Editorial

As the role of physical science in medicine has become more widespread, over the last three decades, it has achieved a level of importance that is not fully appreciated by clinicians, hospital administrators or politicians concerned with health care.

In its early stages Medical Physics was almost entirely associated with x-ray diagnosis and therapy. The physicist used his basic knowledge of radiation physics to establish and maintain diagnostic standards and to calculate doses of radiation to be delivered to diseased sites. He was the 'back-room boy', unknown to the patients and considered by many clinicians to be just another paramedical accessory. As radioisotopes became more freely available and diagnostic nuclear medicine was introduced, the physicist's role in medicine became much more important. His radiotherapy training was applied to the dosimetry of diagnostic radioisotopes and his engineering skills were in demand to aid the development of new imaging systems. Computer skills were required for analysing the data so that diagnostic images could be produced. This was followed by an initial period of tomographic imaging was only achieved with the successful introduction of the CAT scanner. Diagnostic frontiers have also been extended by the use of ultrasound; microsurgery, nuclear medicine, and physiology measurement, bioengineering, surgery, audiology, and flowmetry, together with new applications in the fields of psychiatry and forensic medicine. Yet because the work of the physical scientist is applied to so many branches of medicine requiring originality, inventiveness and diverse skills his job is almost impossible to define. In consequence he frequently fails to attain appropriate recognition and academic status.

Our concern must be to raise the status of the medical physicist and to convince our international and administrative colleagues of the value and necessity of an efficient medical physics service. We must also seek to change the attitude of the official world of physics which in many countries still treats medical physics with complete indifference despite the existence of other well established branches of applied physics.

The next decade we must seek to use our influence as widely as possible to speak up for the profession of medical physics. Certainly there is much to be done and we do not expect either to find anybody doing it for us or to find much comprehension of our problems. The existence of our European Federation will serve to unify and strengthen our efforts.

Message from the President

It took just twenty-seven months from the first initiative, by the Council of the Hospital Physicists' Association (H.P.A.) in February 1978, to reach agreement on the formation of the European Federation of Organisations for Medical Physics. Twelve months of correspondence was followed by an initial meeting in London in May 1979 at which organisations from fifteen countries were represented. At that meeting it was unanimously agreed to establish a Federation. A Steering Committee under the Chairmanship of Professor J.S. Orr was set up to draw up a draft constitution and working parties were formed to consider professional matters, education and training and publications.

The draft constitution of the proposed Federation was circulated to all interested national organisations and at a second meeting held in London, from 7th-9th May 1979, the constitution was formally adopted by delegates representing the medical physics organisations of fourteen countries, who thus became the founder members of the Federation. Delegates from several organisations who at that time had not approved the proposed constitution were able to express the wish of their respective organisations to join the Federation at an early date.

Such rapid progress, brought about by the commitment of the national organisations involved and their willingness to work together, augurs well for the future of our Federation. But let no-one think that having formed a Federation there is no more work to be done - our labours have only just begun. The success of the Federation and its ability to represent and advance the profession of medical physics throughout Europe will depend entirely on the effort which in many countries still treats medical physicists with complete indifference despite the existence of other well established branches of applied physics.

Certainly there is much to be done and we do not expect either to find anybody doing it for us or to find much comprehension of our problems. The existence of our European Federation will serve to unify and strengthen our efforts.

Cafiero Franconi
Inaugural Meeting

The E.F.O.M.P.

Inaugural Meeting

Delegates representing fifteen countries met at the Medical Society of London on 8th and 9th of May, 1980 for the Inaugural Meeting of the Federation. A draft constitution had been prepared by the Steering Committee chaired by Professor J.S. Orr (United Kingdom) and previously circulated. Professor Orr, who chaired the opening session of this meeting, began by summarising the work that had been done in preparing the constitution. He commented that a fairly lengthy explanation of the term 'medical physics' had been found the most effective means of describing the scope of the Federation. He also made it clear that it is possible for more than one organisation in a country to join E.F.O.M.P. A short discussion on details of the constitution was followed by a 'round-table' session in which the delegates stated the position of their own organisations. Organisations from the following countries were able to accept the constitution:

Austria

Belgium

Finland

France

Federal Republic of Germany (F.R.G.)

