

## The 8th EAPC Congress *The Hague, the Netherlands, 2–5 April 2003*

Preparations for the 8th EAPC Congress are well under way. The Scientific Committee has chosen to focus the plenary sessions on nine main topics:

- *How much palliative care does a society need?* Kathleen Foley, USA
- *Are the ethics of palliative care culturally dependent?* Diego Garcia, Spain
- *Are we killing off morphine?* Franco De Conno, Italy
- *The multidisciplinary team: fact or fiction?* Jessica Corner, UK
- *Unpacking fatigue: the pathophysiology of subjective symptoms.* Jon Håvard Loge, Norway
- *Why (not) legalise euthanasia and physician-assisted suicide?* Henk ten Have, the Netherlands
- *Palliative care and geriatrics: the best of both worlds?* Bernard Wary, France
- *From the laboratory to the clinic: exploring pain at the molecular level.* Gavril Pasternak, USA
- *Sources of inspiration: spiritual and existential issues.* Michael Kearney, Ireland.

The plenary talks will be followed by discussion panel sessions, which will give both the speakers and the audience the opportunity to discuss topics in more detail. A reporter will give a formal response to the plenary talk and two independent specialists will then give their statements on the issue. We hope that this initiative will induce more lively discussion at the conference.

A new addition to the programme will be site visits. Small groups will be able to see Dutch palliative care in practice. The purpose is to inform congress members about standards and development in palliative care in the

Netherlands and to offer workshops on the spot about a specific theme, offering the unique opportunity to exchange professional experiences informally. The participants will be taken by bus to the various hospices, nursing homes and hospitals. The visits are organised with the support of the Dutch Ministry of Health Welfare and Sports.

The congress will follow the traditional outline of teaching sessions at a basic and advanced level, seminars and symposia, oral presentations of selected abstracts and a large poster viewing session. The congress will include several discussion sessions on the posters that will be pre-selected by chosen reviewers. We will also offer the participants the opportunity to meet the professors and experts in palliative care. And last but not least we have also allowed our Collective Members to organise 'national' meetings focused on initiatives and developments in their own country during the congress. They will be held in the native language, if requested by the national organisation.

You are invited to offer your valuable contribution to the conference by submitting one or more abstracts on topics that you find most stimulating. Thanks to your co-operation we wish to succeed in fulfilling the aims of the congress: to update healthcare providers and volunteers from Europe and overseas on the latest developments in palliative care and to improve its growth throughout Europe.

For further information, please visit our website ([www.eapcnet.org](http://www.eapcnet.org)).

We look forward to seeing you at The Hague in April 2003.  
*Stein Kaasa, EAPC President and Chair of the Scientific Committee; Frans Baar and André Rhebergen on behalf of the Organising Committee*

## News from the Research Network

The paper, *Morphine and alternative opioids in cancer pain: the EAPC recommendations* by the Expert Working Group of the Research Network of the EAPC, which was published in the *British Journal of Cancer* 2001; **84**: 587–593, is now available online in English, French, Italian and Swedish. The German and Spanish versions will be ready soon.

The Research Steering Committee is pleased to announce that the results of a further expert working group have been published. *Pain measurement tools and methods in clinic research in palliative care: recommendations of an expert working group of the EAPC* by Augusto Caraceni, Nathan Cherny, Robin Fainsinger, Stein Kaasa, Philippe Poulain, Lukas Radbruch, Franco De Conno and the Steering Committee members of the EAPC Research Network, recently appeared in the *Journal of Pain Symptom Management* 2002, **23**(3): 239–255.

The EAPC cross-sectional survey will soon be published. The group is now in the process of finalising several manuscripts using the data. The EAPC Research Network would like to once more thank all the collaborators for their hard work in collecting the data. The results will be presented during the EAPC Research Network conference in Lyon, 23–25 May 2002.

## EAPC and euthanasia

The final meeting of the task force was held in Sion, Switzerland, on 14–15 March 2002. The task force has prepared a draft statement, which will be discussed with the EAPC Board of Directors at their next meeting. Future

plans regarding the EAPC's position on euthanasia will also be discussed.

