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News from the 19th WONCA EUROPE Conference, 2014 - LISBON - PORTUGAL

New Routes for General Practice and Family Medicine



Publicidade

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Art and Medicine in synchrony

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Auspicious start for the 19th WONCA Europe Conference

Art and Medicine in synchrony

Teamwork and integrated effort. That is the way to move forward, both in art and in healthcare. This was one of the most prominent ideas to come out of opening session of the 19th WONCA Europe Conference. So let us work collectively and bring our thoughts together, during the next days, in order to add value to General Practice/Family Medicine

Just before the brilliant opening conference presented by Joana Carneiro (music director of the Berkeley Symphony and invited maestro of the Gulbenkian Orchestra) and the performance of the Lisbon Metropolitan Orchestra, the delegates to the 19th WONCA Europe Conference were greeted with an artistic moment (courtesy of acrobats and an accordion performer who is also a member of the organizing committee). Then, national and international leaders of the health sector, namely the president of the Portuguese Association of General and Family Medicine (APMGF) and chair of the Conference, João Sequeira Carlos, and the president of WONCA Europe (Job Metsemakers) took the floor.

João Sequeira Carlos remembered the importance of this major meeting, which brings together doctors from many origins: “in this time of global communication, physical meetings like this are more important than ever”. The conference president also highlighted the fact that primary care and general practice/family medicine are the cornerstones of every successful health system: “we all know that the more a health system is based in primary care, the better results it will provide”. Job Metsemakers was particularly surprised with the participation of the youngest generation of family doctors: “of the more than 3400 delegates, more than 1000 are trainees. That is certainly an achievement!”. The secretary of State Fernando Leal da Costa was even more enthusiastic: “this is one of the highest moments of Portuguese Medicine!”.

The opening ceremony was then handed over to the domineering presence of Joana Carneiro, who in a theatrical fashion called the patient/composer Robert Schumann to stage, reincarnated in the Lisbon Metropolitan Orchestra, to treat some of his more debilitated melodies and rhythm sections.



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Keynote Lecture - Kamran Abbasi

Exploring the potential of knowledge management

Kamran Abbasi – doctor, journalist, editor and a prolific broadcaster and communicator in the realm of social networks – is going to present tomorrow, at 08h30 a.m., a keynote lecture on «Knowledge Management.

After a hiatus of several years, Abbasi is back with the British Medical Journal (BMJ) team, working as digital international editor and leading the strategic growth of the publication in those areas.

In the course of his career as a medical

journalist, he has been the editor and delegate editor of BMJ, editor of the Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine and of JRSM Open, as well as editor of the World Health Organization Bulletin and consulting editor for PLOS Medicine.

In addition, he has also created three fundamental tools in the field of e-learning, aimed at the medical professional development, including the BMJ Learning system and the e-learning and video lectures services of the Royal Society of Medicine.

It should be pointed out that Kamran Abbasi is an honorary lecturer in the Department of Primary Care and Public Health of the Imperial College, in London. He regularly contributes to a show related to healthcare issues broadcasted by BBC Radio 4, entitled “Inside Health”, proving himself to be an experienced television and radio analyst and commentator.

His background and experience will certainly be the building blocks of a masterful lecture, about knowledge management and what the most valuable information means in terms of the decision making process.

Carl Edvard Rudebeck, general practitioner in Sweden, research supervisor in Kalmar county and professor in General Practice at the Department for Community Medicine of the University of Tromsø (Norway), is going to present tomorrow, at 2h30 p.m., a lecture about personalized and comprehensive care, entitled “The physicians understanding of the patient’s bodily meaning”. According to this general practitioner, “bodily empathy – the process by which individuals communicate body experience – is crucial in medicine, and bodily empathetic skills may be developed to

a professional level by physicians. It is a pre-diagnostic skill of a certain importance to GPs who, when judging symptom presentations, often have to rely on the interaction and personal knowledge, rather than on algorithms”. On the other hand, Carl Edvard Rudebeck believes that body empathetic skills are “dependent on the access to our own body experience, since this experience is the reference for the concepts designating body experience, at large. But the purely social and communicative talent is probably also important”. In reality, the platform for every good relation (includ-

ing the one established between doctor and patient) is simply “human existence; bodily, relational, imaginative, reflective and vulnerable”, states the family doctor. “The specific diseases define a secondary level. But on this level, once again, it appears that the disease has no existence of its own. The patient is always there in full figure, hither to the disease, from the

GP’s point of view. The body has its existential anatomy, the mix of experiences and capabilities, general and specific, gross and minute, well or diseased, that set the conditions for partaking in the physical and social world. In psychiatric symptoms, consciousness is its own suffering. The person and the disease are, in either case, constructions of language”.



