

World conference on general practice/family medicine

THE Seventh World Conference on Family Medicine and General Practice was held from 1 to 8 October 1976 in Toronto, Canada.

The conference was organized by WONCA, the World Organization of Colleges and Academies of General Practice and Family Medicine, and the hosts were the College of Family Physicians of Canada and the Ontario Chapter of that college.

The meeting was held in the Sheraton centre, a skyscraper consisting of a luxury hotel, many conference rooms, and a modern shopping complex. The conditions were excellent and enabled several different meetings to be held at the same time with simultaneous translations available in English and French.

Those attending the conference were able to choose from a wide variety of events and topics, beginning with working breakfasts at 07.30 hours, followed by a series of clinical sessions in the early part of the morning, and a choice of at least three sets of topics in the later part of the morning. This choice was repeated between sessions held in the afternoon. With such a rich variety to choose from, it is not possible to report on individual sessions, except to say that I found the clinical topics providing continuing education for general practitioners well balanced, and that there was a good variety of sessions on all aspects of education, from undergraduate to postgraduate training.

The countries represented were: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Egypt, Hong Kong, Iceland, India, Ireland, Israel, Jamaica, Malaysia, Mexico, Netherlands, Netherlands Antilles, New Zealand, Norway, Pakistan, Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, UK, USA, USSR, West Germany, and Yugoslavia.

Officers

The officers elected at the end of the conference for the next two years were: President, Dr Stuart Carne, UK; Honorary Secretary/Treasurer, Dr David Game, Australia; President-elect, Dr E. Kowalewski, Baltimore, USA; Immediate Past President, Dr D. Rice, Canada; Speaker, Dr B. Fehler, South Africa; Executive, Dr Wong of Singapore, Dr Robles of Mexico, Dr Naqui of Pakistan.

Bibliography

Among the highlights of the meeting was the session chaired by Professor McWhinney, from the Department of Family Medicine at the University of Western Ontario, Canada, who in close collaboration with Miss Dorothy Fitzgerald, the Librarian of the College of Family Physicians of Canada, was negotiating with WHO and the National Library of Medicine in the USA to promote a world bibliography of general practice, and a considerable extension of the indexing of general practitioner journals throughout the world.

Other programmes

An attractive feature of the meeting was the arrangement whereby several business meetings were held during working lunches throughout the conference. These included a meeting of the Ontario Medical Association Section on General Practice, the annual meeting of the Ontario Chapter of the College of Family Physicians of Canada, the annual meeting of the Canadian College, and on the last day the annual assembly of the World Organization, at which the new officers were elected.

It has been decided that in future there will be regional meetings of WONCA in different parts of the world, so that countries sharing common geographical problems can work more closely together.

The final meeting

At the final meeting Dr Best, famed for his discovery of insulin in 1922, addressed the meeting and recounted in detail some of his experiences while making his discovery. He received a presentation sword from the Wilkinson Sword Company and was warmly applauded by the conference.

Next meeting

The next conference will be held at Montreux, Switzerland, in May 1978.

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*See editorial.