Holland

Italy

Norway

Spain

Sweden

Switzerland

Turkey

United Kingdom

Yugoslavia

* These organisations signified their acceptance in correspondence.

Provisional membership was sought by organisations from Czechoslovakia, Denmark and Ireland. Dr. Tautz, from the German Democratic Republic (G.D.R.) attended as an observer. All the Associations so far involved are listed on page 4. When the formalities are completed E.F.O.M.P. will represent about 3000 medical physicists.

Having established formal acceptance of the constitution, subject to agreed changes in detail, the meeting went on to elect the Officers and Council of E.F.O.M.P. The following officers were elected:

- President: Mr. J. Clifton - U.K.
- Vice President: Mr. J. Chavadora - France
- Past President: Prof. J.S. Orr - U.K.
- Secretary-
  - General: Dr. A. Benini - Italy
  - Treasurer: Mr. P. Welde - Norway

The Ordinary Members of E.F.O.M.P. Council are:

- Dr. H. Bergman - Austria
- Mr. A.J. Piron - Belgium
- Dr. M. Pitakane - Finland
- Dr. H. Agile - France
- Prof. A. Kaul - F.R.G.
- Prof. D.H. Bеккеринг - Holland
- Prof. C. Franconi - Italy
- Dr. R. Saenz Gancedo - Spain
- Dr. P.E. Aasen - Sweden
- Dr. G. Poretti - Switzerland

The Steering Committee had four working groups associated with it and these reported upon their activities at the meeting. After further discussion about objectives the groups were reconstituted as E.F.O.M.P. Committees.

Committee on Professional Matters

Dr. Aäsîrd (Sweden) had conducted a survey on the role, responsibility and status of medical physicists in Europe. He had eighteen replies and distributed twenty-two questionnaires. Information about the distribution of grading structures, independent medical physics departments, regional medical physics organisation, formal regulation of the profession, and salaries in relation to medical staff was presented. Discussion revealed a desire for policy statements from E.F.O.M.P. on various aspects and it was felt that a definition of the responsibilities of the medical physicist would best lead the way, with later documents on status, salary, manpower needs etc. The new committee is to consist of:

- Dr. P.E. Aäsîrd - Sweden (Chairman)
- Mr. A.J. Piron - Belgium
- Dr. M. Tautz - G.D.R.
- Dr. H. Agile - France
- Prof. M.M. Black - U.K.

Publications Committee

Professor Franconi (Italy) had begun the task of assessing the attitudes of member organisations towards an E.F.O.M.P. Bulletin. Replies so far indicated that existing Bulletins would continue in parallel with an E.F.O.M.P. publication. In general a publication with two issues per year and with advertising, appeared to be wanted. After discussion and an offer from Professor Ellis, it was agreed that the H.P.A. should finance three issues of the E.F.O.M.P. Bulletin. Issues would hopefully appear in December, 1980 and June, 1981 and be edited by Professor Franconi. The committee would produce proposals for subsequent production of the Bulletin.

Mr. Clifton explained the progress which had been made with the two journals "Physics in Medicine and Biology" and 'Clinical Physics and Physiological Measurement'. It was proposed that E.F.O.M.P. negotiate to make these its official journals after this motion was carried.

The new committee is to consist of:

- Prof. C. Franconi - Italy (Chairman)
- Mr. D.J. Dowsett - Republic of Ireland
- Dr. G. Poretti - Switzerland
- Dr. E. Claridge - U.K.

Scientific Activities

Dr. Benini expected that it would be three or four months before her analysis of the scientific activity of the E.F.O.M.P. member societies was ready. A lengthy discussion upon the scientific role of E.F.O.M.P. was conducted. It was felt necessary to try to fill gaps left by other enterprises, for example clinical evaluation with a view to cost effectiveness. Matters such as the exchange of scientists the support of technicians, the relationship with engineers and the establishment of a unified approach to I.E.C. regulations were considered. Scientific coordination by the dissemination of information was considered very important. A group to work by correspondence and coordinate scientific ideas is to consist of:

- Prof. R.E. Ellis - U.K.
- Prof. D.H. Bеккеринг - Holland
- Prof. A. Kaul - F.R.G.
- Dr. M. Tautz - Belgium
- Prof. C. Franconi - Italy

John S. Clifton with the E.F.O.M.P. candle
A Brief History of E.F.O.M.P.