Foto: Sara Winsnes

Carl Edvard Rudebeck:

Doctor’s understanding of the patient’s bodily meaning



WONCA Environmental Working Party

Don’t miss the presentation of the new book: “Family Doctors In The Field”

Tomorrow, at 5h00 p.m., the WONCA Environmental Working Party will organize a debate session at the 19th WONCA Europe Conference, specially dedicated to the presentation and official launching of a book developed by that WONCA Group, called “Family Doctors In The Field – Environ-

mental Stories From Across The Globe”. Authors of several chapters of this book will be present, to exchange ideas with the audience using as a starting point this rich array of narratives written by family doctors, health professionals who live and work in different parts of the world but share many of their inspira-

tions and operational methods.

As the WONCA Environmental Working Party chair (the Australian family doctor Grant Blashki) explained to WONCA Daily, this debate session has a main purpose, the world launching of a book in which “family doctors from vastly differing contexts have

described their efforts in promoting environmental sustainability. Some have done so through their day-to-day actions in their lives or in their clinics, to reduce energy use, waste and water use. Others have been involved by advocating for environmentally friendly policies within their countries. Some of the doctors have been using their professional voice to educate the community about environmental issues”.

Grant Blashki further details the kind of stories contained in this innovative book that is going to be revealed, for the first time, in Lisbon and that might stimulate a interesting debate session: “some of the doctors describe their work dealing with the health implications of environmental threats, for example responding to floods in Pakistan, or ensuring clean water in Kenya. Other presentations are of a more philosophical nature and explore the relationship of human health to environmental sustainability”.

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How is it possible to develop and perfect a healthcare system and its primary care delivery? Before anything else, you need to evaluate quality, costs and equity standards, in a comparative frame. That is why international, large scale studies/projects like QUALICOPC (Quality and Costs of Primary Care in Europe), are so important. The QUALICOPC Project – funded by European programs – aims to analyze and compare the way in which primary care delivery systems work in 34 different countries, looking at issues like quality, cost management and equity of service. The Project as already involved more than 6800 general practitioners/family doctors and more than 65 mil patients, covering 31 European countries, as well as Canada, Australia and New Zealand. To reach such a level of scientific maturity, it was imperative building a partnership network of research institutions lo-

cated around the world, coordinated by the Dutch institute NIVEL.

Today, at 11h00 a.m., the project will be under discussion in a symposium chaired by Luís Pisco (chair of the International Advisory Board of the 19th WONCA Europe Conference), who also coordinated the study at a national level, in Portugal.

During this session, the first initial data from the Project will be revealed, through presentations made by three research teams that are participating in the international study.

“We will have with us some of the study coordinators and many of the principal researchers, which means this will be an excellent opportunity to discuss the very first results coming out of this project”, says Luís Pisco. The QUALICOPC Study coordinator in Portugal warns that although comparative data on quality, costs and equity of primary care delivery in several countries is becoming available and ready for publishing, it is vital to look at this information in the particular context of the study, avoiding the temptation to interpret the results in a abusive manner: “the idea behind this study is not to produce rankings or anything of that sort, but to understand which countries get the best results, in areas related to quality and efficiency in the delivery of primary care. Having access to this data allows us all to learn from proven strategies and good practices and adapt the success stories to our national setting. All of this should be done within a continuous quality improvement approach”.

