

MALTA COLLEGE OF FAMILY DOCTORS

SECRETARY'S REPORT OF COLLEGE ACTIVITIES 2000-1

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HONORARY SECRETARY, MCFD

1. COUNCIL MEETINGS:

Twelve meetings were held since the last AGM of 18/5/2000, the last of which was on 23/3/2001. Five of these meetings (6th July, 13th July, 20th July, 31st July, 10th August 2000) were devoted to preparations for the 6th Mediterranean Medical Congress. Council members' attendance was as follows:

J.K. Soler	12	D. Soler	9
F.P. Calleja	11	A. Mifsud	9
J.G. Pace	10	W. Galea	8
A.P. Azzopardi	10	P. Sciortino	6
M.A. Borg	10	J.P. Gauci	1
M.R. Sammut	10		

2. 6TH MEDITERRANEAN MEDICAL CONGRESS:

(Adapted from a report drawn up by Congress Chairman Dr Jean Karl Soler).

The Malta College of Family Doctors hosted the 6th Congress and the 2nd Summer School of the Mediterranean Medical Society from the 5th to the 10th September 2000 at the Westin Dragonara Resort in Malta.

The first three days were dedicated to the Summer School, where foreign and Maltese speakers tackled the popular topics of hypertension, hyperlipidaemia and diabetes. The event was quite popular, and more than 70 local and foreign doctors attended.

The opening ceremony of the 6th Mediterranean Medical Congress took place in Mdina Cathedral on Thursday 7th September. After opening addresses by University Rector Prof Roger Ellul Micallef, College President Denis Soler and MMS President Prof. Oreste Manoussos, the President of the Republic of Malta H.E. Prof. Guido de Marco delivered a memorable speech, that touched an emotional chord in many of us when he praised the work of the family doctor in the community.

The Congress ran for two and a half days from Friday 8th to Sunday 10th September. The central theme was "Challenges for the New Millennium". There was a special focus on meeting challenges in the fields of Medical Education, Development and Health Care, and Clinical Topics. High points of the Congress included the opening by the Hon. Louis Deguara, Minister of Health, and the excellent keynote speeches by Gauden Galea, regional health advisor for WHO, based in Manila; Michael Alkan,

head of the Infectious Diseases Institute in Beersheba, Israel; Rosslyne Freeman, from Landar University in Guildford, UK; Giora Almagor from Israel; David Hall, Professor of Community Paediatrics in Sheffield, UK; and Michael Boland, President Elect of the World Organisation of Family Doctors (WONCA) and President of the Irish College of General Practitioners, from Ireland.

Sixty-six oral presentations were delivered by participants, and by local and foreign invited speakers. There were another 28 presentations in four round table meetings dealing with inflammatory bowel disease, liver disease, infections and diabetes. A number of enrichment sessions dealing with Maltese cultural topics were delivered, and 135 posters were presented in the hall of the conference centre. The Congress and Summer School were successful in the quality and variety of the scientific papers presented by foreign and local speakers alike, by the participation of more than 330 doctors and health care professionals, and by the new channels and contacts set up between local and Mediterranean doctors for future scientific collaboration.

3. CPD ACTIVITIES:

- The College granted collaboration and accreditation to a **Sports Medicine Conference** organised by the Malta Sports Council on the 9-11 June 2000.
- The **Malta Association of Public Health Medicine** invited the College to participate in the organisation of a lecture by Prof. David Miller on 'Childhood vaccine dilemmas: how safe is safe?' on 3rd October 2000. Council agreed that such lecture be accredited in the College CPD Scheme.
- The **Winter CPD Meeting** was held on the 24-26 January 2001 at the Medical School. It was entitled **Laboratory Tests in Family Practice** and held in collaboration with the Malta College of Pathologists and under the sponsorship of Vivian HealthCare. The programme was as follows:

Wednesday 24th:

Anaemias – Dr Alex Aquilina
Hypothyroidism - Dr Gerald Buhagiar

Thursday 25th:

Deranged liver function – Dr Gerald Buhagiar
Cytology - Dr James DeGaetano

Friday 26th:

Tumour Markers / Screening – Dr Bridget Ellul
Asking for a culture - Dr Paul Caruana.

- A series of lectures on Paediatrics were organised with the Maltese Paediatric Association as follows:
 - 2/2/2001: Wheezing in Childhood – Dr J K Soler, Dr C Vella; sponsor: AstraZeneca.
 - 23/2/2001: Seizures in Childhood – Dr S Buttigieg, Dr M'D Soler; sponsor: GlaxoSmithKline
 - 23/3/2001: UTIs in Childhood – Dr M R Sammut, Dr J G Torpiano; sponsor: Eli Lilly.
- The **Spring CPD Meeting** will be held at the Medical School as a **Paediatric Update** in collaboration with the Maltese Paediatric association on the 25-27 April 2001.
- A one-day seminar on “**Special concerns of women**” will be organised by the College in collaboration with the Malta College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists and Eli Lilly on 19th May 2001.

