

European Association  
of Schools of  
Occupational  
Medicine

**EASOM**

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More information about EASOM: <http://www.easom.org>

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## Happy New Year!

We just left 2008, a busy year for EASOM, and are now facing the new challenges of 2009. In this issue of the Bulletin, we look backward to the great events of 2008, like the Leuven symposium, the Amsterdam Summer School and the joint meeting with UEMS in Belgrade. And we look forward to further collaboration with UEMS, to Linz for the next Summer School, and to the strengthening of occupational medicine in the undergraduate medical training. The latter is an issue of growing importance for us. Read more about it in this Bulletin!

The EASOM Board wishes you a happy and prosperous New Year!

## First Announcement of 9<sup>th</sup> EASOM Summer School in Linz, 27 – 29 August 2008

EASOM summer school 2009:

### *Using real workplaces as a teaching platform*

EASOM members train occupational physicians (and in some cases also other experts) that have to carry out very practical tasks. Unlike other medical specialists occupational doctors often need to get a complex social / socio-technic system to change in some way in order to prevent negative health effects in workers. That type of intervention is often not only a matter of pure medical knowledge and experience. Desirable core competencies for occupational physicians thus include knowledge and abilities for intervention into (sometimes complex) company systems. Development of those skills and abilities is part of professional formation of occupational physicians, leading to special requirements for training institutions.

The 2009 summer school will explore how development of such a set of competencies can be supported by systematic training modules and sequences. Particular attention will be given to training elements that use real life workplaces and real life companies as a platform for training. Various experiences existing within EASOM and in other bodies on linking theory and practice will be brought together. Special attention will be given to organizational problems that need to be solved by the training institution.

Contributions:

- What is required from occupational physicians: (professional view:

core competencies; industry: management's expectations; authorities: legal framework and expectations of labour inspectorate)

- How training institutions integrate practical elements in training programs (assessment of work situations; understanding social systems like companies, public services etc; developing intervention strategies; cooperation with people of various roles and backgrounds)
- How training institutions can manage and organize cooperation with 'external' organizations like companies (recruiting companies; mentoring).

The NINTH EASOM SUMMER SCHOOL will be held from 27 till 29 August 2009 in LINZ, AUSTRIA. See also [www.easomsummerschool2009.org](http://www.easomsummerschool2009.org)

## **International conference in Leuven**

The retirement of Professor Raphael Masschelein at the Catholic University of Leuven was the opportunity for the international symposium "Education and Training in Occupational Health" in Leuven on 29 May 2008. EASOM was involved in the organization of this symposium. There were presentations from Peter Westerholm (Uppsala), Petar Bulat (Belgrade), John Harrison (London) and André Weel (Utrecht). All presentations have been processed to papers published in the special English issue of the Netherlands Journal of Occupational and Insurance Medicine, December 2008. In that issue you will also find an overview of 40 years of occupational medicine in Flanders, by Raphael Masschelein. *Those who want to receive a copy of this special issue are requested to send an e-mail to the Secretary of EASOM, stating their postal address.*

## **Impressions of the 8<sup>th</sup> EASOM Summer School**

This Summer School was held in the Academic Medical Centre of the University of Amsterdam, from 28 till 30 August 2008. There were 33 participants working together in a two-and-a-half day programme with presentations, exercises and workshops around the theme "Teaching Evidence-based Occupational Medicine".

The scientific staff of the Coronel Institute was involved in the preparation and realization of the Summer School. EASOM is very grateful to Professor Frank van Dijk and his co-workers Carel Hulshof, Paul Smits, Jan Lucas Hoving, Nathalie Hugenholtz, Frederieke Schaafsma (Australia) and Jos Verbeek (Finland) for their involvement and

contributions. There was a very good participation of the audience. At the closing ceremony on Saturday, EASOM's vice president Petar Bulat expressed the feelings of many participants: "This was the best Summer School we ever had".



A group of participants searching for scientific evidence, guided by Paul Smits.



Jos Verbeek leading the plenary interactive workshop

“Cochrane Reviews, how to read, how to start?”



Workshop “Critical Appraisal of the literature”.



Amsterdam City Walk on Friday evening.

*All presentations of the 8<sup>th</sup> EASOM Summer School “Teaching Evidence-Based Occupational Medicine” are available at EASOM’s website [www.easom.org](http://www.easom.org)*

## Joint EASOM – UEMS meeting in Belgrade

This two-day meeting was held in Belgrade on November 7 and 8, 2008. The objective of the joint EASOM - UEMS meeting is the reinforcement of mutual cooperation and the clarification of specific areas of common interest.

After an introduction of EASOM by its president Kristiina Mukala, Consol Serra presents the UEMS (Union Européenne des Médecins Spécialistes) and its Section Occupational Medicine of which she is the president. UEMS (<http://uems.net>) was founded in 1958 and represents more than one million medical specialists all over Europe. UEMS has the aim to harmonise the highest level of medical training and practice. It represents and defends the professional interests of its members. The core of UEMS activities is quality assessment and accreditation of CME/CPD. UEMS organizes seminars, studies and other activities.

