

WFN RG on Organization and Delivery of Neurological Services 1989 – 2009

The beginnings of the WFN RG ODNs go back to the New Delhi preparatory meeting of the WFN bodies (1987) for the coming 14th World Congress of Neurology. The initiative of neurologists from the then Yugoslavia and India, represented by B Barac and J S Chopra, to organize a Symposium on “Neurology in Developing Countries”, on the base of experience of neurologists from the two countries of quite different sizes and populations, was accepted. The Symposium took place on October 25, 1989, with speakers from the developing, but also from the developed countries, later published in the book. The draft of the “Resolution and the Recommendations on neurological services in developing countries” was approved by the bodies of the WFN and published as the WFN document in several neurological journals. A new WFN Research Group related to activities of neurology and neurologists, had been designated “on Organization and Delivery of Neurological Services”, and was joined by the eminent neurologists from all parts of the world. The then WFN President, the late Professor Richard Masland, and the then Chairman of the Research Committee, John Walton, were insisting that the optimal delivery and organization of neurological services were the problem also in the developed countries, and that the common work to improve the situation worldwide is one of the missions of the whole WFN. The founding members, eminent neurologists from all over the world, supported the program of activities of the new RG.

I am glad that I may report that for several years the activities were intensive: a number of meetings followed: "European Neurology in the Activities of the Decade of the Brain" (Pan European Congress of Neurology, Vienna 1991), PAANS Congress (Marrakech 1992), “Ethical problems in neurology” (15th WCN, Vancouver 1993), “1st Conference on Organization and Delivery of Neurological Services” (New Delhi, 1994), “2nd Conference on ODNs” (Athens, 1996), and others. The Athens Conference summarized the actual problems in the delivery of neurological services worldwide, and these formulations were approved at the ensuing RG meeting organized with the WHO experts at the 16th WCN (Buenos Aires, 1997). The officers and members of the RG disseminated the RG aims in the various ways, on different regional or national conferences. The RG members were asking on the Sydney meeting at the 18th WCN to find financial resources for investigations of the most rational solutions for the salient problems of neurologists and the discipline of neurology in various parts of the world.

Some of the problems were repeatedly stressed, inter alia: urgently needed **neuroepidemiological investigations; infections and infestations** as etiologic factor of neurological diseases in developing countries; need for using **appropriate screening measures** in field studies; **sensitivity and specificity of modern technologies** in terms of relative availability and diagnostic efficacy; **importance of subspecialties** in specific fields of neurology; **system of horizontally and vertically connected hierarchical organization of neurological services** based on active primary health service, respecting local and regional situation; **appropriate education of neurologists** in terms of modern scientific advances, but simultaneously for practical work in their specific conditions using rational diagnostic and management means; **perils of "copying" education and management models** from the most advanced medical communities to the underdeveloped nations, with founding centers of excellence organized for specific regional needs; **cost-benefit aspects of neurological management** recognized as a growing interest in the world neurological community. Special concern was caused through the **recent appearance of health organizations, "rational through competition"**, "purchasing" health services, providing profit to investors into a health system: such approach to a health care producing **devastating harms** in the less developed countries, so the WFN with the WHO should take appropriate steps to prevent such developments. International collaboration in **neuroethics** is needed for studying delicate problems in neurology connected in many circumstances with tradition or religion. **The closer collaboration of the WFN with the WHO should increase public and professional awareness of the importance of neurological diseases for the public health worldwide.**

We want to believe that after the current financial, moral and political crises in the world the suitable solutions could be found, also in our activities, in order to support the peaceful solutions in the existing controversies, conflicts and animosities.

Finally, I want to express my deep gratitude to all the officers and members of our RG, to the organizers and speakers on our conferences, meetings and symposia, to our Founding members, giving their ample professional experience and human sympathy for advancing the basic ideas of the initiators of these aspects of neurological science and practice. I want to express a special gratitude to the leaders of the WFN, which were stressing the importance of such work, and to my colleagues and friends

organizing some of the important meetings: Jagjit S Chopra, Franz Gerstenbrand, Maynard M Cohen, Helmut Lechner, Francisco Rubio-Donnadieu, and others.

I want that the RG ODNS continues with such a successful work, important for neurology as well for the whole human community, under the leadership of the Acting Chairman, Professor Leontino Battistin, also in the future years. The leaders of the other Research groups are invited to collaborate with the RG ODNS to achieve the common interests of the WFN in the respective fields of neurology.

Bosko Barac, Zagreb, Croatia

Chairman, WFN RG ODNS (retired)

Founding members:

R E P Sica (Argentina); J W Lance (Australia); F Gerstenbrand, H Lechner (Austria); A Lowenthal (Belgium); A Spina-Franca (Brasil); T J Murray (Canada); Zhi-Ping Qu (China), B Barac (Croatia); M E El-Gengaihy (Egypt); G Serratrice (France); K Poeck (Germany); K Teoh (Hong Kong); E Csanda (Hungary); J S Chopra, B S Singhal, N E Bharucha (India); B Chandra (Indonesia); A Agnoli, L Battistin, P Pinelli (Italy); S Araki, Y Fukuyama (Japan); M R Jusoh (Malaysia); F Rubio-Donnadieu (Mexico); BO Osuntokun (Nigeria); J A Aarli (Norway), K Zaki Hasan (Pakistan); I Hausmannowa-Petrusewicz (Poland); L O Badalian (Russia); Z Levic (Serbia), A Portera-Sanchez (Spain); B Johansson (Sweden); Rong-Chi Chen (Taiwan); A Vejajiva (Thailand); M Ben Hamida (Tunisia); Lord Walton, F Clifford Rose (UK); M M Cohen, R L Masland, M Menken, J F Toole, J F Kurtzke, R Daroff, R J Porter, T Munsat, M Green, F Yatsu, G Roman, D Bergen, M Greer (USA); P L Ponce-Ducharne (Venezuela).

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