



The Grapevine

Welcome

For the first time in its 11 year history EURIPA has enough resources to produce both a newsletter and to develop, and keep up to date, its web site. The newsletter is being sent to all members of the EURIPA list server but will also be put on to the web site so it has a twofold purpose: firstly to keep members up to date with existing activities and forward plans but also to recruit potential members to the network. If, when you are reading this, you would like to be more involved with EURIPA please get in touch with either the president, Dr John Wynn-Jones at johnwj@irh.ac.uk, or the secretary, Jane Randall-Smith at janers@irh.ac.uk. We would also welcome any comments and ideas for future editions of the Newsletter.

Jane Randall-Smith, Secretary of EURIPA

Message from the President



I am delighted to welcome you to the 1st EURIPA Newsletter. It seems such a long time since a small group of European rural practitioners first met in Palma, Majorca in 1997. It was clear to all present that rural practice had little in the way of credibility and a very poor profile amongst urban and academic GPs. We decided to establish a rural network across Europe with the aim of promoting rural practice and sharing ideas and good practice. Due to our efforts rural health is now on the agenda in Europe but the recognition of the special needs of rural practice and rural communities varies greatly across the continent. We want to guarantee that new policies and interventions are "rural proofed" in the future to ensure that rural residents have equal access to the new technologies and treatments of modern medicine.

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News

Honour for retired Scottish GP



Retired rural GP John MacLeod and his family were honoured today as part of an exhibition at the National Museum of Scotland. One of the founding members of the Rural Working Group in WONCA, Dr MacLeod (pictured above with his wife Lorna) comes from a long and distinguished line of rural health practitioners, a fact celebrated in the display. More details are available at:

<http://www.countrydoctor.co.uk/>

Questionnaire

This first edition is very timely as it is an opportunity to introduce the questionnaire that we are about to send to the list server. The Executive Committee agreed at its January meeting that it would collect information about rural general practice from across Europe, collate the information and put it on to the web site so that it will be an accessible resource. The questionnaire is an attempt to standardise the information that is being collected and as EURIPA's working language is English it will hopefully make it easier for members to complete.

Please complete the questionnaire when it comes out – your response will help to build up a valuable resource.

Annual Rural Doctors Conference

This conference will take place at Gregynog, Newtown, Powys in Mid Wales from 1st to 3rd October 2008 and includes sessions on alcohol and chronic liver disease, legal issues, Family Planning, Dermatology, bone disease in primary care and sports injuries. For more information please contact Ann Whale at annw@irh.ac.uk

We aim to work towards the recognition of rural health and rural practice as a specific discipline in its own right.

EURIPA is involved in a number of conferences and events over the next 2 years and we hope to meet old friends and welcome new colleagues.

Our first major venue will be at WONCA Europe2008 in Istanbul (<http://www.woncaeurope2008.org>) in September (more details to follow).

We were honoured to be invited to work with the Clinic of Social and Family Medicine, Medical Faculty, University of Crete to co-host the 9th World Rural Health Conference in Crete in June 2009 <http://www.ruralwonca2009.org> This is the second time that the world conference will have been held in Europe and EURIPA has been a major force in both.

In September 2009 we move to Basel in Switzerland for the Wonca Europe Conference (www.woncaeurope2009.org) where we aim to run a full rural programme.

Finally we are planning to hold a EURIPA Invitational Rural Health Forum in Palma Majorca in May 2010. We will be returning to our Alma mater to review our progress over the last 13 years and develop a rural health strategy for family practice in Europe. Put the dates in your diaries now and we will keep you informed.

We value your input and want to work with you to meet the health needs of rural people and their communities in a culturally sensitive way across this diverse and exciting region.

**Dr John Wynn-Jones,
President.**

EURIPA Executive Committee Meeting 2008

The Executive Committee met in a cold and wet Budapest in January 2008. Agnes Simek, the Hungarian representative, had arranged the meeting room facilities and a social programme for the group so that there was an opportunity to see something of Budapest. There was a good attendance at the meeting although unfortunately some members were unable to attend.

The main purpose of the meeting was to review the previous years activities, to plan the detailed work programme for the year and also to look forward. Key outcomes from the meeting were:

- Agreement on the workshop abstracts to be submitted to WONCA Europe for their annual conference in Istanbul in September 2008.
- Development of the web site
- Production of a quarterly Newsletter
- Agreement to develop PRECEDE: **PR**e hospital Emergency Care **ED**ucation in Europe and to work on a statement for presentation at Rural WONCA, Crete in 2009
- To build a network of EURIPA researchers and provide some initial data at Istanbul in September 2008. The research group was identified as Claudio Carosino, Christos Lionis and Gunta Ticmane.
- Agreement to write to all Colleges (WONCA members) to request a rural lead that EURIPA could have contact with on a long term basis.