Symposium – QUALICOPC Study

Comparative evaluation of primary care at an international level

Working Party on Ethics in Primary Care

Ethical aspects of remuneration and financial incentives systems in focus

One of the 19th WONCA Europe Conference’s seminars that promises to draw significant attention will take place today at 11h00 p.m. and it’s the responsibility of the WONCA Working Party on Ethics in Primary Care. This session, entitled “Challenges to our professional attitudes – use and misuse of remuneration systems and financial incentives for doctors” is going to be under the spotlight, in a moment when the dissemination and improvement of financial incentives schemes and new remuneration systems in primary healthcare is such an important topic of discussion in

Portugal, that hosts the conference and where such schemes have been implemented and perfected in last few years. The WONCA Working Party on Ethics in Primary Care chair – Austrian family doctor Manfred Maier – says this session “aims to address ethical aspects which arise as an integral part of a particular remuneration system, possibly due to efforts to optimize the system in the personal interest of doctors or which arise from financial incentives provided to them”. Attendants should expect a session where four to five speakers, from countries with different remuneration sys-

tems for doctors, present their countries situation, by providing some data and background information. When it comes to the Portuguese reality, where incentive schemes (both group and financial/individual schemes) have been applied gradually to the primary healthcare teams, Manfred Maier recommends a certain degree of vigilance, regarding ethical aspects and potential abuses. But even so, the Austrian family doctor believes the ethical concerns are probably less relevant in the context of such performance incentives systems “than in other systems, such as fee for service”.



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EUROPREV

Focus on quaternary prevention

Immunization and early diagnosis are typical examples of preventive activities that are generally welcomed by the population. The public's enthusiasm for health prevention leads people to think that more testing is better care.

In the workshop that is going to take place tomorrow, at 15h00 p.m, focused on quaternary prevention – led by Portuguese and Danish family doctors: Carlos Martins, Bruno Heleno, Mie Hestbech and John Brodersen – attendants will be able to verify that scientific evidence shows that the benefits of testing may be lower than expected and that there are harms that are largely unrecognized by the public. The balance between benefits and harms of prevention depends on the magnitude (prevalence) of disease. This means that the role of a secondary prevention strategy (screening) needs to be reappraised, after introducing a primary prevention strategy (such as immunization).

Therefore, the participants in this workshop are invited to explore and discuss the clash between scientific evidence and the beliefs of the general public about preventive healthcare (in general) and cancer screening (in particular).

The session aims to clarify the distinc-

tions between the different levels of prevention: primary, secondary, tertiary and quaternary. It also intends to explain the consequences that each of these levels of prevention has on disease prevalence, the benefits and harms of commonly used preventive services (like screening programs), examine possible reasons for the enthusiasm that surrounds preventive healthcare services and, finally, describe the interaction between primary and secondary prevention, using the example of HPV vaccination and cervical cancer screening.

In terms of methodology, the workshop combines brief lectures and small group discussions, followed by global discussions. The lectures will provide a conceptual distinction between levels of prevention and a summary of the best current scientific evidence about the effects of the main cancer screening programs. This will be supplemented with three case studies, derived from the workshop authors' own research. Then, the participants will be invited to share, in small groups, the differences and similarities in the public perception of prevention across their countries.



Organized by the WONCA SIG on migrant care, international health and travel medicine

Workshop addresses crisis impact on primary care delivery for migrants

The WONCA Special Interest Group (WONCA - SIG) on migrant care, international health and travel medicine is organizing today, at 11h00 a.m., a workshop about the consequences of the current economic/political crisis on access to healthcare by migrants. Austerity measures adopted in many countries have translated into a reduction of global healthcare services and also of specific services which are vital to migrant populations, namely interpreter services. In addition to impaired access to healthcare, xenophobia and difficult living conditions further deteriorate migrants' health. Meanwhile, regional crises of a political/ethnic nature have originated large groups of refugees in recent times, people with specific health problems, something that is clearly visible in the ongoing epidemic of poliomyelitis in Syria, which threatens to spread to Syrian refugees in Turkey and several European countries. Conceptualized and developed by a large team of general practitioners/family doctors from the Netherlands, Greece, United Kingdom, Turkey, Ireland and Canada,

this workshop is based on the principle that “family physicians are usually the first to face these problems and should be aware of the impact of crisis on health”. Even so, “primary care offers unique possibilities to guarantee accessible quality care to all in the population, including vulnerable migrant groups”.

According to the authors, the workshop activities will start with short presentations about the health problems of Syrian refugees in Turkey and in the UK, as well as on the effects of the international crisis on access to healthcare for migrants in Greece. Afterwards, the participants will be invited to share their own experiences in this field.

During the second part of the workshop, the authors intend to discuss possible solutions to improve delivery of primary care to migrants and transform the way this issue is handled in medical schools. Examples of positive initiatives will be brought forward, namely a project of integrated care for vulnerable groups developed in Limerick (Ireland) and a health clinic for refugees set up in Quebec (Canada).