## Election news

During the last meeting of the EAPC Board of Directors, preparations for the election of the next Board of Directors (2003–07) were discussed. The Board agreed to establish an election committee. The motivation behind this proposal is to give members an opportunity to take a more active part in the preparation of the next election.

The election committee will compose of two members from Board members who are not standing for re-election and three members will be proposed from the EAPC members. Members were invited to nominate candidates for the committee and the nominations were approved by the General Assembly on 26 April 2002 in Granada, Spain during the IV Congress of the Spanish Society of Palliative Care (SECPAL) – an EAPC Collective Member.

## Voices for Hospices 2003

Choirs and music groups, together with hospices, are invited to participate in the world's largest simultaneous singing event which will take place on 4 October 2003. Voices for Hospices 2003 will be the fifth event of its kind. Its aims are to celebrate the work of hospices and palliative care units everywhere, to raise awareness of the universal need for palliative care services and to provide hospices with a high profile opportunity to raise funds for their work by organising their own musical performances under the umbrella of Voices for Hospices. The success of the last event held in 2000 was phenomenal – no fewer than 43 countries participated and over £1 million was raised.

Concert organisers are free to create a concert programme to suit their local situation, but to create a sense of unity, all concerts should have a number of common features:

- Concerts should feature the voice, either singing and/or spoken
- Concerts can either be a 'come and sing' variety or a concert performance
- They should ideally have an international flavour
- A short poem/song will be provided to be performed at all concerts
- Concerts should take place on 4 October 2003 and start at 19.30 local time (where possible).

If you are interested in organising a concert, please visit:

[www.voicesforhospices.org](http://www.voicesforhospices.org) or contact Alexander Williams, UK Co-ordinator Voices for Hospices, PO Box 217, East Moseley, Surrey, KT8 1WH, UK (tel: +44 (0)20 8979 2380; fax: +44 (0)20 8783 0697; email: [vfhuk@lineone.net](mailto:vfhuk@lineone.net)) for concerts in the UK. For all other concerts, please contact Michael Mackenzie, International Co-ordinator for Hospices, 16a Turle Road, London, N4 3LZ, UK (tel/fax: +44 (0)20 7281 8376; email: [mmacke2568@aol.com](mailto:mmacke2568@aol.com)).

## £70 million for palliative care

The largest single investment in palliative care for children in England has been announced as part of a £70 million lottery initiative to support people coping with life-limiting illnesses.

The scheme – funded by the New Opportunities Fund – will ease the burden for carers of all age groups through a combination of home-based care, residential respite and bereavement services for children and adults who have experienced the death of a child.

The two-pronged scheme is designed to fund the development and extension

of existing palliative care services for adults and children, particularly in areas with low access to community palliative care teams. Forty-eight million pounds will go to developing children's palliative care while £22 million will go to the adult side to ensure that more people with cancer and other life-threatening conditions can access a wider range of services.

This funding is a welcome step forward for palliative care in England and should help to ease the burden of care shouldered by carers.

## Request for help

We are currently undertaking two systematic reviews, one of oxycodone in cancer-related pain and the other of methadone in cancer-related pain (PaPaS Group of the Cochrane Collaboration).

The reviews will use all identified randomised, controlled trials of either oxycodone or methadone in cancer pain, given in any dose and by any route and compared with placebo or another analgesic drug. We intend to include both published and unpublished studies.

If you are aware of any unpublished trials or data only published in the 'grey' literature (for example, conference proceedings) we would be grateful if you would inform us by email:

[Colette.Reid@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:Colette.Reid@bristol.ac.uk) for information about oxycodone or [alexander@doctors.org.uk](mailto:alexander@doctors.org.uk) for information about methadone. Alternatively, please write to us at the Department of Palliative Medicine, Bristol Haematology & Oncology Centre, Horfield Road, Bristol, BS2 8ED, UK.

Thank you in advance for your assistance in this project.

*Colette Reid; Alexander Nicholson, Specialist Registrars in Palliative Medicine, Bristol Haematology & Oncology Centre, Bristol, UK -*

We would like to thank our official sponsors for 2002:

