

ESC NEWSLETTER - Volume 8 - Number 3 - 2011

Newsletter from The European Society of Contraception and Reproductive Health

11th ESC Seminar



From left to right
Birute Zilaitiene (seminar organiser)
Virginija Vanagiene (seminar organiser)
Katarina Sedlecky (Secretary General)
Johannes Bitzer (President)



11th Seminar of the ESC

The 11th Seminar of the European Society of Contraception and Reproductive Health was held on September 23-24, 2011 in Kaunas, Lithuania.

Lithuania is one of the Baltic countries located between Poland, Latvia and Byelorussia. Basketball is the national sport for Lithuanian people, and it so happened that the European Basketball Championship was organised in Lithuania in early-mid September of this year, so it is easy to say that the 11th ESC Seminar was the second important event in Kaunas for the year 2011!

The Seminar caught the attention of many gynaecologist and other health care professionals residing in neighbouring countries (72 Lithuanians, 132 Latvians and 121 Polish people participated). The total number of participants exceeded 500, with delegates from countries located far away from the Baltic area (USA, United Kingdom, Portugal, Spain and Israel).

The main topic of the Seminar was the "Clinical Aspects of Contraception". The main aim of selecting this topic was to provide scientific data and new developments on contraception for the doctors (and the other medical professionals) practising in the Baltic countries (especially for the Lithuanian doctors who were mostly sceptical about modern methods of contraception).

The scientific programme of the Seminar comprised three plenary sessions, seven workshops, free communication session and two sponsored symposia, but even during the sponsored symposia the main accent was clinical aspects of modern contraception without drowning the audience with details of selected products. The interactive (seven workshops) part of the Seminar was very well attended, and for many of the participants it was a first opportunity in their life to meet face-to-face scientists known from publications in the most important medical journals. A few Seminar participants attended in the post-Seminar workshop entitled "Let's talk about sex", first opinions of the participants were very enthusiastic.

The ESC Seminar is not only an educational opportunity, but also an unofficial occasion to meet medical professionals working in various countries in the field of reproductive health. In the evening of the 23th September there was time for a get-together-party, which took place in one of the best known clubs in Kaunas, and many participants staid till very late having fun. The atmosphere of the get-together-party, breaks between sessions and lunches was very friendly; there were no borders between the faculty members and the participants, and between ESC officials and ordinary members of this Society. A very good example of the co-operation within the ESC was presented by Prof Johannes Bitzer (The ESC President) during his opening speech; he lost his luggage in the long air-trip from Basel (Switzerland) to Kaunas, he was able to complete his outfit - within a very short time - with help of other ESC members (the shoes from the ESC Treasurer, the jacket from the Vice-President and the tie from the former ESC President). We all very much enjoyed the content and the atmosphere of the 11th ESC Seminar.

For all of this we should be very grateful to the two very silent and hard working persons; Dr Virginija Vanagiene and Dr Birute Zilaitiene. They formed the local Seminar Organising Committee, and their good work was visible throughout the whole time of the Seminar.

The 11th ESC Seminar Organising Committee received 31 abstracts, one of which was rejected, 8 qualified for the Free Communication Session, and 22 abstracts were presented as posters (posters were presented in a very innovative way, by Power Point presentations on computers located at the entrances to the lecture theatres. There was a competition between the authors of free communications and posters, and it is good to be able to report that the winners of the Free Communication Award were: L.Oboleviciute, D. Vaitkiene, G. Kemeكليene and G. Denafaite from the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Kaunas, Lithuania for their report on : "Myth and truth about family planning and contraception among Lithuanian teenagers". The Poster award was given for: L.V. Suturina, L.M. Lazareva, A.V. Labygina, O.Ya. Leshchenko and E.S. Shaul'skaya from the Scientific Centre of family health and human reproduction problems, Siberian branch of the Russian academy of medical sciences, Irkutsk, Russia for the poster entitled "Combined oral contraception in women with idiopathic hyperprolactinemia"

The seminar had an excellent evaluation, with the average score between 4 and 3 for the overall organisation and scientific programme.

Medard Lech

Guidelines in family planning



11th ESC Seminar - workshop: Guidelines in family planning

The workshop was co-ordinated by Gunta Lazdane, from WHO Europe, Vitas Klimas from Lithuania and Anne Webb from the UK. Forty two participants attended from 12 countries of whom three quarters were in clinical practice and around two thirds used clinical guidelines. Those who did not, said this was because they were either not aware of them or found them confusing. It was reported that some clinicians did not feel they needed them!