Jane Randall-Smith

Executive Committee members

John Wynn-Jones, President	UK
Christos Lionis, Journal Editor	Greece
Marios Chaiziarsenis	Greece
Agnes Simek	Hungary
Claudio Carosino	Italy
Gunta Ticmane	Latvia
Elisabeth Swensen	Norway
Christina Galvao	Portugal
Zsuzsanna Farkas-pall	Romania
Jose Lopez Abuin	Spain
Jaume Banque Vidiella	Spain
Hakan Yaman	Turkey

Co-opted members

Andreas Rinnerberger	Vasco da Gama
Tbc	EGPRN
Jose Bueno	EQUIP
Tbc	EURACT
Hans Hannich	IAAMRH

Executive Secretary Jane Randall-Smith

My Practice

I work in a rural practice, not far from Riga, the capital of Latvia (it is just 80 km away). It is a solo practice where I work alongside one nurse and one assistant doctor. The closest GP's practice is 20 km from the village, whilst our nearest regional hospital and Emergency station is 40 km away. It is due to this distance that our patients are turning to GPs for emergency care.

In the village there are approximately 2000 inhabitants, all of whom are my patients (including 450 children). There is one Secondary school and one kindergarten which are attended by both the village children and other children in the catchment area - we take care of these children as well.

Every day 25 – 30 patients attend our practice. There are also 3 – 6 home visits each week. However, during the winter months the number of patients attending the practice grows greatly, as does the demand for home visits.

Latvian GPs are enthusiastic about the possibility of several doctors working together in one practice, but the socio – economical situation in the country is complicated, and patients generally cannot manage long distance journeys to GP's practices.

Gunta Ticmane

Newest Member of the Executive Committee

It was an honour for me to be considered as a member of the Euripa Executive Committee.

I have been interested and involved in rural health care issues since I finished my family medicine residency training in 2000, both as a GP in rural practice in North-West Romania and as an assistant professor at the General Practice Department of Oradea Medical University. I often involve my student groups in practicing in rural healthcare.

As I have worked closely with people from small villages, I have been able to identify specific needs emerging from the social determinants of health, especially gaps in access to information and to a maintained level of diversified health services. My main interests focus on the prevention, early diagnosis and management of cardio-vascular pathology in primary health care; my PhD study is also based upon similar research.

In order to prove the necessity of change at national level, over recent years various prevention, screening and educational programs have been conducted in the practice. We have of course been closely monitoring the results and their influences over the population's health status, and whether a more health-aware population should be a partner in reducing health inequalities. Developing and promoting the concept of an enlarged rural health care team that provides integrated health care in the community is an ongoing activity undertaken by our team. A model of this is the surgery in Rosiori, providing a community of 10,000 people with the possibility of having ultrasound, ECG examinations, blood tests and physiotherapy performed locally.

Recognizing the importance of gathering a strong, highly responsible and trained rural health care professional group, we started organizing meetings, conferences and Continuing Medical Education courses for GPs on a regular basis. The next conference will be held in Oradea in October 2008.

I would therefore like to warmly invite colleagues from all over Europe to participate, and to share their experiences with us in Romania.

Zsuzsanna Farkas-Pall



Zsuzsa's
practice in
Romania

Journal

The European section of the International Electronic Journal of Rural & Remote Health continues to provide an opportunity for Euripa members to disseminate research and to promote education, practice and policy in rural health

The journal is an important and growing aspect of EURIPA's work, and so all contributions, be they scientific, reviews or notes of general business will be included. All submissions will be edited, so contributors should not feel nervous about testing and improving their English writing skills.

The journal is hosted online at

<http://www.rrh.org.au/euro/defaultnew.asp>

All contributions should be submitted according to instructions on the web site but any queries for European contributions can be sent to the editor of the European Section Professor Christos Lionis at:

lionis@galinos.med.uoc.gr



EURIPA Executive Committee members.

EURIPA Programme for Wonca Europe 2008

September 4th-7th Istanbul, Turkey

We are delighted to announce the EURIPA Rural Practice Programme for the Wonca Europe Conference in Istanbul in September. As you can see we have a full and challenging programme of workshops. We are grateful to our Turkish hosts for allocating a plenary session on the Friday morning. The plenary aims to address some of the following issues

- Managing change in rural practice
- Identifying and managing threats to rural practice
- Maintaining quality at the periphery of health care
- Keeping care local and culturally sensitive
- Developing an academic base for rural practice
- Exposing medical students to rural practice
- Developing training programs for rural practice
- What contribution can EURIPA make towards a new rural agenda for Europe?

The plenary will be followed by 4 workshops which address the main themes of the conference and at the same time giving a rural perspective. EURIPA has worked closely with EGPRN and Vasgo-de Gama to run two of the workshops.