4 July, at 08h00 p.m

Conference Dinner at Pátio da Galé

Enjoy an informal, friendly and amusing dinner atmosphere! We have prepared a dinner event that mimics, in some ways, the festivities organized in the historical quarters and neighbourhoods of Lisbon, during the traditional celebrations in honour of the beloved St. Anthony, born in this city. This kind of dinner event, accompanied by music, dances and bright and colourful decorations, is best-known in Portugal as an “arraial”.

Venue Address:

Pátio da Galé, Praça do Comércio (Comércio Square)

The dinner venue is located on the right hand side of the square when facing the river.

Transport:

The best way to get to Pátio da Galé is by metro/underground. There is a Metro/Underground station at Praça do Comércio (Blue Line). A reusable transport card and tickets are available in vending machines, inside metro stations.

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Satellite Symposia

AstraZeneca launches debates centered around Opioid-induced constipation and gout

During the course of the 19th WONCA Europe Conference, the pharmaceutical company AstraZeneca is organising two satellite symposia, focused on two major clinical issues, with an serious impact on the health of European populations: the management of opioid-induced constipation (a significant problem when it comes to chronic patients) and gout, a disease that has been around for a long time and has been a constant worry for family doctors but that poses new challenges in present days

The firsts of these symposia is going to take place today, at 1h00 p.m. (Auditorium II) and its entitled “Opioid-induced constipation – Progress for patients”. This session is going to be chaired by Andrew Davies (Royal Surrey Hospital, Guildford, UK) who will also make a presentation, followed by contributions from Andrew Dickman (UK) and Jan Tack (University Hospital Leuven, Belgium), over questions like the real impact of the use of opioid in the development of constipation, the challenges associated with the beginning of opioid therapy and the new treatment options that have emerged recently to manage this debilitating side effect.

The second symposium organized by AstraZeneca is scheduled for tomorrow (July 4), at 1h00 p.m.(Auditorium II) and it is entitled “Gout – a chronic crystal disease”. It will be chaired by Elspeth Wise (Freeman Hospital, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne UK). The presentations will be done by Elspeth Wise, Tim Jansen (Radboud University Nijmegen Medical Center, Nijmegen, The Netherlands) and Fernando Perez-Ruiz (Hospital Universitario de Cruces, Vizcaya, Spain).

The subject of gout was selected for the symposium at WONCA since it is a chronic inflammatory arthritis of increasing prevalence, presents significant burden for patients and health systems, and there is a significant unmet need in managing the chronic nature of the disease. Chart reviews demonstrate that

many treated patients are still above target sUA levels of 6.0mg/dL as established for gout patients by guidelines like those issued by EULAR (European League Against Rheumatism) and ACR (American College of Rheumatology). It is the second most common form of arthritis overall (osteoarthritis is first), and is the leading cause of inflammatory arthritis, particularly in men. Treatment of gout has often focused on the acute flare and dietary recommendations, however gout is a chronic condition that requires long-term treatment to adequately control. It is caused by hyperuricemia (elevated serum uric acid levels), which lead to deposition of monosodium urate crystals in joints and tissues. Therefore, long term management of gout must consider not only the treatment of acute gout flares, but also include urate lowering therapies to reduce and prevent monosodium urate crystal deposits and control the often disabling signs and symptoms of gout. During the symposium, recent gout prevalence data will be presented and the audience will be informed of the recently revised EULAR gout treatment guidelines. This will be of interest to European primary care physicians given that these guidelines are based on scientific and clinical advances in the understanding and optimal treatment of gout. Finally, recent clinical data results will be presented that may have not yet been widely circulated to primary care audiences in Europe.

Book commemorates ten years of VdGM

10 years sailing, much more to discover...

As part of the 10th anniversary celebration program, the Vasco da Gama Movement (VdGM) released a book called “10 years sailing, much more to discover”.

Michael Kidd, president of WONCA World, declared during the official book launching session that this work constitutes “a wonderful present”.

During the revealing of this commemorative work, sponsored by the Portuguese Association of Family Medicine (APMGF), the president of WONCA Europe, Job Metsemakers, stated that the VdGM inspired many trainees and young family doctors, but also senior doctors, that were always very much impressed and inspired thanks to the energy demonstrated by VdGM members.

