



Newsletter September 2008

Dear members,

With this Newsletter the board wants to inform you on the MAMH conference in Liverpool (postponed), a meeting in Brussels, our annual General Meeting, a visit to Romania and the education of doctors in intellectual disability medicine in Germany.

The MAMH conference

Unfortunately it has not been possible to organise a MAMH conference in Liverpool in the Autumn of 2008. It is our intention to reschedule this for spring 2009. The theme of the conference will be developmental psychiatry for children and young people with intellectual disability. In order to keep conference costs to a minimum the majority of speakers will be drawn from the UK – we would welcome, however, suggestions for speakers and/or topics from our members.

The EU

On January 18th we met in Brussels with Mr. Johan ten Geuzendam, head of the EC Unit for Integration of People with Disabilities, Directorate-General for Employment, Social affairs and Equal Opportunities. October 10th we will meet Ms. Nathalie Chaze, European Commission Directorate-General for

Health and Consumer Protection, Unit C5 Health strategy and health systems, and Mrs Fiona Kinsman, EMPL G/2, Equality, Action against Discrimination, Legal Questions.

We will discuss inequalities in medical care for people with intellectual disabilities, how to reduce these inequalities and which role the European Union can play in attaining this goal.

General Meeting: November 22nd

Usually our Annual General Meeting is linked to a conference. Since the conference in Liverpool has to be postponed, and nevertheless we have to organise a general meeting for our members, we thought it might be a good idea to let this meeting take place in Switzerland. As we reported before, this year, our Swiss colleagues have established an association of physicians who work with people with intellectual disabilities: the Schweizerische Arbeitsgemeinschaft von Ärzten für Menschen mit geistiger oder mehrfacher Behinderung. Having our meeting in Zurich gives us the opportunity to meet our Swiss colleagues.

The following program was planned:

Zurich, Saturday November 22nd:

10.30 - 12.00 general meeting

12.00 - 13.00 lunch

13.00 - 15.00 presentations (on health programmes, investigations, organisation of medical care). All boardmembers will do a presentation, all other members present are invited too, to inform the audience on their activities.

Dr. Dorn offers us a visit to his centre including the home for residential care. The agenda of this meeting (and the exact meeting place) will be sent to you by email at the end of October.

The items on the agenda will be as usual: minutes of the last meeting, report of the

president, report of the treasurer, and topics like: a new strategic plan of MAMH, contacts with the European Union, contacts in Eastern European countries, Educational training of doctors in intellectual disability medicine.

Visit to Romania

In November, Frans Scholte, as president of MAMH, will be joining a mission to Sibiu in Romania. This is in the context of a Romanian-Dutch project “Pro Care” that includes, under a common aim defined according to the local social needs, several public and private institutions in Romania and The Netherlands: the General Directorate for Social Welfare and Child Protection in the county of Sibiu, the County Council of Sibiu, The Public Service for Social Welfare in the Municipality of Sibiu, Sion International Foundation Romania (“Casa Luminii”) and the Dutch platform of social institutions working under the guidance of a long-standing partner: the Municipality of Deventer. The general aim of the project is to improve the quality of life in the social institutions for disabled persons (children and adults) in the county of Sibiu, by increasing the knowledge, skills and efficiency of the personnel working in social institutions for mentally and physically disabled persons.

Our (MAMH) goal is to meet the physicians who are connected to the Romanian institutions and to discuss with them the medical care for these persons in the context of the Romanian health care system. We also want to talk about the needs and wishes of the Romanian colleagues towards cooperation with MAMH.

Frans Scholte will be accompanied by Talitha Van den Heuvel, a Dutch member of MAMH who lives for two years in Tirgu Mures Romania and already speaks

the language and knows the Romanian situation.

In the next newsletter we will report our findings.

Curriculum ID-medicine in Germany

The German association of physicians for individuals with intellectual disabilities (ID) and multiple handicaps (Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Ärzte für Menschen mit geistiger oder mehrfacher Behinderung, BAG) went through a long-winding process to develop a curriculum in ID-medicine and will start with the first teaching units of a „basic course“ in November.

The curriculum is addressed to physicians of any speciality and consists of a theoretical part (50 units à 45 minutes) and a clinical traineeship (5 days).

It comprises aspects of communication (approach to a person with an ID), the causes of ID, and pathways of diagnosis, social and public healthcare aspects, frequently occurring clinical problems (e.g. gastroesophageal reflux, cerebral palsy, behavioural and emotional problems), as well as specific aspects of different specialities (e.g. gynecology, dermatology).

For many years the official German organisations of physicians (Ärzttekammern) did not pay much attention to ID-aspects of medicine. We recognized, however, a substantial change in the mindset during the last year. The president of the Bundesärztekammer himself assured his support to introduce and spread our curriculum.

Though this is very encouraging we will remain, for the time being, far apart from making ID-medicine a speciality or at least a sub-speciality in Germany.

Peter Martin

Finnish Association celebrates its 25th anniversary

Greetings from Finland!

This picture was taken in September 1982.

A group of physicians working in institutions for intellectually disabled decided to found an association. Since 1982 many of us are retired or past away and many institutions are empty. I (sitting in the left corner) was 29 years old and after two children and a short period in a health care centre, I started in this most interesting field of medicine. Today there are about 100 members representing different medical backgrounds: child neurologists, psychiatrists, neurologists, paediatricians, clinical geneticists and GP's. About a third of us have special competence in intellectual disability medicine. Now, after four children and two grandchildren and with 27 years experience in this field I work in a central hospital serving patients, many of whom I have known for over 20 years or for their entire life.



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