island of Gozo, Republic of Malta.

The theme was "Research using Electronic Patient Records in General Practice". The meeting was opened by EGPRN Chairman, Prof Dr Paul van Royen, and Malta College of Family Doctors President, Dr Pierre Mallia.

On the eve of the meeting the theme was developed during two pre-conference workshops, on research using EPR and on the International Classification of Primary Care, led by Dr Douglas Fleming and Dr Mario R Sammut respectively. The theme was introduced by keynote lectures delivered by Dr Douglas Fleming and Dr Jean K Soler. Forty-one abstracts were accepted, and most were presented successfully. However some participants suffered abrupt flight cancellations when the radar net in Milan failed, resulting in a few presentations being dropped. There were more than 70 participants from all over Europe. Drs. Mario R Sammut, Anthony Mifsud and Mark Rosso were amongst the presenters, and other Maltese and Gozitan GPs also attended the meeting. The presentations and discussions over the two days took a broad approach. Many quality data collection projects were presented, and participants shared their experiences of barriers and

opportunities with regards to research using EPR. This workshop was particularly rich in its content and lively in its interactions. On Saturday the participants had the pleasure of being addressed by Minister for Gozo, The Hon. Mrs. Giovanna Debono, on closure of the meeting.

One outcome of the meeting was the resolution to form a special interest group in research using EPR, within the EGPRN but accepting outside members.

For more details of past and future EGPRN meetings, please visit the EGPRN website at <http://www.egprn.org>. An on-line database of all abstracts presented at recent EGPRN/EGPRW meetings is available.

## **EGPRN Research Methods Course**

Additionally a group of motivated Maltese, Italian and German doctors attended an EGPRN International Course in Research in Primary Care. The course ran from the 2<sup>nd</sup> to the 6<sup>th</sup> October and was linked to an optional twelve-week on-line research methods module provided by the University of Ulster in Northern Ireland. This course is part of an MSc in Primary Care and General Practice with the University, and is the first Brisbane Initiative event to take place. The course tutors were Prof Frank Dobbs, Prof Hagen Sandholzer and Dr Lieve Peremans. More details are available in an article on the MSc in Primary Care and General Practice submitted to this journal.

## **Malta Family Practice Research Network**

In November 2003, College members Drs. Tanya Melillo, Isabel Stabile, Mario R Sammut and Jean Karl Soler founded the Malta Family Practice Research Network. The aim of this group is "to develop research in family practice in Malta" and to change GPs' 'need for' research into 'want to' research.

The group has organised a research symposium in July 2004, which was well attended by College members. Previously

completed research projects were presented, including members MSc theses, projects for Irish College of GPs Diplomas, and others. Projects presented included research on smoking cessation, burnout, sickness certification, influenza surveillance and others. Some of the presentations were eventually presented at the EGPRN meeting in Gozo.

Future plans of the group include the further development of research in GP in Malta, such as stimulating the availability of more funding for local research, and support of local researchers.

### **EGPRN National Report for 2003**

The Maltese EGPRN National Representative report for 2003 is included in its entirety for reference.

COUNTRY: Malta

RAPPORTEUR: Dr. Jean Karl Soler

DATE 20/09/2004

- (NEW) BRIGHT STARS, EXPERTS WHOM WE WOULD LIKE TO KNOW  
(IF POSSIBLE, PROVIDE ADDRESS)
    - Dr. Isabel Stabile - Stabile, Isabel E-mail Address: [istabile@maltanet.net](mailto:istabile@maltanet.net)
  - (NEW) EGPRN MEMBERS FROM YOUR COUNTRY
    - Tanya van Avendonk
  - (CHANGES IN) FINANCING AND ORGANISATION OF RESEARCH ON LEGISLATIVE LEVEL
    - None to report
  - (CHANGES IN) TEACHING GENERAL PRACTICE RESEARCH
    - EGPRN Research Methods Course October 2004 (Brisbane Initiative)
    - MSc General Practice Primary Care from University of Ulster
  - FUTURE MEETINGS OF RELEVANCE TO EGPRN AND WHY
    - EGPRN October 2004, Gozo
    - Research Methods Course, Malta, October 2004
  - HOW HAVE I PROMOTED EGPRN IN MY COUNTRY AFTER THE LAST REPORT
    - This is my second report. In the interim I have organised an EGPRN meeting, a Research Methods Course, and a MFPRN network research meeting.
  - (NEW) MAIN RESEARCH PROJECTS FOR GENERAL PRACTICE GOING ON IN YOUR COUNTRY
    - The Maltese Transition Project (year 4 – closure of database end 2004)
  - (NEW) MAJOR PUBLICATIONS FROM GENERAL PRACTICE RESEARCH IN YOUR COUNTRY (IF POSSIBLE, PROVIDE REFERENCES)
    - JK Soler, IM Okkes. "Sick leave certification: an unwelcome administrative burden for the family physician?" First Author. *European Journal of General Practice* 2004; 10:2: Pages 50-55 (June 2004)
    - C Lionis, F Carelli, JK Soler. "Towards an academic career in general practice/family medicine within the Mediterranean setting: An important priority for the development of the discipline". Co-author. *Editorial in Family Practice* 2004. (October 2004)
    - M Esteva, C Larraz, JK Soler, H Yaman. "Desgaste profesional en los mÈdicos de familia espaÒoles". *Atencion Primaria* 2004 (in press).
- None other identified with Mesh search of Pub Med ("Family Practice"[MeSH] AND "Malta"[MeSH])
- (NEW) INSTITUTIONS, ORGANISATIONS, RESEARCH CLUBS ETC?  
(IF POSSIBLE, PROVIDE CONTACT INFORMATION)
    - Malta Family Practice Research Network (First meeting July 2004)

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