



NEWSLETTER

@ Newsletter from The **E**uropean **S**ociety of **C**ontraception

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Editorial

Dear friends,

The European Society of Contraception (ESC) has entered a very dynamic stage in its existence. As well as an increasing number of members, the interest from national societies dealing with contraception and reproductive health care to affiliate to our society is steadily growing. International organizations, such as FIGO, have also shown interest in collaboration. Slowly but surely the medical and popular press finds its way to the ESC, when dealing with events in our domain, for the necessary professional feedback. The number of manuscripts submitted to our Journal (EJCRHC) increased by 26% over the last year and hopefully the impact factor, which is normally updated in July, will also improve.

Our biennial congresses are growing in popularity. In Prague in 2008 we hope to beat the record set at the last Congress in Istanbul in 2006, attended by 1,833 participants. The upcoming Seminar 'From abortion to contraception' in Bucharest (21 and 22 September 2007) looks very promising. Keep in mind that attendance is free for ESC members! The four different Expert Groups, established last year, are coming into operation step by step. The Expert Group on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Education launched their web-library on sexual education (read more on this amazing initiative elsewhere in this Newsletter) and we urge you to use this teaching tool and to help us in expanding the library with your own materials. The Internal Scientific Committee of the ESC is working to set up sessions during other related congresses to which the ESC has been invited. We refer you to the congress calendar section in the Newsletter for more information. Plenty of other projects are in the pipeline, mainly focussing on science, training and education. Being a partner of the Standing Committee for Training and Assessment of the EBCOG (European Board and College of Obstetrics and Gynaecology) and taking into account the aims of our Society, it is our global project to teach, to spread the knowledge and to conduct research.

Several initiatives have been started to optimise communication with members and non-members. The website already offers a huge package of information but the intention is to switch (for congress presentations) from text materials to streaming video, synchronising the PowerPoint presentation with the lecture and the image/voice of the speaker. Furthermore, members now have online access to their personal membership record. This will allow you to upload your own contribution online and to edit your address and other relevant details yourself, if needed. The third IT project is related to the Journal and will facilitate online submission, assignment of reviewers, online peer review and associated dialogue with authors and referees. This central system will be working within a month.

It is obvious that the above 'good news' report was only achieved thanks to the tremendous efforts of many colleagues with a remarkable dedication to the European Society of Contraception. Thank you so much!

We would like to thank you, as a member, as well. We greatly appreciate your time and participation in sharing with us your knowledge and experience of contraception and reproductive health care.

You should be aware that the ESC offers you as a member, plenty of opportunities. Have a look at the Rules of Procedure at www.contraception-esc.com for a better understanding. You will find that you can apply for support from the ESC for projects that are in accordance with the aims of the Society. You also can apply for a grant to organise an event in our field and you can even (why not?) submit a bid to organise the Congress in 2012.

Although there is still a lot to do in the coming years, we are on the right track.

Warm regards,

David Cibula
ESC President

Olga Loeber
ESC Secretary General
Editor-in-Chief ESC Newsletter

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ESC donation for humanitarian activities

Medard Lech, Poland, ESC Treasurer

During the last ESC Board of Directors Meeting (Istanbul – May – 2006), the former ESC President Carmen Coll proposed to invest a certain percentage of our profits in developing countries, studies, humanitarian activities etc. The majority of the Board members had no objections.

Executing this idea, the Executive Committee discussed this matter in depth, and it was decided to use a 1% of the surplus of last ESC Congress towards a concrete project in reproductive health. It was also stated that the projects subsidised should be Europe oriented, and preference would be given to provide materials (contraceptives, vaccines, AIDS medication, HIV prophylaxis) rather than money. It was proposed that Medard Lech (the ESC Treasurer) have the mandate to propose a project to be ratified by the ESC Board of Directors. After the detailed study of the several humanitarian aids projects in Europe, it was found that most valuable projects are coming from the internationally well recognised organisation “Save the Children”. The most valuable - among their projects – seems to be “Bosnia & Herzegovina Children Institutional Care Project”. The selection was made, although this project is not directly related to the reproductive health, but - below - you may find the reason why this particular project was selected (the final decision will need to be ratified by the ESC Board of Directors).

