

EASOM - European Association of Schools of Occupational Medicine

Bulletin – Fourteenth Edition – December 2012

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

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Editorial from President

Ladies and Gentlemen,

dear members and colleagues,

the year of 2012 is almost over and a new year will begin soon. Let me at first on behalf of the whole Board of EASOM express my best wishes for a wonderful and relaxing Christmas time and a Happy and successful New Year to all of you and your relatives and that the vast majority of your aims may become reality. For EASOM there will be a very special year, because it will celebrate its 20th birthday, as it was founded in 1993.

Occupational medicine for several reasons has been moving into rough seas. One of the major problems is obviously that there are not enough younger colleagues who join this medical field. So we have to intensify our efforts to increase their interest already in the undergraduate curricula. A central aim has to be to focus the students on the fact that the future lays in prevention of diseases, may they be work related or not, and not in curing patients. This is also important because of our ageing populations and the directly connected problems.

In August 2011 and August 2012 we had very interesting and inspiring Summer Schools in the cities of Rouen and Berlin, respectively. Please read more about them in this bulletin. During the General Assembly which was held in Rouen there was an important change in the managing board of EASOM, as André Weel, who was the second Secretary General of this Association, resigned after ten years of service. The General Assembly expressed its thankfulness to him with a big applause and some special statements from the audience. Our former president, Kristiina Mukala from Finland, also resigned from the Board after completion of her term. Both were honoured by the association with a special gift, so that they can remember their time being members of the board of EASOM. Petar Bulat from Belgrade, Serbia, accepted a third term as the Vice-President of EASOM, which was unanimously agreed by the General Assembly. At the same time we have gained Elena-Ana Pauncu from Timisoara, Romania, as a new member of the Board. Jasminka Godnic-Cvar from Vienna has taken over the position of the Secretary General which was approved by the General Assembly in August this year. I personally would like to express my gratefulness to all current and former members of the Board for their permanent voluntary commitment to EASOM.

EASOM is involved in the EMUTOM project, I would like to ask all members to support those ones who are carrying things out. There has been a workshop to present the final results in Timisoara, Romania, in September 2012. You will find further information in this bulletin.

UEMS section occupational medicine has been working on the installation of a European accreditation process in international permanent training in occupational medicine. The accreditation process of those training programs as congresses and other relevant events is now open for application, as the basics in the meanwhile were agreed with UEMS. A link to the relevant information can be found on EASOM's website.

To receive an overview of the contents of medical specialist training in the next weeks there will be sent a questionnaire to the national key experts of occupational medicine in the EU Member States. The results of this study will be presented at our next Summer School in Timisoara, Romania in August 2013.

I wish you all an utmost success in your daily work and would be happy to meet at least some of you in the year of 2013.

Past EASOM Summer School: Rouen (France), August 25th – 27th , 2011.

Topic: Teaching Ethics

The EASOM summer school of august 2011 took place in Rouen, France, and concerned the "Teaching Ethics to Students in Occupational Medicine". Nearly 40 participants attended this summer school.

Many wellknown speakers delivered challenging presentations, among which Prof. D Sicard, former President of the French National Ethics Council Committee, Dr. G-H Coppée, Former Head of ILO Occupational Medicine Unit in Geneva and Prof. P Westerholm, from the Department of Medical Sciences, Uppsala University, Sweden.

P. Westerholm gave some usefull definitions, to ensure that every one was understanding the concepts:

- Ethics is the study of fundamental principles of morality and their application in concrete situations”
- Morality is the judgement of human acts actions or behaviour as being right or wrong, as being good or bad.”
- Difference between Ethics and Morals : ”In a discussion of Morals the answers come before the questions, in a discussion of Ethics there is first a questioning and the answer is a reflection”.

The process of editing an international code of ethics in occupational health was presented by G-H Coppée and P Westerholm gave an introduction to the new code of ethics of the ICOH.

To illustrate the ethical issues raised by the organizations of occupational medicine, we had some presentations of the French, Dutch, Romanian and Finish organizations, which pointed out the dramatic differences in the missions and resources of occupational health services in Europe.

This was followed by the presentation of the point of view of different stakeholders (social partners, nurses, engineers, ergonomics and sociologists) concerning the ethical challenge in occupational health.

The rest of the summer school was dedicated to the methods used to teach ethics. After a presentation of the pedagogical methods used in the Master of Medical Ethics in Paris (Prof. I François-Purssell), P. Westerholm and A Weel introduced the concept of "Moral deliberations" and several participants gave practical examples of its use in teaching ethics in Occupational Medicine.

Following these discussions, the participants to the summers school were spared in small groups to imagine Problem Based Learning cases, using the moral dilemmas. The groups were very active and the different cases were presented on the saturday morning.

The summer school ended with a lecture gave by JF Caillard and P Westerholm on the ethical issues in research and expertise in occupational health and a farewell address by the organizers and by G. Schmeisser, President of EASOM.

Last EASOM Summer School: Berlin (Germany), August 30th – September 1st, 2012.

Topic: Communication as a core competency for occupational health physicians

The 12th EASOM summer school took place from August 28th to September 1st 2012 in Berlin. Organizer was the "Akademie für Arbeitsmedizin und Gesundheitsschutz" of the Berlin Chamber of Physicians.