We discussed their benefits including

- Providing support to be sure of practising safe, evidence based practice
- Providing professional support in case of any complaint or litigation
- Providing updating for clinicians and the confidence to change practice in light of new evidence
- Lessen myths and bad publicity about contraception
- Increase patient choice
- Reduce costs by eliminating unnecessary tests

We looked at the WHO Medical Eligibility Criteria as well as the Selected Practice Recommendations and worked through common scenarios. We had a very lively discussion and by using the WHO MEC wheel we were able to offer greater choice of methods to more women and reduce the number of unnecessary investigations from the chart on the SPR. We acknowledged that unnecessary tests cost money, took time and could give the impression that contraception is dangerous as it needs tests prior to issuing it.

The WHO carries international authority and allows those who wish to practice good, up to date medicine to introduce changes with some authority. It also encourages local organisations to adapt and translate their guidance to local practice and to ask important clinical questions that have not yet been addressed by emailing them to Gunta Lazdane (gla@euro.who.int) who will take them to the next revision group.

All WHO guidance is available at www.who.int under Family Planning and the summary wheel is available from rhrpublications@who.int and a UK adapted version can be found at www.fsrh.org under Clinical Guidance together with other evidence based guidance.

Anne Webb

Workshop Nis

ESC is organising a workshop in Nis

After two very successful workshops which were organised in Budapest in 2009 and 2010, a similar workshop will be held in Nis, in the southern part of Serbia. It will gather established faculty members from several European countries, participants from Romania, Bulgaria, FYR Macedonia, Greece, Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Slovenia, as well as new faculty members who speak Russian. We will tell you more about this in the next edition of the Newsletter.

Katarina Sedlecky

Let's talk about sex



Post-Seminar Workshop: 'Let's talk about sex' in Kaunas, Lithuania

The ESC supported a workshop on Sexuality Education following a needs assessment. We got responses from Albania, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Poland, Romania, Russia, Slovenia and Turkey, mostly from gynecologists but also psychologist, lecturers in sexual health, sexologists, programme coordinators and public health specialists, demonstrating health professionals' development needs in this area.

This workshop was meant to, on one hand train professionals who are interested in the field but have little experience, and on the other hand give examples of how training of trainers may be undertaken. The ESC expert group on Sexuality Education developed a one day programme which was appended to the ESC Seminar in Kaunas.

The workshop had 19 participants, mainly from Lithuania and Latvia but also from Russia, Hungary and Romania. The participants had a wide variety of professional backgrounds, including educators, doctors, programme co-ordinators for sexual health matters, psychologists and other professionals in the field of sexual health and education.

The morning was spent creating a shared understanding of matters pertaining to sexuality education: definitions, experiences and activities that may be used to engage educators,



young people, parents and health professionals in the development and application of programmes. The afternoon allowed more in depth exploration of either more medical topics (myths and misconceptions in contraception and sexual health issues; sexual history taking; barriers and enablers for patients and professionals) or continuing exploration of 'hot bottom issues' or practical skills in working with groups of young people.

The evaluation in general was between good and very good with an average of 3,5 on a scale from 1-4. Some very experienced educators attended the workshop and felt that they had not learnt much that was new to them. The vast majority of participants were very positive stating it was very useful to them, and they would recommend it to a colleague. Different aspects were appreciated by different participants. Everybody appreciated the open friendly atmosphere. The participant from Hungary hoped that such a program could be made available in Hungary.

Olga Loeber, Coordinator of the Expert Group on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Education

Call for abstracts



12th ESC Congress, 20-23 June 2012, Athens - Greece Call for abstracts – deadline 15 January 2012

Dear colleagues and friends,

The Organising and Scientific Committee invite all those involved in any aspect of contraception, sexual and reproductive health care to actively participate by submitting abstracts, either for oral or poster presentation for the 12th ESC Congress, Myths and misconceptions versus evidence in contraception.

How to submit an abstract? Abstracts can only be submitted electronically through the online system at: www.escrh.eu/events/esc-events/12th-esc-congress/call-abstracts/how-submit Questions? If you have any questions just email: nancy.habils@escrh.eu

Topics

- Abortion
- Barrier methods
- Contraception in adolescence
- Contraception in medical conditions and physical handicap
- Contraception in premenopausal women (perimenopausal)
- Contraception in socially disadvantaged groups
- Cultural influences on contraceptive decisions/practice
- Delivery of sexual and reproductive health care
- Diversity and sexual/reproductive health (SRH) in Europe
- Dual protection
- Education and training for family planning professionals
- Emergency contraception
- Gender issues in sexual and reproductive health
- Hormonal contraception
- Intrauterine contraception
- Long-acting reversible contraceptive methods
- Male contraception
- New contraceptive methods
- Natural family planning methods
- Non-contraceptive benefits of contraceptive methods
- Postpartum contraception
- Permanent contraception
- Role of non-doctors in contraception provision
- Sexual and contraceptive behaviour
- Sexual dysfunction
- Sexual health education
- Sexually transmitted infections
- Side effects and risks of contraceptives
- Tailor made bleeding patterns in contraception

