

13th European Congress of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine

28-31 May 2002, Brighton, UK

Those involved in the speciality of Physical & Rehabilitation Medicine (P&RM) – represented in the UK as Rehabilitation Medicine – at a European level know that the discipline is a lot more healthy in some countries than in Britain and that a greater range of clinical activity exists. There are whole areas of work undertaken in continental Europe that are not considered as part of the speciality's area of expertise here. These include cardiac, pulmonary and cancer rehabilitation and span the whole age range. The lack of interest by British doctors in the activities of our colleagues abroad is also surprising and the view was formulated at the European Congress in Rome in 1997 (where there was only a handful of British doctors and not one trainee), that the only way to stimulate some interest was to hold the Congress in the UK and bring Europe to British clinicians.

This will now hopefully happen when, after five years of planning, the 13th European Congress of P&RM comes to Brighton. The European Federation of P&RM granted the Congress to be jointly hosted by the British Society of Rehabilitation Medicine and the multidisciplinary Society for Research in Rehabilitation, which is a new departure for these events and reflects changing practice in Europe. It will also hopefully see the inauguration of the new European Society of P&RM, which will succeed the European Federation. Some of the traditions of recent European Congresses will continue, but Brighton will break new ground in putting on "state of the art" plenary and concurrent sessions, along with practical teaching to meet the demands for continuing professional development and to allow trainees and junior members of staff to acquire new skills. This Congress should interest a wide variety of professionals and trainees in all professions will be particularly welcome.

The event will open on the evening Tuesday 28th May and the three-day scientific programme on the Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, 29th – 31st will be built across three main areas:

- Neurological rehabilitation,
- Musculoskeletal rehabilitation and
- Prosthetics and the technical aspects of rehabilitation.

The Congress will open with a look at Clinical Governance with a guest lecture by Professor Aidan Halligan, who heads up the NHS Clinical Governance Support Team. The themes will change each day and will cover the following through the daily morning plenary sessions:

- Day 1: Clinical standards,
- Day 2: Measurement of outcome
- Day 3: Evidence for effectiveness

There will then be three concurrent sessions throughout the rest of the day covering a range of topics relevant to the speciality's work and it is here that I hope a wider view of specialist rehabilitation will be apparent. There will be three parallel sessions in each 90-minute section across each area of rehabilitation and the aim is to allow suitable discussion during each. There will thus only be two speakers and it is hoped that the experts in the audience will have a real chance to interact with the experts on the podium. Of course, the scientific committee, headed by Professor Lynne Turner-Stokes has encouraged scientific papers and the submission date has now passed. A creditable 240 have been received and scoring has been carried out using the SRR's well-established system. Submitted papers fall into the categories of research, audit and quality of clinical care, clinical cases, technological developments and education. These have been placed into number of topic areas (diagnosis and assessment, management, technological advances, rehabilitation approaches, audit and education) to help delegates categorise them. Poster presentation is the preferred method and there are only a few slots for oral presentations where the point of the paper would be lost in a poster. Posters are thus held in the same esteem as oral papers and this is of particular importance where the authors' first language is not English. In addition, there are a number of workshops, seminars, updates and practical demonstrations covering many aspects of clinical work and the whole experience will be valuable to both established clinicians and to those in training.

The Congress takes over the usual summer meetings of both the BSRM and SRR and an international meeting like this allows greater choice in topics, as well as the chance to "network". There are thus a number of social events to allow delegates to mix and, while the scientific sessions will be in English only, it will be fun to try the odd words of French, German, Dutch, Swedish, Italian or Greek! We in Britain are proud and fortunate to host this exciting event and I hope as many people interested in rehabilitation make the effort to come. The Congress' web site has all the necessary information and can be found by clicking on to:

www.ecprm2002.co.uk

So go on – treat yourself – come to Brighton, acquire new knowledge and skills, renew old acquaintances and make new friends.

*Dr Anthony B Ward
President, Organising Committee*