

Editorial

Dear ESC members and colleagues,



I recently received the final registration report from the Istanbul congress and I was surprised that 70 % of the participants were non-members of the ESC. This means that the majority of you were unable to be there and therefore may appreciate a few comments. Besides the fact that it was once again the biggest event in our history, I felt a unique spirit during this meeting. It is always a challenge to compete with the attractiveness of the

local destination, especially in such a huge and colourful city as Istanbul – but our final score was excellent, having lecture halls busy from the morning plenary till the late afternoon sessions. On site generated responses were in majority very enthusiastic, and this positive feedback has been confirmed recently by the results of the congress evaluation: satisfaction with the scientific programme was high, very few critical remarks, and a long list of innovative suggestions for further meetings.

The second issue which I wish to share with you, is the drastic change in the composition of our Board. It was the first time in our history that so many mandates of Board members expired. Obviously it concerned colleagues who have been involved in the Society for a very long time. Many of them served as executives, past presidents, and/or were even founders of the Society. On behalf of the Executive Committee, let me express our gratitude for their contribution. As a consequence, 35 new Board members from 28 countries were elected during the General Assembly. I welcome especially the new countries, which were not represented in the Board so far: Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovakia and Switzerland.

Finally, allow me, as usual, to encourage you to participate actively in the life of the Society. Most urgently you may send your suggestions for the scientific programme of the next congress in Prague. For the first time, we used suggestions from a broad spectrum of experts to establish the programme of the Istanbul congress. The same approach is planned for the Prague congress. The International Scientific Committee will use the excellent collection of suggestions received from the Board, members of the Expert groups, participants of the Istanbul congress, and also from ESC members. Therefore, should you have a topic or speaker in mind, or even a combination of both, please inform the Central office. I promise you that all proposals will be discussed.

Another motion in which contribution of all members is essential, is the creation of a web library. This idea was already created during the seminar in Warsaw. The aim is to collect valuable tools which are currently used in Europe in sexual education. The idea is to present it and to make it available on a special part of the ESC website. Currently, the Expert group on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Education is in charge of the creation of this library. The conditions which these tools need to fulfill are being formulated. We would appreciate receiving any kind of educational material, including films, brochures, DVD, web site addresses, books, etc. As all tools will be reviewed before publication on the website, please be aware that at this moment we can only accept materials in English or with complete English translation.

I wish you a restful summer spent according to your expectations!

David Cibula, ESC President

Index

Page 1

Editorial

Page 2

- 9th ESC Congress Report
- Evaluation of the Istanbul congress

Page 3

- Switzerland - family planning issues
- Society News - 9th General Assembly

Page 4

- The correlation between abortion and contraceptive prevalence in Serbia
- For your agenda

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9th ESC Congress Report

Highlights from the 9th Congress of The European Society of Contraception (ESC) 'Improving Life Quality through Contraception and Reproductive Health Care' 3-6 May 2006, Istanbul Turkey

S. Sinan Ozalp (Turkey), President of the Organizing Committee

I think once again, that the ESC held a successful meeting, the 9th Congress, with the title 'Improving Life Quality Through Contraception and Reproductive Health Care'. The highest attendance in ESC history was achieved, reaching over 1.800 participants from over 80 countries. The 'top five' countries in greatest participation were Turkey, Spain, France, Russia and the United Kingdom. This congress was the first congress with simultaneous translation available in two languages, Turkish and Russian. I believe this support helped our colleagues from Russia and other surrounding countries to participate actively.

Forums, Free Communications, Plenary Sessions with Keynote Lectures, Meet the Experts Sessions, Posters, Society Sessions, State of the Art Sessions and Symposia were part of the scientific program. This congress attracted a high number of free communication and poster abstracts, requiring a peer-reviewed assessment process, leading to a very high standard of free communication presentations and posters. Following the tradition of ESC Congresses, the scientific program covered all aspects of reproductive health and contraception from basic to clinical research. The topics contained the newest data on contraception, reproductive health and sexual health.



Meet the Expert Session

Three of the main topics of interest were, new developments in male hormonal contraception for men, recent developments in abortion techniques and contraception without bleeding. Hormonal contraception for men was discussed in details by distinguished speakers in the field. GnRh analogues, GnRh immunization, synthetic progestins and androgen preparations are the hormonal contraceptive options for men. Regarding medical abortion methods, the optimal dose of mifepristone and best choice of prostaglandin analogues, at different gestations and acceptability were discussed by leading experts in several sessions.

Another important topic of the congress was contraception without bleeding. The acceptability, continuation rates, as well as efficacy and side effects of extended use of 30 µgr EE + 150µ levonorgestrel, 91 day regimen, was discussed in detail. Long-term efficacy and safety of these contraceptive methods need to be addressed.

In this congress, current knowledge, practice and thoughts about contraception and reproductive health care were shared by the participants.

Evaluation of the Istanbul congress

Olga Loeber (The Netherlands), ESC Secretary General

During the Istanbul congress we followed a different approach to the evaluation process and although this meant an extra effort in personal services, the overall result of the evaluation was far more reliable and informative than usually is obtained in the evaluation of congresses.

At each session specific evaluation forms were given to the participants and collected at the exit. In the plenary sessions we had an average of 80 forms per session. One session has not been evaluated.

Of the other sessions different numbers of participants gave their evaluation (8-84 per session, average number 39). Other than that interviews were held about the general impression of the participants about the congress (n=201). The sessions could be evaluated as to content and presentation, score 5= excellent, 4= good, 3= average, 2= below average and 1= poor.