The rural programme includes:

Friday September 5th

Rural Plenary: - *"Reaching in From The Periphery: Identifying and Promoting the Best of Rural Practice as a Dynamic and Innovative Element of European Primary Care"* Chairperson: John Wynn-Jones

Workshop 1: *"Mental Health in Rural Practice"* Chairperson: John Wyn-Jones. Speakers: Huw Lloyd

Workshop 2: -*"The Care of Elderly in Rural Practice"* Chairperson: Jose M Lopez-Abuin, Cristina Galvao. Speakers: Cristina Galvao, Zsuzsanna Farkass-Pal, Jose M Lopez-Abuin

Saturday September 6th

Workshop 3: - EURIPA joint workshop with Vasco de Gama: *"Overcoming Training Barriers in Primary Care-rural training"* Speakers: Raquel Gomez Bravo-VdGama Movement, Fatma Goksin Cihan-VdGama Movement, Fernidando Petrazzuoli-EURACT EGPRN, John Wynn Jones - EURIPA

Workshop 4: -EURIPA joint workshop with EGPRN: *"Research in Rural Practice"* Speakers: Claudio Carosino, Pinar Topsever, Francesco Del Zotti, Marios Chatziarzenis, Gunta Ticmane Chairperson: Claudio Carosino

Dr John Wynn-Jones

WONCA Europe 2008



I have been charged by the executive committee to organize a workshop on research during the next WONCA Europe conference in Istanbul.

We know that rural practice shows some special problems or characteristics that only rural GPs can detect and study, so we began, during the year 2007, to collect ideas and suggestions about topics that rural GPs perceived as urgent or important. We studied the literature and we discussed these topics during a workshop in the Paris Wonca Conference 2007.

We now need to go on in spreading the culture of research within EURIPA, in building hard bridges between rural practices and university departments and in organizing a network of GPs and practices.

We don't yet know enough about this theme however, and we need to collect data on organization of care, involvement of GPs, problems and inequalities, as well as good practices and pilot experiences.

EURIPA's aim is to write a draft of a statement on emergencies in rural areas. Research is the correct means for doing this, being deeply rooted in the multifaceted reality of European rural practice. The workshop will be an important step in this project.

Claudio Carosino

WONCA Europe 2008



Wonca Europe 2008 . Istanbul 14th Regional Conference

EURIPA joint workshop with Vasco Da Gama

Overcoming Training Barriers in Primary Care: Rural Training

These two working groups of Wonca Europe which represent Rural Health and Young Doctors will share this workshop with the goal to combine their efforts and initiatives to improve the knowledge about Rural Health Training in Europe.

The speakers will present the current and future projects taking place in their respective European countries about rural training for young doctors.

As well as this, the importance of the "Leonardo Exchange Program" and the coordination of the different Rural Training initiatives across Europe will be emphasized. The final proposals and conclusions will then be presented for further discussion in their respective Executives' Meeting.

Speakers:

Raquel G mez Bravo. VdGama Movement - Spain

Fatna Goksin Cihan. VdGama Movement - Turkey

Fernidando Petrazzuoli. Euract. EGPRN - Italy

Dr John Wynn - Jones. President of Euripa – Wales

Chairperson:

Jaume Banque Vidiella - Euripa – Spain

Jaume Banqu  Vidiella

Comments

The secretariat would welcome comments on this newsletter and ideas and contributions to future editions.

Please get in touch with either

Dr John Wynn-Jones at
johnwj@irh.ac.uk



Or

Jane Randall-Smith at
janers@irh.ac.uk



Rural WONCA 2009



As the president of the organizing committee of the **9th WONCA Rural Health World 2009 Conference**, I invite you to Crete for this major event hosted by the **Clinic of Social and Family Medicine, Medical Faculty, University of Crete**, Greece in conjunction with the practice-based research rural network of Crete and **EURIPA**.

Human genomics and genetics are frequently main themes of several international meetings and other events, since this field is promising rapid technical advancement. During the past few years, the topic of **health inequalities** offers a suitable theme to develop inter-professional, interdisciplinary and inter-sectoral collaboration, an issue of high importance in recent meetings and conferences, especially those addressing rural health.

This umbrella **theme covers the three core subjects of the 9th World Rural Conference; namely, technology suitable for rural settings, island medicine and health services for immigrants**. All three subjects are strongly interrelated with the umbrella theme. Strengthening rural communities in remote areas and small islands and empowering immigrants seem to be a high priority and well fitted within the core subjects of a rural conference.

The island of Crete was chosen as a place with significant contribution to the early history of European civilization and a unique epicentre where knowledge developed as a result of Crete's proximity and interface with both Asia and North Africa.

We sincerely invite you to join the proceedings of this World Rural Conference.

Christos Lionis, MD, PhD,

Associate Professor of Social and Family Medicine,
Head of the Clinic of Social and Family Medicine,
University of Crete