Since 1962, specific sections have been created within UEMS, with two delegates per country. The Occupational Medicine Section of UEMS was created ten years ago. Its mission is to promote and develop occupational medicine. The Section focuses on training, research, communication and politics. It publishes position papers, recommendations, requirements and proceedings and works on the assessment of training and practice tools. Its interests are:

- Harmonisation
- Quality assessment of training institutes, trainees, practicing specialists
- Overall improvement of quality and status of occupational medicine
- Continuous professional development
- Accreditation.

Overall, the aim of a common meeting between EASOM and UEMS could be to speak with one voice.

In the discussion, next topics have been dealt with:

UEMS is a European association, but some non-European countries may be involved on specific projects.

For the moment, UEMS is not involved in undergraduate medical training, but this may become a subject of collaboration with EASOM. Many surveys have been carried out about this issue, and a position statement could be drafted by WHO, UEMS and EASOM. It is of great importance to influence the core competencies and the learning needs of the future non-occupational physicians regarding the relationship of work and health.

## **WHO strategy on worker's health**

Rokho Kim (WHO Europe) provides an overview of the human and financial costs induced by occupational diseases and accidents. He points out that occupational health is often under the responsibility of other ministries than the ministry of health. In some countries, less than 10% of the working population has access to occupational health services. In 2007, WHO has proposed an action plan 2008-2017, named WHO global plan of action on workers' health. This plan expresses a change in paradigm from "occupational health" to "workers health". The latter includes all workers, including self employed, and emphasizes all health determinants. The workplace is considered as a setting for delivery of essential health interventions and for the promotion of health.

The WHO plan has five objectives:

1. to develop and implement policy instruments on workers health
2. to protect and promote health at the workplace
3. to improve the performance of and access to occupational health services
4. to provide and communicate evidence for action and practice (e.g. occupational causes of diseases will be introduced in ICD11, which should be implemented in 2015)
5. to incorporate workers' health into other policies.

The whole document is named WHA60.26, and can be consulted on the WHO web site: [http://www.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf\\_files/WHA60/A60\\_R26-en.pdf](http://www.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/WHA60/A60_R26-en.pdf) (English)

[http://www.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf\\_files/WHA60/A60\\_R26-sp.pdf](http://www.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/WHA60/A60_R26-sp.pdf) (Spanish)

[http://www.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf\\_files/WHA60/A60\\_R26-fr.pdf](http://www.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/WHA60/A60_R26-fr.pdf) (French)

[http://www.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf\\_files/WHA60/A60\\_R26-ru.pdf](http://www.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/WHA60/A60_R26-ru.pdf) (Russian)

After this presentation, two points are raised by the participants:

The focus is on primary prevention and perhaps not enough on secondary or tertiary prevention.

The focus is mainly on the individual, and maybe not enough on organizational factors.

## **Discussion issues of the second day**

1. We can try to define what both organizations will do on their own, and what can be done in common. There is huge overlapping in the work of EASOM and UEMS.
2. The undergraduate medical training should be put on the agenda.
3. Kim Rokho: mental health is a very hot topic for WHO and Europe. Psychosocial Risk Management is an ongoing project of WHO and a guidance will follow.
4. Kim Rokho: WHO will support, as a co-publisher for example, the dissemination of documents. There are 64 WHO collaborating centres. Most of them are located in Europe, and are often

university centres. WHO relies on these centres for work plans and actions. We may become a WHO collaborating centre, as an individual, but also as an organization, such as EASOM or UEMS.

Consol Serra wonders whether some representatives of EASOM and UEMS could discuss with WHO to decide how we could move forward. The WHO biennium ends next year, and it is probably advisable to make this a project for 2010 - 2011. Could members of UEMS and EASOM be invited to WHO meetings concerned with occupational health ?

John Harrison, as an associate professor at the Business School of Brunel University, emphasizes that the focus is on SMEs, where most people work.

Kim Rokho says that occupational physicians have been trained only on occupational risks, and have to improve their skills in work capacity.

### **The 10<sup>th</sup> Summer School: a joint event?**

At the 2010 EASOM Summer School we will celebrate the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Summer Schools. This is an opportunity to organize a bigger meeting, involving UEMS and EASOM.

The leading topic may be Quality. This could concern assessment of knowledge and competencies, of professional practice (medical audits), of guidelines, and of CME and CPD. There is no opposition to a common organization, providing that quality of practice is included in the program. The research agenda on that topic should also be included, as well as the expectancies of customers and other stakeholders. The title could therefore be "Quality of research, training and practice".

This leads to the following question: "What are the real needs of the society and the customers?"

The meeting will take place in late August or early September 2010.

Jean-François Gehanno, André Weel, Ewan Macdonald, Jacques van der Vliet and Milan Milosevic will prepare a draft for this meeting.

## **Lifelong learning in Europe**

The European Commission has integrated its various educational and training initiatives under a single umbrella, the Lifelong Learning Programme. With a significant budget of nearly € 7 billion for 2007 to 2013, the new programme replaces previous education, vocational training and E-learning programmes, which have ended in 2006 (Socrates and Leonardo da Vinci).

