



Newsletter from the Association for European Paediatric Cardiology

News from the Association for European Paediatric Cardiology

Ingrid Oberhänsli-Weiss (Secretary-General, Association for European Paediatric Cardiology)

THE ASSOCIATION MADE ITS USUAL CONTRIBUTION to the annual meeting of the European Society for Cardiology, held in September in Vienna, with the Congress again experiencing a marked increase in those registering and participating. The members of Working Group 22, concerned with adults with congenital cardiac malformations, again provided an interesting programme, with excellent presentations. It was gratifying to note that these sessions were very well attended by adult cardiologists. Interest in this ever increasing group of patients is growing all the time. At this particular congress, the group addressed the long-term evolution of operated congenital malformations, Marfan's syndrome, electrophysiological aspects of congenital cardiac malformations, the different forms of atrial tachycardia, recent insights into the mechanisms of cardiac development, and pregnancy in the setting of cardiac disease.

Several further sessions in the programme concerned primarily with adult cardiology provided interesting new insights into the genetic origin of cardiac anomalies. New echocardiographic methods for the assessment of myocardial function using tissue Doppler imaging were presented by the research group from Leuven, in Belgium, and these might have implication also for those working in Paediatric Cardiology. Of especially high quality, and of great general interest, were the different FOCUS and Hot Line Sessions.

Although this annual meeting has now developed into a sort of a monster, with more than 20,000 participants, much interesting information was presented that could, and should, be of interest to paediatric cardiologists.

Paediatric Cardiology itself, unfortunately, was less well presented. The subjects proposed during the preparation of the meeting had been of less interest to adult cardiologists, and were not, therefore, supported by the board of the European Society of Cardiology when the programme was decided. This board, of course, with one exception, is constituted only of

adult cardiologists. Thus, when we propose abstracts for forthcoming annual meetings of the European Cardiology Society, if we wish to have them accepted, then we have to propose items that are of equal interest to the adult as to the paediatric cardiologists. On the positive side, the Association provided a booth in the area of the general exhibition that was well-attended, at which we also presented the newly published coding system.

Looking to the future, the Annual Meeting of our own Association for 2004 will be held in Munich, specifically between the 19th and the 22nd of May. Prof. John Hess is the local chairman. He and his collaborators are looking forward to welcome many participants. The local congress organisation is in the hands of Interplan. Detailed information about this meeting can be found on the website of the Association at www.aepc.org, and on www.aepc.munich2004.de. Those intending to submit abstracts should note that this must be done electronically. The forms are available on the Internet, and the deadline for submission is 11th January 2004.

News from the Working Groups

Our Working Groups have, for the second time, actively contributed to the annual meeting held in Amsterdam in 2003, making their contributions through pre-arranged symposiums and presentations. All these sessions were very well prepared and presented. We know that the sessions were all well attended, and from feed-back we know that the participants appreciated the subjects discussed. Of especially high quality were the teaching course organised by the Fetal Working Group, and also the presentations of the Working Group for Morphology. Similar contributions are expected for the annual meeting in Munich.

Our field has experienced important developments throughout the past 20 years, with refinement and modification of investigational methods, beside the

great advances and achievements in non-surgical interventional treatments and new surgical approaches for congenital cardiac malformations. These spectacular advances now provide much better outcomes and survival for children born with cardiac malformations in our highly developed countries.

The recent policies of unification within Europe now offer much more freedom for movement of doctors between countries, hopefully improving medical practice all over Europe. In this light, it becomes the more important to promote equality of medical education in the different European countries. Recognition of medical diplomas, and an advanced programme of postgraduate continuous medical education in all European countries, is on the way to become a major requirement. Some efforts and dispositions have already been taken. New European rules are being formulated that should contribute to control, and guarantee equal quality for and of medical professions and the treatment of patients all over Europe. Recommendations for the practice of Paediatric Cardiology in Europe, therefore, have become both a need and an issue of concern. Recognising this, two of the

Working Groups of the Association have prepared some general recommendations in order to harmonize and guide the practice of Paediatric Cardiology. In this issue of *Cardiology in the Young*, we now published recommendations for an Ideal Catheterisation Laboratory as prepared by the working party of the Working Group for Interventional Cardiology. These recommendations have been approved by the working group, and by the general assembly of the Association. There is no question but that the recommendations will need to be adapted to greater or lesser extent within individual countries, respecting the specific rules of those countries, and recognizing the general financial conditions. We suggest, nonetheless, that maximal effort should be taken to meet the proposed standards so as to maximize European harmonization, and guarantee a high quality of treatment. In this respect, all the members of the Working Group are open and willing to help with the realization of their recommendations. It goes without saying that we also hope that our proposals will receive suitable consideration and response throughout the rest of the World.