Beginnings

It was with some trepidation that I approached the Council of the H.P.A. in February 1978 with the suggestion that the wider issues of medical physics through­out Europe. To the suggestion was added the proposition that the H.P.A., as the oldest and largest association in Europe, should take the initiative. The minutes of the Council meeting indicate that Council agreed with the suggestion, approved the formation of a union of I.O.M.P. with I.F.M.B.E. The constitution is agreed and the name is to be the International Union for Physical and Engineering Sciences in Medicine. Support is needed at national level for the acceptance of the new union to the International Council of Scientific Unions. National Academies send delegates to the I.C.S.U.

(2) International Organisation for Medical Physics

Professor Mallard apologised for the fact that he could not attend the E.F.O.M.P. meeting. I.O.M.P. welcomed and supported the formation of E.F.O.M.P. The minutes of the meeting referred to the formation of a union of I.O.M.P. with I.F.M.B.E. The constitution is agreed and the name is to be the International Union for Physical and Engineering Sciences in Medicine. Support is needed at national level for the acceptance of the new union to the International Council of Scientific Unions. National Academies send delegates to the I.C.S.U.

(3) European Community

Professor Bekkering and Professor Black explained the problems and limited activity within the European Community concerning medical physics, which is seen by the community as a branch of biomedical engineering. Again our influence must be through national delegates on the Research in Medicine Committee and its sub groups.

Groundwork

At the end of the meeting in London in May, 1979, Jean Bruquet was asked to host a meeting of the Steering Group in Paris in early October. I prepared a first draft of a possible Constitution using assorted documents, from Brian Stedeford, out of the I.O.M.P. archives. I wrote to Rune Walstam to ask for the official definition of 'Medical Physics' but, unfortunately, it appears that none exists. Professor Alex Kaul was inspired by my first draft to write a second one, which was given to me in the Berlin countryside in producing a much longer and more rigorous German version of the Constitution.

When the Steering Group met in Paris on 11th and 12th October, my arrival was late due to airport delays, when my British Airways plane found itself in the fog at Heathrow behind a number of other aeroplanes whose pilots could not see their way to the runway. However, I was eventually ruthlessly thrust into the Chair and told to get on with it. Each time the possibility of disagreement on any clause rose we found that by the time the various versions of European English had been harmonised with Scottish, it was rarely possible for anyone to object. All the disagreement eventually appeared to vanish in the course of a marvelous evening laid on by our dear friend Nicole. Copious notes had been made by Anna Benini, who had undertaken the Secretaryship as she appeared willing to leave most of the talking to Cahero Franconi.

It was agreed that it was both very desirable, and also possible, to complete the proposed Constitution in time to circulate to national organisations in January, 1980.

In accordance with the timetable laid down at the Paris meeting, Peter Griffiths organised the foundation meeting in London for May, 1980. We were too late in attempting to book the old Scottish paddle steamer moored on the Thames for our evening's entertainment but this was very fortunate as the boat was burned to the water line the night before we would have been on it. The meeting opened with a very pleasant evening in the library of the British Institute of Radiology, looked after by Douglas, whose fluency in French was as entertaining as his knowledge of the wines which he discussed. The following day we met again at the Medical Society of London and by unanimous agreement of those present, representing fifteen countries in Europe, the European Federation of Organisations for Medical Physics was duly inaugurated.

J.S. Orr
Organisations involved in E.F.O.M.P.
negotiations, with the name of an officer

Austria: Dr. H. Bergmann
Austrian Society of Hospital Physicists
Department of Nuclear Medicine,
2nd Medical Univ. Clinic, Garnisonkreis 13,
A-1090, Vienna, Austria.