On the other hand, João Sequeira Carlos, president of APMGF and of the 19th WONCA Europe Conference (he was the leader of VdGM between 2007 and 2009) declared that “the legacy of VdGM is going to be maintained with the help of multiple generations of family doctors. Never forget that we can only build a future and live the present, to the fullest, if we know our past”.

The current president of VdGM, Harris Lygidakis, believes this commemorative book contains “diverse stories that are born in the midst our complex and heterogeneous continent. Nevertheless, there are two common points that bind these stories: a respectful look towards the past and a bouquet of wishes for the future”.



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Lisbon Stories

Feel the pulse of the city



If you truly want to know Lisbon, there is a «must do» list you cannot ignore. And at the top of that list is a stroll through downtown and historical neighbourhoods that surround the city's mighty castle and central squares. The historical neighbourhoods of central Lisbon are jam-packed with unique sights, sounds and smells and they are home to some of the more genuine Lisbon inhabitants. The history, architecture and people of these neighbourhoods are fundamental aspects of Lisbon's identity, and those who explore them will discover their own personal map. There are so many possibilities, don't let them get away! The Bairro Alto is one of the most delightful and attractive neighbourhoods in the city. The Bairro Alto boasts shops and bars and it is a place where people meet in an eclectic and multicultural atmosphere. To discover its streets, lanes and alleys, you must be prepared to walk and explore. Traditional restaurants nes-

tle alongside cosy bookshops; tea rooms serving signature cakes fight for attention against funky design shops and boutiques of the most respected Portuguese fashion designers. Bairro Alto is a unique experience within Lisbon, with a hidden secret around every corner. From Bairro Alto, stroll down to the Chiado, the sophisticated hub for the city's young people, artists and intellectuals. The Chiado is an area of iconic cafés including “A Brasileira”, art schools and theatres. The intrinsic beauty of the Chiado, and it's people – going about their daily lives –, makes the area what it is: intense. The Carmo area, next to the Chiado, has some of the most fascinating historical sites in the city, such as the Convent and Church of Carmo, which maintain their elegance and grandeur. Don't miss the Museu Arqueológico do Carmo, which houses a collection of artefacts from pre-historic, Roman, Medieval, Manueline, Renaissance and Baroque periods. Largo do Carmo was the

site of important events in the 1974 Revolution.

Carmo is connected to the Baixa (Downtown) by the Elevator of Santa Justa, another of Lisbon's icons. The Elevator, designed by a disciple of Gustave Eiffel, is open to the public and boasts impressive views over the downtown area and the river.

The Baixa is the city's traditional shopping district, where visitors can stroll around the streets and find dozens of shops offering a wide range of temptations. Rua Augusta is the main artery of the downtown area, leading north from Terreiro do Paço to the beautiful Rossio Square. Close to the castle, in the neighbourhood of Graça, is the Monastery of São Vicente de Fora, one of the most imposing and notable religious monuments in the city. It was built immediately after the city was recaptured from the Moors following a vow made by King Afonso Henriques to St. Vincent.

Also in the immediate surroundings of the city's castle is the Alfama District. Alfama is Lisbon's most emblematic quarter and one of the most rewarding for walkers and photographers, thanks to its medieval alleys and outstanding views.

Because its foundation is dense bedrock, it survived the 1755 earthquake, and a walk through this old-fashioned residential neighbourhood is now a step back in time. It is a village within a city, still made up of narrow streets, tiny squares, churches, and whitewashed houses with tile panels and wrought-iron balconies adorned with flower pots, drying laundry and caged birds.

It was settled by the Romans and Visigoths (it was also an important Jewish quarter in the 15th century), but it was the Moors who gave the district its atmosphere and name (alhama means springs or bath, a reference to the hot springs found in the area). Alfama has influenced poets and novelists, and although Bairro Alto is the city's traditional Fado quarter, it is Alfama that has always been the inspiration for Fado songs and is becoming just as popular when it comes to Fado Houses.

The district has an intangible quality that needs to be experienced to be truly appreciated. The best way to get to know it is to get a little lost (something almost impossible to avoid) and wander around, admiring the postcard-perfect views, visiting the churches, and walking up to the castle for the most breathtaking panorama of the city and the greatest sunsets.