



EBCOG

European Board and College of Obstetrics and Gynaecology



President's Newsletter

Dear Colleague,

Following our recent Council meeting in Brussels last month, it is clear that EBCOG is continuing to develop in many exciting and challenging directions.

One of the many important issues which arose during the discussions in Council in both Brussels and in June in Budapest was that of communication between EBCOG and its member national societies. This newsletter is part of our effort to increase the two-way flow of information. EBCOG and the Section are members of the UEMS family; UEMS is the organisation that officially represents all medical specialties within the EU system and therefore EBCOG is the official representative of obstetrics and gynaecology at EU level. EBCOG's members are national societies and EBCOG therefore has a vital role to play in acting as a channel of communication, not only between the national societies themselves but also between the national societies and the European Union Institutions.

The 21st European Congress will take place in that diamond of a city, Antwerp, on 5-8 May 2010 with our Vice-President Johan Van Wiemeersch as Congress Co-President and Secretary-General Professor Chiara Benedetto as Chair of the Scientific Committee. As we have seen over the years, communication is also at the heart of the success of the European Congress and so I would urge you to promote the Congress as widely as possible in your own countries. An electronic advert is available and, of course, information is available on the Congress web site: www.ebcog2010.be Planning for the 2012 Congress in Tallinn has now begun in earnest, so don't forget to put the 9th - 12th May 2012 in your diary!

The 20th European Congress was held in Lisboa and was a great success, attracting approximately 1,500 people. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Congress President and Chair of the Congress Management Committee, Professor Bill Dunlop and Congress President Professor Carlos Freire de Oliveira and the Chair of the Scientific Committee, Professor Wolfgang Holzgreve for all their enormous efforts on behalf of EBCOG.

One of the most successful features of the Lisboa Congress was the sessions involving our affiliated European subspecialty societies, ESGO (the European Society of Gynaecological Oncology), ESHRE (the European Society for Human Reproduction and Embryology), EAPM (the European Association of Perinatal Medicine) and EUGA (the European Urogynaecology Association). These sister societies will also be running sessions in Antwerp, which we are sure will prove to be

just as successful. Among the most popular sessions in Lisboa were the hands-on training courses, and these will be continued in 2010. A new feature of the Lisboa Congress was the live surgery session which was organised in conjunction with ESGE (European Society for Gynaecological Endoscopy). This was so well-received that a live surgery session will be run again in Antwerp and there will also be an Anatomy Laboratory. EBCOG needs to take a very clear position on the surgical aspect of training and we hope that the Congress in Antwerp will also provide a forum to enable us to do just that.

Please bear in mind that we still need reviewers for abstracts. Delegates in Brussels were willing to volunteer, so may I please remind you to send your name and field of interest to Charlotte Mercer.

Whilst EBCOG remains committed to its core activities such as training, hospital visiting and accreditation, we are looking hard at ways to broaden the impact and range of those activities. To this end, one of EBCOG's pressing aims is to develop closer links with EU institutions and politicians, both directly and via UEMS. As became clear during the discussions on the strategy paper over the last year, it will be important for EBCOG to eventually have a presence in Brussels, in the heart of the EU decision making capital. In the meantime, we are seeking to identify people within the EU institutions with whom we can develop close and fruitful relationships and contacts.

At the last Council meeting, the new Chair of the SCTA, Professor Klaus Vetter, reported that a lot of EBCOG Training the Trainers (TTT) courses had been run and that these had been based on the RCOG TTT blueprint. The SCTA is keen for EBCOG to provide a model which could be used by countries wishing to run TTT courses at national level so that there can be further harmonisation of training programmes and methods of assessment. By doing this, we hope to move closer towards a recognised Europe-wide standard of specialist certification. This process is greatly facilitated by the extremely successful hospital visiting programme which is rapidly expanding throughout Europe. This is largely due to the tireless work of Professor Juriy Wladimiroff, the EBCOG Hospital Visiting Coordinator. These are important mechanisms for the establishment of common clinical standards throughout Europe. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Professor Ziva Novak and Professor Jacques Lansac for all their great work as Past-Chairs of the SCTA over the years.

At present, the development of common European guidelines is not feasible. The conditions under which care is being delivered throughout Europe still vary greatly, and common European guidelines are still simply unattainable. On the other hand, common European Standards of Care are within reach, and EBCOG wishes to develop such standards for both obstetrics and gynaecology. Standards of Care do not regulate the actual medical treatment of our patients, but they will set up a framework that can help all European obstetricians and gynaecologists to understand what issues we need to address and how we need to address them. One example of a Standard that was agreed by Council in Brussels is that all pregnant women in Europe must have access to a well-described programme of antenatal care, and that a specified number of particular issues will be addressed during this programme. Another is that our patients should expect to be treated with respect and

be kept thoroughly informed. These Standards should be available to patients so that patients will know what they should expect from us. The developments of Standards would be facilitated if we could succeed in engaging EU momentum.

Recruitment into medical specialties differs widely from country to country. Some countries have an abundance of obstetricians and gynaecologists whilst others do not. It is, however, common to most countries that the vast majority of the doctors now entering the specialty are female. This gender imbalance is so pronounced that EBCOG, together with ENTOG, has established a working group to analyse the situation and try to find remedies.

The EBCOG web site is now in the process of being revitalised. We want the web site to be constantly updated and even more informative and interactive than before. In order to achieve this goal, we have appointed Dr Erica Werner as web master. To keep the site current and topical, Erica Werner needs you to keep her up to date with news and events from your own national societies. Please don't forget to keep in touch with her and give her all your news, ideas and input.

Financially, EBCOG is still healthy, with regular budgets and accounts prepared by our Treasurer, Professor Wolfgang Holzgreve, who oversees our income and expenditure so efficiently.

We are happy to say that EBCOG and ENTOG remain close and mutually supportive. No specialist visits now take place without the involvement of an ENTOG trainee and Council agreed to give ENTOG additional financial support to attend the ACOG trainees meeting in the USA in January 2010. ENTOG's European Training Project is going from strength to strength, as is the annual ENTOG Exchange programme. Trainees are the future of our specialty and it is wonderful to see their enthusiasm and commitment to our discipline.

EBCOG and FIGO continue to work well together. EBCOG is one of the regional organisations of O&G in the World and together with the others – Latin American FLASOG and Asia-Oceanic AOFOG – we meet regularly with FIGO and can assist FIGO to transmit information to and from FIGO's local member societies. Furthermore, EBCOG and the other regional federations might be able to help FIGO establish a regional federation in Africa, an activity which is a focus point for FIGO.

Finally, I would like to thank you all - the Officers, Executive Committee, Council delegates and Working Party members - for giving your valuable time, effort and contributions to EBCOG so willingly.

Kind regards,



Professor Peter Hornnes
President of EBCOG

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