

# REPORT ON THE 1ST EUROPEAN NETWORK ORGANISATIONS MEETING

## QUALITY, EDUCATION AND RESEARCH WORKING TOGETHER FOR GENERAL PRACTICE

### PALMA DE MALLORCA, 19TH - 22TH MAY 1999

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#### EUROPEAN GENERAL PRACTICE RESEARCH WORKSHOP SESSIONS

The beautiful isle of Mallorca was the setting for a special WONCA Europe conference, the first meeting of all the network organisations. The European General Practice Research Workshop, EQUIP which deals with Quality Assurance in General Practice, and EURACT, the European Academy of GP Teachers, all participated in this special event. The new prevention network, EUROPREV, was also set up at the meeting in Palma.

Malta is fortunate to have representatives in all four network organisations. Dr. Anthony Mifsud is the national representative for EGPRW, Dr. Philip Sciortino the same for EURACT, Dr. Anthony Azzopardi for EQUIP, and Dr. Mario R. Sammut for EUROPREV. I am also the webmaster of the EGPRW website. Moreover, Dr. Denis Soler represents the College in the Council of the European Society.

Around 1000 delegates from all over Europe attended this meeting. More would have attended if their applications had been accepted, but no more were after the one thousand mark was reached.

The meeting started on the evening of Wednesday 19th May, with an inaugural session at the Conference venue, followed by a reception at the Town Hall of Palma de Mallorca, the Castell de Bellver. The castle was impressive, and the large central courtyard took all the delegates comfortably. The rest of the meeting took place at the Palacio de Congresos, Pueblo Espanol, a castle complex converted into a conference centre. The venue was very beautiful, and the congress facilities generally very good.

Dr. Anthony Mifsud and myself attended the EGPRW sessions. However, we had an opportunity to hear a plenary lecture every day, each organised by a different network organisation. The one by Dr. Jan-Joost Rethans on Quality Assurance, and the one by Prof. Paul Wallace on Research were memorable for me.

Over the three days, we were treated to a large number of presentations from all over Europe. I particularly remember the new format poster sessions. We broke into two groups and made for a

room with five or six posters each. One of us a discussion of the poster by the group. I particularly liked the one by Dr. Jan van der Wouden from The Netherlands, reviewing inhaled sodium cromoglycate in children with asthma, which showed that there was little evidence for the efficacy of cromoglycate at all. It was a pleasure for me to review it for the group, and lead the discussion. Anthony also had the pleasure to do the same for another poster during a different session.

I also liked the presentation by Douglas Fleming from the UK about Sentinel practice networks in Europe. It is high time we started to contribute, and I did have some discussion to this regard with Prof. Fleming.

I had the honour to participate in two workshops of the WONCA Informatics Working Party, of which I am a member. It was a pleasure to participate actively in the discussion, especially in the workshop on medical records in family practice.

Both Anthony and myself also participated in the EGPRW council meeting, and joined in the discussions about the format of this joint meeting, and how it may be even better the next time.

Our colleague Dr. Mario R. Sammut attended the sessions of EUROPREV, the European Network for Prevention and Health Promotion in General Practice. He was honoured to be selected to co-chair a Cardiovascular Workshop, and was fortunate to be able to present a paper entitled 'Tobacco Control in Malta - the Present and Future'. Mario also represented the Collage at the Closed Meeting of EUROPREV, which focused on the development of this recently setup network.

In conclusion, I can say that it is always instructive to attend European General Practice Research Workshop meetings, and this joint meeting was no exception. As Maltese representatives, we continued to build on the bonds we have developed with other European doctors, and also to build new ones. New opportunities of co-operation have been identified, and these will hopefully be brought to fruition in the months to come. The fact that all this happened whilst we were in such beautiful surroundings only adds to the pleasure.