War, poverty and unemployment in Bosnia & Herzegovina have led to higher numbers of children being placed in institutions like residential care homes. It is estimated that between 3,000 and 3,500 children are growing up without parental care, a large number of whom are placed in residential care, but is much better for children to grow up in a secure family environment. The project is to support the development of foster parents association, and promoting the development of fostering as an alternative to institutional care for children deprived of parental care. Through this project, it is planned to recruit new foster families and provide them with training and support for adequate placement and care of children without parental care.

News from Poland

Medard Lech, Warsaw - ESC Treasurer

Training for lawyers on how to take reproductive rights cases to the ECHR.



As is very well known, Poland is among the countries where abortion law is very restrictive. It happens that even in the eligible cases, the execution of the abortion is very difficult (most of the public hospitals refuse to perform abortions). Most recently the Polish Federation for Women and Family Planning and the Warsaw University Law Clinic have organised a capacity-building training for Polish lawyers. The four-day session trained 15 lawyers on how to take reproductive rights cases to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR). Throughout Europe, reproductive rights advocates are finding that the ECHR has tremendous potential to advance reproductive rights in the region. In fact,

one case currently pending before the Court may do just that. *Tysiacy v. Poland* centers on a Polish woman who is severely visually impaired and was denied an abortion that would have prevented further irreversible damage to her eyesight. While abortion is legally restricted in Poland, it is permitted to avert threats to a pregnant woman's physical health, such as the one the applicant faced.

Proposed amendment to constitution threaten's women's rights

One of the Vice Prime Ministers of Poland, has recently called for a Constitutional amendment to “protect the life of every human being from the moment of conception.” Currently, the Constitution is similar to almost all constitutions in Europe in that it protects the right to life. Extending this protection to the fetus threatens to further restrict and could potentially ban all abortions in Poland. Poland's current law permits abortion only to save a woman's health and life, in cases of fetal impairment, and when the pregnancy is a result of a crime. The Vice Prime Minister is also President of the conservative League of Polish Families (LPR), a political party that has consistently pushed to ban abortion in all circumstances.

Note on abortion in Portugal

Teresa Bombas, Board Member Portugal

Until 1984 the practice of abortion was punishable in Portugal under all circumstances. It was on this date that abortion was legalized for specific cases where there was a danger of death or serious and irreversible injury to the physical or psychological health of the woman, in cases of serious illness or malformation of the fetus and in cases of rape.

Despite the alteration representing a considerable advance, the practice was restrictive so we had a lot of illegal abortions. There were never any national studies about this subject. The only official study was published by the Government in 1997. This showed that the number of abortions was between 30 and 90/1000 pregnancies but was higher for teenagers (100/1000 pregnancies) and older women (200-400/1000 pregnancies).

It is in this context that in 1997 abortion was discussed again in the Parliament. Complete legalization was not approved but the time limits were extended. Our legislation became similar to other countries like Spain. The application of this law was always very restrictive so that the practice in Portugal was different from that in Spain. In 1998 there was a referendum about the legalization of abortion before 10 weeks. There was an abstention rate of 70% and the votes in favour were only 49.1%. So the situation remained unchanged. But this matter continued to be discussed and there was an improvement in Family Planning. In Portugal, 80% of women use contraception. However, it is estimated that 1 in 4 women have had an illegal abortion. As a result, in February 2007, abortion before 10 weeks was discussed again and a new referendum indicated a majority of votes in favour. The Government has now approved the new law.

