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6th EADPH Congress, Marburg, Germany 21-22nd September 2001

The beautiful and historic city of Marburg, Germany, provided the setting for the 2001, conference of the Association. Hosted by the Philipps University, the local organising team was admirably lead by Prof. Dr. Klaus Pieper. The University which was founded in 1527, had originally been a Dominican monastery and it was the Alte Aula building, part of the Theology Faculty, that provided the setting for the scientific programme.

This year the theme of the meeting was "Oral Diseases and Prevention in Underprivileged Groups". In the first session, Prof. T. Marthaler, gave an overview the changing prevalence of dental caries in Europe and Dr M. Grindejford, discussed how social and psychological factors influence attitudes to disease in disadvantaged communities. Dr M. Van Steenkiste, then described the protocols and function of school-based preventive programmes in Germany. The GABA lecture was delivered by Prof Dr Jolan Banoczy, who described her work with high disease risk adolescents in Hungary.

The Saturday morning symposium was devoted to reviewing the progress made by the working groups, formed when the Association was first constituted. The detail of this symposium will be described in a future Newspaper. The general consensus was that the working groups as currently constituted had to varying degrees achieved their objectives and that the future work of the Association could be best taken forward in the format of Special Interest Groups. It was thought, that in this format, defined projects / topics could be advanced within a more prescribed timeframe.

The remaining sessions of the conference were devoted to the poster presentation of 45 scientific papers, which covered a range of topics and themes of relevance to community and dental public health practice.

Notes from the annual business meeting.

This conference concluded Dr Roberto Ferro's term as President and he has been succeeded in that office by Dr Eeva Widstrom. At the conclusion of the annual business meeting, Dr Ferro, presented the Presidents Badge to Dr Widstrom and wished her a successful tenure in office.

Other changes to the Executive Board included the election of Professor Nigel Pitts as Vice President, Professor Thessaly Athanassouli as Co-president for the next year 2001/2002, and the appointment of Andreas Schulte as auditor following the retirement of Professor Pierre-Michel Cahen. The Post of Editor has been taken over by Professor Eino Honkala in succession to Professor Gert-Jan Truin. Professor Honkala graduated in 1974 from the University of Helsinki, Finland. Formerly director of the International Institute of Oral Health in Kuopio and in Helsinki he is currently Professor of Dental Public Health and Vice-Dean for Research and Students Affairs of Kuwait University. His research has been focused on preventive dentistry, health promotion and oral health behaviour.

Presidential address

The conference Banquet was held in the splendour of Marburg Castle, where delegates were entertained by a local orchestra. After dinner, The President addressed members as follows:

"On behalf of the members of the European Association of Dental Public Health, I would like to thank Professor Klaus Pieper and his team for the kind invitation to Marburg and especially for bringing us to this magnificent castle. We have today enjoyed a very interesting programme on

dental health in underprivileged groups and different attempts to cope with the problems.

We have long been talking about the challenges with our ageing populations, globalising economies, new technologies but also rising inequalities between populations. Many of us wealthy west-Europeans have been lulled by the perhaps futile idea that people in the third millennium should be able to solve their problems without bombs and military action. Many of us are obviously very disappointed with the recent violent events in the world, we worry about their political consequences and particularly about the reflex recourse to violence by leading countries to solve violence. We have a long way to go to understand each other in our world and unfortunately those who are the strongest seem to have the furthest to go, yet without understanding is there a solution?

Against this background I think the fundamental themes of our association, public health, that good dental health should be the right of every citizen and that all people should have access to dental care based on health needs, are very important concepts. Public health very much relies on the collective effort of populations, not individual patients; the common good, not the individual's good; there is no place in public health for the selfish interests of individual treatment providers and in convening a scientific meeting, we also should remember the basic scientific principles which are:

1. Universalism: the truth of a statement should be evaluated through objective criteria chosen in advance and independent of the nationality, religion, race or personal characteristics of the supporters of an idea. Also replicate studies should give the same results independent of who performs the study.
2. Generosity: scientific information should be researched and analysed for its own sake and regardless of the researcher's own career interests.
3. Common ownership: scientific inventions and discoveries are the result of social co-operation and should be shared as the common property of humanity.
4. Criticism: all scientific findings and results should be open for critical evaluation by others.

Philosophical principles and ethics are important concepts also in modern dental research where new findings easily can be monopolised by business and commerce.

There are today about 8,500 scientific journals in the field of natural sciences and 11 million articles each year. My Finnish scientific fellow countrymen in 1989 published 6,980 articles which was 0.95% of the entire total for that year. It is a huge number of papers to read. However, the ever-increasing amount of papers and reports published each year have not reduced the need to meet colleagues "in the flesh" and to have an opportunity to discuss papers face to face. It is for this reason that we are here, and I am sure we need to meet each other again both to discuss our scientific work and also to renew and refresh our friendship with each other. I therefore wish to take this opportunity to thank our outgoing President Roberto Ferro for all his good work in organising our association for the past two years. I would also thank the conference organisers here in Marburg for making the practical arrangements for what I feel sure will be a memorable conference even if we get no mushrooms to eat. Most of all, I would like to thank all of you for attending, because neither the scientific nor the social purposes of our association are possible without the active participation of our members.

I wish you all an enjoyable, pleasant and rewarding meeting"

Other news

The meeting in Marburg coincided with the appointment of two members of the Association to Chairs in Dental Public Health. Cynthia Pine, first president of the association, takes up the post of Professor of Primary Dental Care and Dental Public Health, at the University of

Liverpool, U.K. Anne-Marie Musset-Obry, association secretary, succeeds Pierre-Michel Cahen as the Professor of Dental Public Health in Strasbourg. Congratulations to them both.

Future meeting and dates for your diary.

The 2002, annual meeting of the EADPH will be held in Athens, Greece, under the stewardship of Professor T. Athanassouli. The dates for the meeting are the 13th and 14th of September, 2002 with the deadline for abstract submission 15th March. The conference will be held in a modern conference centre on the coast in Glyfada, 50 minutes from the new Athens International Airport and 30 minutes from Athens city centre. This venue provides the opportunity to link a late summer break in Greece with attendance at what is guaranteed to be a relaxed and informal meeting. Further details will be available at the EADPH web site.

EADPH Newpage - information sharing.

This newpage is designed as a forum whereby members of the Association can share information which may be of interest to those in other states. All contributions will be considered and should be forwarded to:

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