Emergency Contraception

The European Consortium for Emergency Contraception A new initiative

Emergency contraception (EC) can reduce a women's risk of becoming pregnant after unprotected intercourse. Levonorgestrel only EC pills have been available in most European countries for 10 years or more, although access varies significantly from country to country. In Portugal and France, EC has been available behind the counter (from pharmacists without a prescription) for more than a decade, while in countries like Germany, a prescription for EC is still mandatory. Such regulations are likely to shape the landscape of EC use in Europe. Such diversity, also reflected in the protocols and clinical guidelines for EC use, result in the absence of a harmonised evidence-based approach to EC recommendations across the European zone, likely to lead to further inequalities in access to reliable EC options for women with the introduction of new generations of EC pills (such as ulipristal acetate) as well as the promotion of IUDs for emergency contraception.

Data on accessibility and use of EC in Europe is scarce. Nevertheless, marketing sales suggest that EC is more widely used in countries with non prescription access. Norway, Sweden and France have the highest estimated proportion of users: 14%, 12% and 10% respectively (estimated as number of EC units sold per year divided per number of women 15-49 years). Italy, Hungary, Germany, Poland and the Czech Republic, show the lowest records of use, below 3%. Use in other European Union states range from 4 to 9%.

These trends are likely to vary significantly in some countries where measures to facilitate access to EC are implemented. In Spain, use more than tripled over the last year, after EC switched to over the counter status in 2009.

In light of this situation, the International Consortium for Emergency Contraception is working with a number of European research experts and advocates in order to establish a European Consortium for Emergency Contraception (ECEC). ECEC aims to be an autonomous network of European-based organisations and individuals working in the field of EC research, service provision and advocacy, within a broader sexual and reproductive health and rights approach, with the mission of expanding knowledge about and access to EC in European countries. The Consortium also will work towards promoting the standardisation of EC services delivery to encourage an equitable access within the region. The group also hopes to stimulate high quality research related to emergency contraception in Europe.

ECEC will be launched in 2012, and looks forward to play a key role in improving knowledge and access to all EC options for European women. We look forward to working closely with the European Society of Contraception and Reproductive Health in this effort.

If you are interested in this initiative and would like to become a member of the Consortium, please contact Cristina Puig at cpuig@fcimail.org.

**WCD
Slovenia**



World Contraception Day - Activities 2011 in Slovenia

**Dont loose your head.
Check www.your-life.com
(Get to) Know contraception. You have to know!**

Activities for adolescents

- Brochure 'All about contraception': Distributed on WCD, Sept 26th, to all pupils of 1st year secondary school in Slovenia
 - Partnership with Ministry of Education and special engagement of Minister with an official note to the headmasters to dedicate a lessons about contraception and distribute WCD guides on WCD
 - WCD guide as first step of systematic approach to equip adolescents with knowledge and information about contraception before signing the certificate for responsible and safe sex and reproductive health at the end of school year
 - Booths in 8 biggest cities:
 - Distribution of educational leaflets by students on rollers
 - Increasing awareness of contraceptive methods
 - Games at booth
- For example: Park Zvezda, Kongresni square in the capital Ljubljana
- The Wall: Collecting signatures for safe and responsible sexuality
 - Gathered amount (554 signatures) donated to Virus project– society of students of medicine in Slovenia, who educate secondary school pupils on safe sexuality

Activities for media

- Slovene ESC ambassador (Dr. Andreja Štolfa-Gruntar and BSP WH representative presenting WCD on national TV morning programme
- Meeting for journalist (with Minister of Health and supporters of WCD at Bayer booth) in the capital Ljubljana

Activities for health care professionals (HCPs)

- 2nd symposium on contraception dedicated to WCD – "Benefits and side effects of contraceptive methods" - when: Friday, Sept 23rd, before WCD - for whom: for gyns and other HCPs interested in contraception (primary care provider, pediatricians)

Do you consider WCD as a success in your country?

Yes, we consider WCD a great success in Slovenia. WCD Guide is recognised as a perfect tool for adolescents to inform themselves about contraceptive options and is distributed to the whole target group (1st year secondary school pupils).

Andreja Stolja Gruntar

All materials to be included in the ESC Newsletter should be submitted (electronically) to the:
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