



Website launched to provide one-stop resource on breakthrough pain

A website dedicated to breakthrough pain (www.breakthroughpain.eu) was launched at the 10th Congress of the EAPC. The website, sponsored by Nycomed, is overseen by an independent editorial board consisting of Dr Marilène Filbet (France), Dr Andrew Davies (UK) and Dr Lukas Radbruch (Germany).

The aim of the website is to provide a one-stop resource on all aspects of breakthrough (episodic) pain. It is still at an early stage and further content will be added over the next few months. The main language will be English, but it is envisaged that there will be some content in other major European languages.

The editorial board is seeking extra content, particularly new information that relates to any aspect of breakthrough pain. If you would like to contribute to the website, please contact Andrew Davies ■ Andrew.Davies@rmh.nhs.uk

The 10th EAPC Congress in Budapest proves a success

The 10th Congress of the European Association for Palliative Care (EAPC) was held in Budapest, Hungary, from 7–9 June. It is the first time that such a large and high-level event on palliative care has been held in Eastern Europe.

With our slogan, 'Connecting Diversity', we created the opportunity to show the creativity and diversity that exists across Europe. The Scientific Committee and the local Organising Committee strived to create a congress to meet the expectations and needs of all participants. We were honoured by

The Angelus Moldova building in Moldova's capital city, Chisinau



László Sólyom, President of Hungary, who formally opened the congress.

In total, there were 1,997 participants from 67 countries. There were 217 oral presentations, including 11 plenaries, which were delivered in more than 80 different sessions and workshops. In addition, more than 750 posters were presented during the three days.

Budapest is a beautiful city, and we wanted to ensure that this event left participants with special memories to take home. Apart from the scientific programme itself, the performance of sand artist Ferenc Cakó during the opening ceremony and the special dance-theatre performance that took place during the closing ceremony made sure of this.

A further attraction of the congress was the art exhibition, 'Connecting Diversity – Bridges', which conveyed the cultural aspects of hospice and palliative care and expressed the struggles and rewards of working in the field through the symbol of a bridge or the free association of ideas ■

For further information, and to read László Sólyom's opening address, go to: <http://www.eapcnet.org/congresses/Budapest2007/Budapest2007.htm>
Katalin Hegedus, Chair of the local Organising Committee, President of the Hungarian Hospice-Palliative Association

Moldovan hospice for cancer patients about to celebrate its sixth birthday

The Charity Foundation for Public Health 'Angelus Moldova' was founded in Moldova in 2000 as an independent, non-governmental, non-political and not-for-profit organisation, whose main goal was to create a new system of medicosocial and psycho-emotional support for patients with incurable cancer and their families.

The Hospice Angelus has been in operation as part of the Foundation's project since November 2001. A mobile team provides a palliative care service to patients in their homes, over the telephone and at the hospice's

office. The team includes three full-time doctors and a social worker. Other specialists, including psychologists, nurses and clergymen, provide their services to patients on a voluntary basis.

Patients are provided with medications. In addition, the hospice provides medical accessories such as stoma bags, catheters, syringes, dressings, walkers, wheelchairs and orthopaedic mattresses. There is a great shortage of such accessories in Moldova and only a few patients have unlimited access to them.

The foundation and the hospice are located in Moldova's capital city, Chisinau, which has a population of around 780,000. The hospice covers the entire area of Chisinau and its surrounding suburbs as there are no other organisations providing this kind of service within the city. The hospice serves 80 to 100 patients and their families each year.

The Foundation also provides education in palliative care both for medical professionals and the general public. It has held many events. These include two seminars on the development of volunteering programmes, a seminar on psycho-emotional support for incurable patients, three basic courses in palliative care for Moldova's doctors and nurses, two national conferences and 32 one-day seminars disseminating information on palliative care.

The Foundation has also held fundraising activities, including 'Buy a Brick', three charity concerts and a charity auction, and has installed three collection boxes in the capital.

During the time it has been running, the charity has laid down the basis of palliative care and hospice service in the capital, disseminating it throughout the Moldovan republic through educational programmes and patient consultations. It has raised public awareness of patients with incurable cancer and palliative care ■

Natalia Carafizi, Senior Medical Coordinator of the Hospice Service, Charity Foundation

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Collaboration on research into family carers moves a step forward

Family carers of people receiving palliative care should be offered optimal support from healthcare professionals. However, there has been a dearth of intervention studies and it is not yet clear how best to meet their needs. Also, it seems that only a small number of researchers are focusing specifically on family carers in palliative care and there are limited opportunities for funding for such research.

In June 2006 a meeting was held in Venice, Italy, at the European Association for Palliative Care (EAPC) Research Congress to seek consensus about establishing an International Palliative Care Family-Carer Research Collaboration (IPCFRC). Around 35 researchers from several countries attended and endorsed the initiative. Outcomes of the inaugural meeting were published in this journal.¹

The aim of the IPCFRC is to develop a strategic approach to research planning by establishing international partnerships and promoting information exchange.

A steering committee has been established to guide the developmental phase of this important initiative, with representatives from a variety of disciplines and countries.

The second face-to-face meeting of the IPCFRC took place at the 10th EAPC Congress in Budapest, with the aim of confirming strategies for moving to the next phase of our collaboration's development. Topics for discussion included seed-funding, website development, constitution, communication links and membership ■
For more information, please contact Associate Professor Peter Hudson, Director,

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1. Hudson P, Payne S. An international collaboration for family carer research. *Europ J Palliat Care* 2006; **13**: 135.

Is the increasing number of opioid analgesic deaths due to pain management?

In a recent article in *Pharmacoeconomics and Drug Safety*, researchers from the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, report on the tragic increase in drug poisoning deaths involving opioid analgesics.¹ The authors link the rising opioid mortality with increasing medical use of opioid analgesics for more aggressive pain management.

In an adjoining commentary, David Joranson and Aaron Gilson call attention to the risks of using correlations to make causal statements that implicate pain management.² They review significant evidence of non-medical sources of diversion of opioid analgesics, including millions of doses of prescription opioid analgesics that have been stolen from pharmacies before being prescribed.³ Recommendations are offered for a public health examination that can inform effective interventions ■
You can find the whole article and the commentaries on the following link: <http://www.painpolicy.wisc.edu/commentary.htm>

References

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2. Joranson DE, Gilson AM. Wanted: a public health approach to prescription opioid abuse and diversion (Editorial). *Pharmacoeconomics and Drug Saf* 2006; **15**: 632–634.
3. Fishman SM. Commentary in response to Paulozzi et al. Prescription drug abuse and safe pain management. *Pharmacoeconomics and Drug Saf* 2006; **15**: 628–631.