



REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

BEME Workshop and Website

On 26 October 2000, during the Network's annual meeting in Bahrain, Hossam Hamdy (Dean, Arabian Gulf University School of Medicine), Kameshwar Prasad (Professor, Neurology, All India Institute of Medical Sciences), and Hilliard Jason (Editor, *Education for Health*, Clinical Professor of Family Medicine, University of Colorado) conducted a workshop on Best Evidence Medical Education (BEME).

BEME is a rapidly expanding international effort to find, evaluate, coordinate and disseminate the best evidence that can be found in support of decisions that need to be made when planning or implementing educational programmes in the health professions. The overall effort is now being encouraged and shepherded by 'The BEME Collaboration', which is a group of individuals and institutions committed to promoting Best Evidence Medical Education by:

- disseminating information that helps medical teachers, institutions and all concerned with medical education to make decisions on the basis of the best evidence available;
- producing appropriate systematic reviews of medical education research findings and analyses that reflect the best evidence available and meet the needs of users; and
- creating a culture of seeking and using Best Evidence Medical Education among teachers, institutions and national bodies.

At the Bahrain workshop, 35 health professions educators from many countries joined in reviewing the current state of BEME, its potential benefits, and the limitations of this approach. Similarities with and differences from EBM (evidence-based medicine) were explored, the idea of using a template/algorithm to help guide the evaluation of educational research was introduced, and all participants were encouraged to promote further exploration of BEME in their home institutions.

More information about the BEME Collaboration is available at the following website: <<http://www.bemecollaboration.org>>. This site, which is still in the early stages of development, already offers information on the Collaboration's activities, an up-to-date bibliography, and links to many related resources.

Under the same leadership, a fuller, pre-conference workshop on BEME will be offered in conjunction with the Network's next annual meeting, in Londrina, Brazil, on 20 October 2001.

PBL at Tokyo Women's Medical University

Since 1990, Tokyo Women's Medical University (TWMU) has been using a problem-based learning (PBL) tutorial system. Ours was the first school in Japan to do so. This PBL programme was incorporated into an interdisciplinary, block-wise curriculum. About 30% of the class hours throughout the four years of pre-clinical education are allocated to PBL (including unscheduled time for individual self-learning).

Fortunately, we were able to develop the necessary infrastructure for the PBL programme. A Tutorial Committee (17 members representing all six blocks) serves as the steering committee for the PBL curriculum, and it also manages the tutor-training courses we offer. These include a two-day training programme and a two-week co-tutor course. To date, 1251 tutors have been trained, including a small number of participants from outside our school. The committee also coordinates the assignments of 192 tutors per year. The individual Block Educational Committees (each with 10–15 members from related fields) design the case sheets, the case summaries, and the tutor guides (which are meticulously prepared, usually consisting of 20–40 pages). These guides are especially helpful for non-content-expert tutors. The submitted candidate cases from each block are again scrutinized, coordinated from the inter-block perspective, revised, and authorized before being used by the Case Coordination Committee (which meets monthly and involves 11 committee members plus the authors of the case). The 16 tutors of each block meet once every two weeks with major members of the Block Educational Committee and the expert PBL tutorial educators. This Tutor Liaison Conference is held over lunch. Each tutor reports on the learning process and the activities of his/her group, requesting advice when necessary. The tutors also receive briefings from the author(s) of the next case and may ask questions. The formative and summative assessments for each case (from the tutor and individual students) are submitted to the Block Educational Committees. When necessary, feedback is provided with the help of a Tutorial Advisor or a Consultant for Students.

Our PBL curriculum seems to have worked rather well in these 10 years, and we are now gathering evidence of the efficacy of this innovation. A recent change in our PBL tutorial approach is the addition of a stepwise introduction of the factors needed to prepare students for problem solving in clinical medicine as they proceed from their junior to senior classes.

Faculty members of TWMU have served as advocates of PBL throughout Japan and in Korea. During the past 10 years I have been asked by 41 of the 80 Japanese medical schools to introduce their faculties to our approach to PBL. Many of them have now implemented their own PBL programmes, with a range of approaches and different levels of involvement at different schools.

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Warm Thanks to our Reviewers ... and an Invitation

Education for Health, like all professional journals, couldn't exist without the contributions of peer reviewers. With deep gratitude we are pleased to acknowledge those below who in 2000 generously contributed their judgements to our core task of deciding which of the manuscripts we received should be considered for publication. Our reviewers also helped us provide guidance to our authors so that they could undertake constructive revisions of their submissions, which most papers need. To all our reviewers we convey a heartfelt 'Thank You!'.

If you are an experienced academic writer and would like to give something back to your profession, we invite you to consider applying to be a reviewer for our journal. For more information, please visit our journal web site, at: <<http://www.the-network.org/efh>>. To receive an application form, please send a request to our journal office, at: <efh@network.unimaas.nl>.

Hilliard Jason, MD, EdH
 Editor, *Education for Health*

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The 16th WONCA World Congress of Family Doctors

Family Medicine: The Leading Edge¹

13–17 May 2001, International Convention Centre, Durban, South Africa

In your plans for 2001 don't forget the 16th World Congress of Family Doctors in May. This prestigious international medical congress, hosted by the South African Academy of Family Practice, is being held in South Africa for the first time.

The main reasons for attending the WONCA Congress are to update your skills, gain CPD points and renew friendships. This congress also offers an ideal opportunity for doctors to bring their families, not only to enjoy the hospitality of the country and its many tourist attractions, but to make the most of the innovative and informative Accompanying Persons' Programme.

Scientific Programme

The Scientific Programme is central to the World Congress. The daily plenary sessions will be addressed by well-known experts and will deal with issues faced by medical practitioners. Dr David Satcher, the United States Surgeon General, will speak at the first plenary session. Clinical practice sessions will offer workshops and seminars on disease updates, clinical skills, therapeutics, respiratory medicine, geriatric care, sexually transmitted diseases, environmental and occupational health, as well as other timely topics. There will also be workshops on evidence-based medicine and sessions for those involved in research and education. There is a special one-day track focusing on rural and remote medicine and another on women's health.

Social Programme

The 16th World Congress has something for everyone. On Monday evening local practitioners will host their international colleagues to dinner at home. If you prefer, you can attend a delightful evening of music, including supper in Durban's famous Botanic Gardens. Tuesday night is Carnival Street market night at the Beachfront. There'll be a wide range of stalls with beautiful local crafts and a

variety of local cuisine, plus local entertainers. The Traditional Dinner will be a memorable evening of Zulu culture and cuisine.

Accompanying Persons Programme

We've planned an innovative, informative and entertaining programme for accompanying persons. The programme offers a fun introduction to aspects of South African life and culture, including flora, fauna, marine life, Zulu pottery and beadwork, traditional music and, of course, gold. Registered accompanying delegates are invited to attend the Opening Ceremony and cocktail function on Sunday evening, the Opening Plenary Session on Monday morning and the Closing Plenary Session on Thursday.

For more information or to register, please visit the WONCA Congress web site at <<http://www.wonca2001.org.za>> or e-mail the South African Academy of Family Practice at <saafpncb@saafpncb.co.za>.

Garth Brink

Convenor

16th WONCA World Congress of Family Doctors

Note

1. According to the best available evidence.