Belgium: Mr. A. Piron
Société Belge des Physiciens des Hôpitaux,
Belgische Vereniging van Ziekenhuissfysici,
Institut Jules Bordet,
1 Rue Hiver Be Bordet,
1000 Brussels, Belgium.

Czechoslovakia: Dipl. Ing. J. Pecina
National Organization of Physicists,
Inst. of Clinical and Research Oncology,
Ziznou kopek 7,
6000 00 Brno, Czechoslovakia.

Danmark: Mr. N. Ulsl'I
Dansk Selskab for Radioterapi Og Cancerforskning,
Radiofysisk Laboratorium,
Aarhus Kommunehospital,
Ek 8000, Aarhus C., Denmark.

Finland: Dr. J.T. Kuikka
Finnish Association of Physicists in Medicine,
Department of Nuclear Medicine,
University Central Hospital,
SF-70210 Kuopio 21, Finland.

France: Mr. J. Chavaudra
Société des Physiciens des Hôpitaux d’expression Francaise,
Institut Gustave Roussy,
Rue Camille Desmoulins,
14000 Villejuif, France.

F.R.G.: Professor A. Kaul
Deutsche Gesellschaft für Medizinische Physik, e.V.,
Klinikum Stotzd der Freie Universität Berlin,
Hindenburgdamm 30,
D-1000 Berlin 45, F.R.G.

G.D.R.: Dr. M. Tautz
Gesellschaft für medizinische Radiologie der D.D.R.,
Section "Klinische Strahlentherapie",
1115 Berlin-Buch, Wältbergstrasse 50.

Holland: Professor D.H. Beckering
Nederlandse Vereniging voor Klinische Fysica (N.V.K.F.),
Vliugkerwaard I,
3984 PD Odijk, Holland.

Ireland: Mr. D.C. Howett
Irish Hospital Physicists’ Association,
153 Templeogue Road,
Terenure, Dublin 6.

Italy: Professor C. Franconi
Associazione Italiana di Fisica Biomedica,
Istituto di Fisica Medica,
Citta Universitaria,
00100 Rome, Italy.

Norway: Mr. F. Welde
Norwegian Society for Medical Radiation Physics,
Radiofysisk Afd., Ullevaal Sykehus,
Oslo, 1 Norway.

Spain: Dr. S. Millan
Spanish Society of Medical Physics,
Hospital Clinico Universitario,
Sección de Fisica,
Av. Gomez Laguna, Zaragoza 9, Spain.

Sweden: Dr. P.E. Åsård
Swedish Hospital Physicians’ Association,
Dept. of Hospital Physics,
Danderyds Hospital, S-18288, Sweden.

Switzerland: Dr. G. Poretti
Société Suisse de radiophysique et radiobiologie,
Dept. of Medical Radiation Physics,
Insepital,
CH-3010 Berne, Switzerland.

Turkey: Mr. S. Kutar
Turkish Association of Physicists,
Physics Department,
Institute and Clinic of Radiotherapy,
University of Istanbul,
Topkapi, Istanbul, Turkey.

United Kingdom: Mr. D. Field
Hospital Physicians’ Association,
47 Belgrave Square, London, SW1X 80X.

Yugoslavia: Mr. S. Kuter
Yugoslav Society for Biomedical Engineering,
Imperial Measurements Laboratory (VIII floor),
Electrotechnical Faculty,
Unska 17, 41000 Zagreb, Yugoslavia.

Extracts from the E.F.O.M.P. Constitution

Preamble.

1. In most European countries there are
National Organisations (e) in which the principal defined category of members are persons
qualified with a University degree or equivalent in physics, mathematics, computing sciences, physical chemistry, mechanical, electrical or electronic engineering, etc., and
working in alliance with medical staff in hospitals, universities or research institutes,
and (b) which carry the responsibility of
- guiding and supporting the professional character of the work of their members and
- encouraging and promoting the scientific work of their members.
Their activities and field of work will be described in this document by the comprehensive expression of Medical Physics.

2. These National Organisations believe that their activities will be strengthened and made more effective by bringing about and maintaining systematic exchange of professional and scientific information, and by the formulation of common policies on the responsibilities and roles of their members and on training programmes, etc.

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