Poster Selection Committee

I am very happy to inform you that the overall score as to content was 4,2 and for presentation 4,1 with no large extremes between the different sessions. Best evaluated as to content was session about good clinical practice (4,39) and the forum about tailoring sexual education (4,38), followed by the session on sexual life (4,27). Best evaluated as to presentation was the forum tailoring sexual education (4,5) followed by the session attitudes to contraception (4,38) and good clinical practice (4,32).

The general impression during interview of the participants was scored over 6 items with an average of 4. A wide number of different topics was suggested to use in future congresses. Of course there were also criticisms. Of 201 interviews 73 participants made a remark over the congress: 57 said this was a good congress, whereas 16 participants were not pleased with something. We will try to make good use of all the remarks during the next congress.



A more extensive overview of the scores will be published on the website: www.contraception-esc.com

Switzerland - family planning issues

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In Switzerland contraceptive needs of women and men are met by various professional groups depending on the different regions of the country. In general, gynecologists in private practice or in outpatient departments of hospitals perform contraceptive counseling and treatment.

The second largest group is general practitioners followed by paramedical counselors who work in family planning institutions. These "family planning counselors" are most frequent in the French speaking part of the country, while in the German speaking part it is mainly physicians who undertake contraceptive care.

The most frequently used method of contraception is hormonal contraception (about 40%); the use of IU methods is low but increasing mainly due to the LNG-IUS. The introduction of the patch and Nuvaring have not yet dramatically changed the pattern of use.

Among the long-term methods, apart from Mirena, Implanon is the most used. The rate of unplanned and unwanted pregnancies is still about 1 in 6 pregnancies. Chlamydia prevalence seems to be around 3%-5%.

We are now in the process of carrying out a large research project on emergency contraception, in which we want to evaluate the impact of the pharmacy based use of emergency contraception on subsequent contraceptive behavior and other aspects of sexual health (STIs etc.).

Another large area of research and clinical concern is the contraceptive care of migrant women. Frequently these women have unwanted pregnancies and psychosocial stress with a negative impact on their sexual and reproductive health. The contributing factors are difficulties regarding the access to health care, difficulties communicating with health professionals, illiteracy, health beliefs etc. Therefore projects are undertaken to develop a culture-sensitive approach in contraceptive counseling.

Society News

by Olga Loeber, The Netherlands



The 9th General Assembly (GA) of members was held in Istanbul on 5 May 2006.

The membership report was presented. The society has 1019 members in 57 countries. Every two weeks, an update of the membership is published on the website. The Rules of Procedure were extended with new and amended articles on the Journal (art 7), the ESC award (art 15), the Internal Scientific Committee (art 16), Expert Groups (art 17) and support towards local initiatives (art 18).

The financial situation of the Society is healthy. Professional book keeping ensures clear financial probity. Following the Statutes, the GA appointed two auditors among the members to verify the accounts.

New projects initiated by the Expert Groups and the Internal Scientific Committee, focus on science and education. Besides this, our society maintains good relations with EBCOG and many other national and international organisations.

A report was presented on the past and future seminar and congress as well as on the special sessions the ESC organised on the occasion of other congresses. The GA accepted the bid from the Netherlands to host the 11th Congress in The Hague in 2010. Many countries needed to elect or reelect their national representative on the Board. Ten members are needed to have one Board Member, fifty members give the country two representatives. The new Board is composed by 35 members, representing 28 European countries.

The new Board acknowledged and supported the daily management of the Society by the former Executive Committee by prolonging their mandate for another two years.

The Minutes of the GA and full details on the aforementioned issues can be found on the website (Archives, Reports): www.contraception-esc.com

The correlation between abortion and contraceptive prevalence in Serbia

Mirjana Rasevic and Katarina Sedlecki, Serbia

Transition of fertility in Serbia (excluding Kosovo and Metohija) began during the closing decades of the nineteenth century and today total fertility rate is 1.53. However, the transition from abortion to modern contraceptive use has not yet taken place in Serbia. The only measure of pregnancy prevention which is accepted without resistance is coitus interruptus. Currently only 11.2% of women in reproductive age have any experience with modern and effective contraception (1). The result of this conservative birth control model is a huge number of induced abortions.

The estimated number of induced abortions in Serbia today is about 200.000 abortions per a year or 90.5 abortions per 1000 women in the 15-44 age (2). In 1989, the last year with complete statistical data, the structure of the women who have had an abortion, shows that majority of them were aged between 20 and 39 years (90.0%), married (92.1%), with one or two living children (75.8%). Worthy of mention is that 22.4% of women having an abortion had already had four or more abortions.

Research findings showed a complex array of factors contributing to this abortion problem, including insufficient knowledge of contraception and abortion, a belief that modern contraceptive methods are harmful to health, and a number of psychological barriers including those arising from relationships with partners. Additionally, the liberalization of the abortion law occurred at a time of decreasing birth rate and very modest availability of modern contraceptive methods.

Literature:

UNICEF. Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey II. Belgrade: UNICEF, 2000.
Rasevic M, Family Planning as a Life Style, Belgrade: Institute of Social Sciences, Demographic Research Centre, 2000.

For your agenda

9th ESC Seminar

From abortion to contraception
Bucharest, Romania
21 and 22 September 2007

10th ESC Congress

Non contraceptive impact of contraception and family planning
Prague, Czech Republic
30 April to 3 May 2008
Info : esccentraloffice@contraception-esc.com
www.contraception-ESC.com



Royal Society of Medicine 'Key Advances' Symposia

Contraception and Sexual Health
Friday 14 July 2006
Info : jennifer.lake@rsm.ac.uk
www.rsm.ac.uk/academ/a10-contra.htm

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All Newsletters are also to be found on the website of the Society:
www.contraception-esc.com (go to 'News')