The programme enables individuals at all stages of their lives to pursue stimulating learning opportunities across Europe. There are four sub-programmes focusing on different stages of education and training and continuing previous programmes:

- [Comenius](#) for schools

- [Erasmus](#) for higher education
- [Leonardo da Vinci](#) for vocational education and training
- [Grundtvig](#) for adult education.

In each of these programmes there are similar actions such as

- Mobility
- Multilateral projects
- Academic networks
- Structural networks.

A transversal programme aims to ensure that they achieve the best results possible. Four key activities focus on [policy co-operation](#), [languages](#), [information and communication technologies](#), effective [dissemination and exploitation of project results](#).

Participating countries are:

- the 27 countries from EU: Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxemburg, Malta, The Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Slovenia, Slovakia, Czechia, United Kingdom, Sweden
- EVA/EER-countries: Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway
- Turkey.

All documents and guidelines can be found :

[http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/doc80\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/doc80_en.htm)

### ***Erasmus actions - Mobility: Intensive programmes (IPs)***

#### *Objectives and description of the action*

An Intensive Programme (IP) is a short programme of study (from 2 weeks or 10 continuous full days to 6 weeks of subject related work) which brings together students and staff from higher education institutions of at least three participating countries in order to:

- Encourage efficient and multinational teaching of specialist topics which might otherwise not be taught at all, or only in a very restricted number of higher educational institutes (HEIs);
- Enable students and teachers to work together in multinational groups and so benefit from special learning and teaching conditions not available in a single institution, and to gain new perspectives on the topic being studied;
- Allow members of the teaching staff to exchange views on teaching content and new curricula approaches and to test teaching methods in an international classroom environment.

An IP can be a one-off activity or repeated over a limited number of years (maximum duration of funding three consecutive years, annual application).

It may not consist of research activities or conferences, but should provide something new in terms of learning opportunities, skills development, access to information, etc. for the participating teachers and students.

The following desirable features should be noted:

- The ratio of staff to students should guarantee active classroom participation and promote an element of curricular development in the implementation of the IP;
- The involvement of HEIs from more than three countries, in order to enhance the European impact of IP, is a plus;
- The programme should be making a high contribution to the dissemination of knowledge in rapidly evolving and new areas.

Priority will be given to IPs which:

- Focus on subject areas for which shorter programmes give a particular added value;
- Give evidence of full recognition and credits to the activities by the participating institutions;
- Are part of integrated programmes of study leading to recognised double or joint degrees;
- Present a strong multidisciplinary approach;
- Use ICT tools and services to support the preparation and follow-up of the IP, thereby contributing to the creation of a sustainable learning community in the subject area concerned.

Applications must be submitted to the National Agency in the country coordinating the IP, by the institution coordinating the IP on behalf of all the partners. All higher education institutions participating in the IP must hold the Erasmus University Charter.

Selection is carried out by the [National Agency](#) (NA) in the coordinating country of the IP, on the basis of a call for proposals published by the NA in complement of the general LLP call for proposals.

Selection of IP participants (students and teachers) is carried out by the IP consortium.

Deadline for submitting a IP proposal is 13<sup>th</sup> of March, 2009.

## **Epidemiology Module**

Cathy Harrison (London) is project manager of the realization and implementation of the Epidemiology Module, on behalf of the Board of EASOM. The project team for stage two (testing the module) consists of Kristiina Mukala, André Weel and Petar Bulat.

Five institutions / EASOM members have volunteered to test the module: Barcelona, Rouen, Amsterdam, Manchester and Timisoara.

Frank van Dijk (Coronel Institute, University of Amsterdam) will develop the evaluation tools.

Peter Bulat continues his supervision upon the process of putting the Epidemiology Module on the EASOM website.

Next steps identified following the Board Meeting and General Assembly of August 2008:

- 1 – Module to be transferred to disc so that testing is possible before web site is complete.
- 2 – IT module to be put onto the web pages; interactive survey; web master.
- 3 - Evaluation of the module.
- 4 – Service Level Agreements to be developed and funding to be agreed.

## **Forthcoming events**

**Utrecht, 9 March 2009: EASOM Board Meeting**

**Cape Town, 22 – 27 March 2009: 29th triennial Congress of the International Commission on Occupational Health (ICOH2009)**

**Linz, 26 August 2009: EASOM Board Meeting**

**Linz, 27 – 29 August 2009: 9<sup>th</sup> EASOM Summer School  
“The workplace as a teaching environment”**

**Brussels, 11 December 2009: EASOM Board Meeting**

## **A request from the editor**

EASOM Members schools are requested to provide us with their teaching and learning experiences. The EASOM Bulletin is a good place to share these experiences. Please send your contributions to the secretary:

[a.weel@nvab-online.nl](mailto:a.weel@nvab-online.nl)

**The next EASOM Bulletin is expected to be issued in May 2009.**

**See you in Linz!**