Population Council tests longer-lasting contraceptive vaginal ring designed for enhanced convenience, lower cost, and reduced environmental impact at sites around the world including locations in Finland and Hungary

(published with permission of the Population Council)

NEW YORK, NY (February 2007)-The Population Council has launched a study to test the safety and efficacy of its vaginal ring, a contraceptive that is designed to be used for one year. The vaginal ring currently available to American women must be discarded after three weeks of use, so at least 13 rings are needed annually. A product that is purchased only once a year may result in lower costs and fewer trips to the doctor and pharmacy. With less to manufacture and less to discard, a product that is replaced annually could also have a reduced impact on the environment.

The Council's study is one of two investigations—collectively involving 2,200 women at 22 sites on four continents—being conducted in preparation for submitting the ring for consideration by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Before the product can be put on the market, the FDA mandates that two large-scale studies, known collectively as a Phase 3 trial, be completed.

The Council is working in collaboration with the World Health Organization at sites in Australia, Brazil, Chile, Dominican Republic, Finland, Hungary, Sweden, and the United States. Funding for these trials is from the US Agency for International Development.

The US National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, National Institutes of Health, is conducting vaginal ring trials at 12 additional sites across the United States via its Contraceptive Clinical Trials Network.

Study participants are instructed to keep the contraceptive ring in place for three weeks and then remove it for one week to permit periodic bleeding. Seven days later the device is to be re-inserted. Preliminary research in women suggests that the one-year ring is as effective as oral contraceptives in preventing pregnancy. It was well-liked and well-accepted everywhere it was tested. The ring's side effects are expected to be similar to those of existing combined hormonal methods.

“One of the most exciting features of the re-usable ring is that it is entirely under the woman's control,” said Ruth Mer Katz, R.N., Ph.D., the Population Council's director of clinical development. “This product could be attractive to women throughout the world, including those with limited access to health care services.”

Although a steady increase in contraceptive use has been observed worldwide, the family planning needs of many couples are unmet, and the number of unintended pregnancies continues to increase. Worldwide there are 74 million unintended pregnancies annually—and that figure could rise steadily and substantially in the coming years. The largest generation of young people in history is now making the transition from childhood to adulthood. This increase in the number of childbearing adults means that billions of new couples will need contraception in the next half century.

The Council's vaginal ring is a thin, flexible product made of silicone rubber. It contains Nestorone®, a synthetic progestin similar to the natural hormone progesterone, and a low dose of ethinyl estradiol, a synthetic estrogen. The ring inhibits ovulation by continuously releasing a low dose of hormones through the vaginal walls and then the bloodstream.

To better understand the safety of the product, researchers are including smokers and/or overweight women in the trials. These populations typically have been excluded in studies of hormonal contraception. This inclusive testing model is designed to provide a more comprehensive assessment of the risks and benefits of using the one-year ring.

The Phase 3 trials will close in mid-2009. Using the safety and efficacy data collected and other information, the FDA will then decide whether the product can be approved for use in the United States. The procedure for submitting a New Drug Application and the FDA's approval process may take an additional two years. Therefore, if testing indicates that the product is successful, and the administration okays the contraceptive, a one-year ring could be approved for use in about five years.

During the study Population Council scientists will conduct interviews to further assess the method's acceptability among trial participants. An independent data safety monitoring board will review safety and efficacy information regularly throughout the trial, which is scheduled to last for approximately 30 months.

See also http://www.popcouncil.org/mediacenter/newsreleases/Vaginal_Ring_Studies.html

Society News

Renew your ESC Membership 2007 today online access to your personal record at www.contraception-esc.com

To serve you better, we now implemented the online membership and secure payment system on the ESC website. This will allow you to upload your own contribution online and to edit your address and other relevant details, if needed. Members of the Society can be all professionals; doctors and non-doctors, actively working within the field of Contraception and Reproductive Health Care.

The yearly membership fee is 50 euro. The right and duties of members are defined in the Statutes and Rules of Procedure of the Society.

