



3RD EUROPEAN CONGRESS ON FAMILY MEDICINE/GENERAL PRACTICE, WONCA

DR MARIO R. SAMMUT

HONORARY SECRETARY,

MALTA COLLEGE OF FAMILY DOCTORS

Introduction

Through the generous sponsorship of the registration fee by the Swedish Association of General Practice, a delegation from the Malta College of Family Doctors was able to be one of sixty from countries around the world participating in the 3rd European Congress on Family Medicine/General Practice, WONCA (World Organisation of Family Doctors), held at the City Conference Centre in Stockholm, Sweden, on June 30 - July 4 1996. The Malta delegation consisted of Dr. Denis Soler M.D. F.R.C.G.P., College President, Dr. Wilfred Galea M.D., International Secretary, and Dr. Mario R. Sammut M.D., Honorary Secretary.

Congress Scope & Theme

As described by Carl Edvard Rudebeck and Jonas Sjogreen, Congress President and Vice President, "recent dynamic political developments in the whole of Europe are a challenge for us all. Our society is changing rapidly and so are the tasks facing our health care systems. The scope of this congress was to contribute towards meeting the growing need for setting up networks and strengthening bonds between family doctors.

Every general practitioner has an obvious need for **continuing medical education**. CME is the key to the development of personal competence and to quality assurance and improvement. In the last few years there has been great activity in this particular field in Europe. Research, experimentation and investigation have led to new knowledge, new educational techniques and new strategies. The main goal of the congress was to utilize all this and to stimulate the development of CME through intercollegiate discussions and the exchange of ideas."

Inauguration Ceremony and Symposium, 30th June

Family doctors playing Swedish Folk Music started off the **Inauguration Ceremony** of this congress on a tuneful note. With Dr. Jonas Sjogreen acting as compere for the evening in his historical uniform of an olden-day Swedish district medical officer (complete with cocked hat, tails, sword and all!), speeches of welcome were made by Dr. Carl Edvard Rudebeck, President of the Organising Committee and Chairperson of the Scientific Committee, Dr. Frede Olesen, President of the European Society of General Practice/Family Medicine (ESGP) and Dr. Goran Sjonell, President of WONCA. These were followed with the customary presentation of the

Hippocrates Award by Drs. Ingvar Krakau and Frede Olesen to Professor Gosta Tibblin of Sweden in recognition of his services to family medicine.

The **Inauguration Symposium** entitled "Life-long Learning – Personal Reflections given by Experienced General Practitioners from their Varying National and Cultural Backgrounds", was chaired by Bengt Mattsson (Sweden), with presentations being made by Bernardine Wanrooij (Netherlands), Michael Weingarten (Israel) and Aili Pick (Estonia).

Main Programme, 1st-4th July

The titles of the daily opening keynote lectures were the following:

- **Wants and Needs in CME** – Michael Boland (Ireland);
- **The Individual in Clinical Practice** – S. Kay Toombs (USA);
- **General Practice/Family Medicine in the New Europe – Changes and Challenges** – Joan Gene I Badia (Spain);
- **General Practice and Society – An interactive tale** – Per Fugelli (Norway).

College representatives also attended for the following presentations, symposia and workshops:

1. **CME – Incentives and Formats**, chaired by Jacky Hayden (UK).
2. **CME – Groups, Mentors, Plans**, chaired by Bernardine Wanrooij (Netherlands)
3. **CME – Patient Needs**, chaired by Igor Svab (Slovenia).
4. **CME – long distance, information technology**, chaired by Aldo Lupo (Italy).
5. **CME – academic work, research**, chaired by George Bellos (Greece).
6. **WONCA Working Party on Informatics**, a workshop chaired by Michael Kidd (Australia),

where the College, having already appointed its representatives on this working party, made a strong presence through active participation.

7. **The Internet for General Practice**, a workshop chaired by Ian Purves (UK).
8. **Prevention**, chaired by Robert Hall (Australia).
9. **Methods for Assessment of Competence in General Practice**, chaired by John Hasler (UK).
10. **EGPRW: Research in General Practice/Family Medicine in Europe**, chaired by Paul Wallace (UK).

International Contacts

Various contacts were made during the congress, as follows:

Copies of the College's **Specialist Training Document** were presented to the following international experts for their opinion, constructive criticism and recognition. These were **Dr Philip Evans (UK)**, President of the International Committee of the Royal College of General Practitioners, **Prof Jan Heyrmann (Belgium)**, President of the European Academy of Teachers in General Practice (EURACT), **Dr Jonas Sjogreen**, President of the Swedish Association of General Practice, **Prof. Michael Weingarten** of the University of Tel-Aviv, Israel, **Prof. Paul Wallace (UK)** and **Dr. Igor Svab (Slovenia)**, President & Secretary of the European General Practice Research Workshop (EGPRW), **Dr Vaclav Benes (Czech Republic)**, Vice-President of ESGP, **Dr Robert Higgins (USA)**, President-Elect of WONCA, **Dr Michael Boland (Ireland)**, representative of the European Working Party on Quality in Family Practice

(EQUIP) on the ESGP executive, and **Dr Christos Lionis (Greece)**.

Dr Goran Sjonell, President of WONCA, was asked about the possibility of WONCA organizing a database of the resources available from different Colleges. He was optimistic about this and asked that the College formalize the request in a letter.

A meeting was held with representatives from Greece and Israel about the possibility of forming a **WONCA Eastern Mediterranean Sub-Group** of colleges, initially comprising Malta, Greece, Israel, Cyprus and Turkey, to enable collaboration in family medicine between these countries. It was decided that each of the colleges prepare a presentation for circulation, and that another meeting be held during a regional conference in November where presidents of the regional colleges are to be invited.

Finally, a copy of the book "*Malta 360 degrees*" was presented on behalf of the College to Dr. Jonas Sjogreen and Dr. Anna Kallkvist of the **Swedish Association of General Practice** as a token of thanks for sponsoring the registration fees of the College representatives in Stockholm.

Closing Ceremony

The congress was brought to a close with various speeches and a couple of presentations inviting participants to the 1st Conference of the European Society of General Practice in Prague, June 30 - July 4, 1997, and to WONCA '98 – the World Conference of Family Medicine in Dublin, June 14 - 18, 1998.



Dr Jonas Sjogreen (second from left), President of the Swedish Association of General Practice, being presented with a copy of the book "Malta 360 degrees" by Dr. Denis Soler (second from right), President of the Malta College of Family Doctors, in the presence of (from left) Dr. Mario R. Sammut, Dr. Anna Kallkvist and Dr. Wilfred Galea.