In his opening lecture Dieter Weigel outlined the history of occupational medicine in Berlin going back to 1925, when the first clinical department for occupational diseases had been established. Special emphasis was given to the foundation of the first Academy of Occupational Medicine in 1962 on the political background of the cold war between the Soviet Union and the Western Allies.

A short scenic introduction showed the dilemma of a company doctor facing high and differing expectations which can not be delivered fully.

Subsequent Sabine Griebel gave a lecture on the basics of communication and its importance in the everyday's work of company doctors.

In the afternoon all participants met for group work on aspects of communication in the practice of occupational health physicians. The discussion was structured by a method called "world café". This type of moderation technique is especially useful for groups which have to work together on different questions.

The morning of the second day was scheduled for workplace inspections with a special regard to the communicative skills needed to meet specific expectations of workers and management.

The afternoon session was about how to improve the methodical competence of occupational health physicians. Reports were given by EASOM members from Finland, Spain, Belgium, Slovenia and Germany.

In the evening the participants met for a boat trip through the historical centre of Berlin. Fortunately the weather improved and the rain stopped, so everybody could enjoy a spectacular sight at the water-side of the German capital, a rich buffet and the possibility to continue private and professional talks with the other participants.

The last day of the Summer School on Saturday was open as well to interested physicians outside EASOM. Wolfgang Gaissmeier and Peter Wiedemann lectured on risk perception and communicating risks to people concerned and to the media.

In his summary and farewell address Giso Schmeisser outlined his conviction that all participants had had a good opportunity to improve their knowledge about communication and invited all to the forthcoming summer school in Timisoara.

Forthcoming EASOM summer school: Timisoara (Romania), August 28th – 31st, 2013.

Topic: Workplace Health Promotion

Further information will soon be available on our website.

EMUTOM Project : A European Module on Undergraduate Teaching in Occupational Medicine

EMUTOM is a project aimed at enhancing cooperation between European medical universities through the design of a module for teaching health and work issues that allows for harmonisation and transparency in terms of competencies and learning outcomes.

Ghent University (BE, Pr Lutgart Breackman) was the leading coordinator of the project. The partnership was composed by 5 universities from countries that cover different regions of Europe : Belgium, France, The Netherlands, Romania and Serbia. By cooperating with a partner from third countries, the Emutom project partnership has been well representing the objective of the programme namely "contribute through lifelong learning to the development of the Community as an advanced knowledge-based society".

For most people work is essential for economic, social as well as physical wellbeing. All medical doctors, whichever speciality they practice, have a key role in the prevention of work-related disease and the promotion and maintenance of good health. Educational experts and specialists in occupational medicine from five different countries (Belgium, France, The Netherlands, Romania and Serbia) offer a research based module in the form of blended learning for qualifying future health professionals in issues around work and health.

The target groups that were reached during the life of the project, are undergraduate students in medicine, academics and staff members of the participating universities as well as professionals in the field. The long term target groups are students in health sciences e.g. nursing but also other disciplines and institutes may benefit from the experience of providing a European joint module on occupational medicine.

In order to reach the general goal, some specific objectives were accomplished: the examination of the undergraduate medical curricula with regard to work-related issues throughout Europe; the analysis of the needs among general practitioners and medical specialists in the partner countries; the development of a competency framework, associated teaching materials and resources; and finally the design of a quality policy.

The surveys on undergraduate teaching concerning the link between work and health and the analyses of needs among several groups of practitioners were completed in the first phase of the project. First, a lack of standardised preparation for practice in these topics across Europe was identified. Whilst some countries have a robust training at medical undergraduate level, others have little or none. Second, differences in needs and demands were observed between countries on one hand and between occupational physicians and general practitioners on the other hand. These activities enabled the partners to formulate core competencies, learning objectives and construct the module and a teaching format. The module includes four chapters:

general introduction to work and health, effects of work on health, fitness for work, and workplace health promotion. The module is delivered as a 5-day taught programme in a three weeks period with a student workload of 84 hours. A prototype module did run on test-basis during six months and was evaluated by developers, students, teachers and experts. Based on the evaluators' feedback, the module content was optimized and refined. The final results and training materials including a teacher manual can be found at www.emutom.eu and all interested parties can use the material free of charge.

Last, a quality management system was also developed so as to regulate partners' performance in the process and guarantee outcomes and further implementation.

All partners were active in the dissemination and exploitation of the EMUTOM module and the actual project results into their own networks. Dissemination has involved informing the academic community in each partner institution on the progress in the development of the module and getting professionals from the field also involved in the debate. Results of the surveys have been presented at local meetings, during EASOM Summer Schools (Rouen 2011 - Berlin 2012) and at international congresses (ICOH Cancun March 2012). The presentation of all outcomes and module at the final conference in Timisoara (September 2012) also contributed to the dissemination of the project among a group of European experts and scholars in the field of occupational medicine.

Finally, activities to guarantee the project's sustainability beyond the project's lifespan are scheduled : another survey on continuous professional education in occupational medicine across Europe forthcoming in winter 2012 and joint publications on the development, implementation and evaluation of the module.

Further details on the project, its participants, activities, results and full contact address are available on the website www.emutom.eu.

Warning

Please check your address, mail and phone number on the EASOM web site (<http://www.easom.org>)

If you have changes to make, please let us know (giso.schmeisser@dguv.de).