4. LOCAL NEWS:

- **Draft Health Care Professions Act, 2000:** a reply was sent in August 2000 (to the Director General (Health)'s request for feedback on the subject) regarding aspects affecting the family doctor and family medicine, and supporting MAM's general recommendations on the draft act. Feedback regarding a second draft was sent in October 2000.
- In September 2000, the Department for the Welfare of the Elderly informed the College that it was in the process of setting-up a new multi-disciplinary team to provide a **specialised geriatric service in the government homes for the elderly**. The College suggested that the GP is invited to the team assessments, and requested that the College is kept informed of further developments.
- In October 2000, the College found no objection to a draft information-form that the **Jehovah's Witnesses** were proposing to be filled in by their members and presented to their doctors.
- In October 2000, replying to a letter dated 30th September 2000 by Dr D Soler regarding a report in The Times entitled “**Sickness certificates under scrutiny**”, Deputy Prime Minister Dr L Gonzi explained the situation and was to instruct his staff to arrange for a meeting with the College (which however never materialised).
- In January 2001, the College made recommendations for the **new MAM – Association of Insurers agreement** regarding the maximum benefits payable to family doctors.
- In January 2001, **St Philip's Hospital** terminated its provision of free services to the College. Following this, Dr D Soler had written to **Capua Palace Hospital** requesting hosting fa-

ilities, and the latter generously accepted.

- In January 2001, Council identified a number of **secretarial duties** needed by the College, and asked Mrs Elizabeth Saliba to perform part-time secretarial duties for the College. Mrs Saliba accepted.
- **Vocational Training Scheme in Family Medicine:** Following a request by Dr R Busuttil, Director General (Health), in January 2001, Dr M R Sammut and Dr P Sciortino presented the lists of criteria they had prepared for the selection of 12 trainers and 1 coordinator for the above course. Such lists were approved by Council for forwarding to the DG(H).
- In March 2001, the Medical Association of Malta invited the College to nominate two representatives to sit on the **MAM General Assembly**. The Council agreed to write to MAM for more information regarding the function of the General Assembly and its consultative role, its terms of reference, and details of the benefits/obligations of joining.
- In March 2001, the College submitted suggestions for amendments to the present 'ticket of referral' in reply to a request from the **Department of Institutional Health**.
- In March 2001, Council decided that a permanent **P.O. Box address** be procured for the College, namely P.O. Box 69, Gzira GZR 01.

5. INTERNATIONAL NEWS:

- In May 2000, Dr A Mifsud and Dr J K Soler represented the College at the **EGPRW Meeting** in Maastricht, the Netherlands, with the theme of 'Research in clinical skills in general practice'.
- In June 2000, Council agreed that the Journal participates in **ExtraMED**, a project originally founded by the WHO, where some 300 biomedical journals are placed on a monthly CD-ROM as full text, at no cost to the journals, and with a share in sales of subscriptions.
- In October 2000, Dr A P Azzopardi presented details of a **Distance Learning Diploma in Therapeutics for General Practice** organised by the Irish College of General Practitioners. Council agreed that details are circulated to College members, asking for those interested to submit their names.
- In November 2000, Dr A P Azzopardi represented the College at the **18th Workshop of EquiP** held in Athens, Greece.
- In November 2000, Dr M R Sammut represented the College at a meeting of the **EUROPREV Council** held in Barcelona, Spain.
- Dr J K Soler represented the College at the **Euro-Med-Data Workshop** held in Brussels on 8-9/12/2000.
- In January 2001, Council approved a document prepared by Dr J K Soler entitled **Development a Mediterranean Family Medicine Group - The Malta Consensus**.

- In June 2001, Dr D Soler, Dr J K Soler and Dr A Mifsud plan to represent the College at the **2001 Regional WONCA Europe Conference** in Tampere, Finland.

6. MEMBERSHIP AND ACCREDITATION:

- Six College members failed to pay their 2000 subscription fee by the end of October 2000 despite repeated reminders. As such, these were **deleted from the College register** as per Council decision of 13/9/94.
- **Membership at present stands at 132.**
- **Thirty College members were accredited for 2000**, 13 of which have maintained their accreditation status for the ten consecutive years since 1991.

7. COLLEGE JOURNAL AND NEWSLETTER:

- In October 2000, Council agreed to Editor Dr J K Soler's following plans in line with its recommendations that the **College Journal be up-graded academically:**
 - three international peer reviewers to review papers at no fee (Prof. F Dobbs, Dr R

Bridgewater and Dr I Svab);

- an international scientific advisory board be appointed to recruit (and translate, if needed) papers from the Mediterranean region, so that the Journal develops into a journal for the area;
- Prof. C Lionis be appointed to the Editorial Board, with the latter keeping a majority of Maltese members;
- an addition be made to the official name of the journal to read: 'The Family Physician — It—Tabib tal—Familja: the Journal of the Malta College of Family Doctors
- One issue of the **College Journal** (June 2000) was published since the last AGM. This included two GP-related articles, one entitled 'Piloting GP Surveillance for Influenza-Like Illness, Malta 1999-2000 Season' and the other 'Transhis – the Maltese Experience with ICPC-2'.
- The **Newsletter** continues to be sent on a regular basis exclusively to College members, with local and international news of special interest to family doctors.

MCFD-AGM, 17th April 2001