Membership to ESC includes

- free attendance at the biennial Seminar,
- preferential registration fee for the biennial Congress,
- free subscription to the official Society Journal (The European Journal of Contraception and Reproductive Health Care) and delivery of the quarterly Newsletter,
- information on all ESC activities through brochures and leaflets,
- active participation in the policy-making of the Society by admission to the General Assembly,
- membership certificate

**9th ESC Seminar, Bucharest, Romania
21 and 22 September 2007
From abortion to contraception**

We invite you to take part in the 9th ESC Seminar. The aim of the seminar is to have the opportunity to share current practices and thoughts from around Europe and to learn from them by having plenty of time for discussion.

The theme of the 9th Seminar is "From abortion to contraception".

Three plenary sessions will deal with the main aspects of contraception:

- Medical abortion : is it still a method for family planning?
- New achievements for contraception
- Summary of the Seminar : reports on the workshops and the forum

Plenary sessions will be followed by ample discussion time and then lead into interactive workshops.

- Workshop 1 : Abortion, safety and risks in 2007
- Workshop 2 : Sex education in your office
- Workshop 3 : How to move from abortion to contraception?

Each workshop will have a leader who will co-ordinate the session and feed back the main points to the whole group during the plenary session on Saturday.

We hope that you will be joining us for an exciting seminar in Bucharest. Information: seminar@contraception-esc.com

10th ESC Congress

**Prague, Czech Republic, 30 April to 3 May 2008
Non-contraceptive impact of contraception
and family planning**

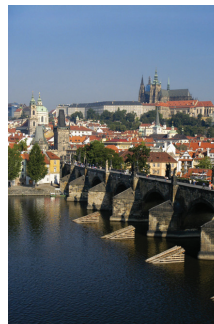


Time is passing very quickly and it will soon be 10 years since we met in 1998 at the Prague Hilton Hotel at the occasion of the 5th ESC Congress. Much was changed since that time – not only in our personal life or in Prague, but also in the field of contraception and reproductive health.

You have not yet received the First Announcement? What a shame! In that case, 'urgently' contact congress@contraception-esc.com and ask for your free copy.

Call for abstracts

The Organizing and Scientific Committee cordially invite all those involved in any aspect of contraception, sexual and reproductive health care to participate actively by submitting abstracts, either for oral or poster presentation. All abstracts will be peer reviewed and those accepted will be published in a Supplement of the European Journal of Contraception and Reproductive Health Care.



Abstracts submitted for the Young Scientist session should be written by a first author who is less than 33 years old on May 1st, 2008. Authors who wish to be included in this session, should indicate this on the online form.

Abstracts can only be submitted electronically through the online system on www.contraception-esc.com (congress section).

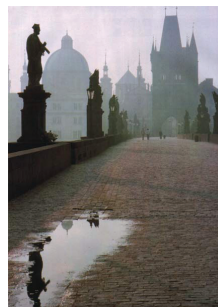
Abstract submission deadline: 1 January 2008

Call for registrations

Take advantage of the early registration fee (deadline 1 February 2008)!

You can register:

- through the online system on www.contraception-esc.com (congress section)
- by completing and returning the hard copy registration form to the ESC Central Office, Opalfeneweg 3, 1740 Ternat, Belgium)



WEB LIBRARY ON SEXUAL EDUCATION

By Olga Loeber, The Netherlands

The working group on sexual and reproductive health and education is happy to announce the start of the ESC web library on sexual education early this year. The aim of this web library is to provide background information and educational tools to professionals working in the field of sexual health promotion.

We started with a selection of sites which provide a wide selection of tools and resources, examples of sites for the general public and a manual on sexual education to download. The next step is to invite you all to participate with us in extending this library by comments, requests and contributions.

So please visit :

www.contraception-esc.com/weblibrary

and mail us, so we will be able to add more useful contributions to the library in English or other languages.

If you tell us what kind of other programmes you need, we will try to find these and if translation is needed this might also be possible.

Call for bids to host the 2012 Congress. Closing date: 2 February 2008

The first available year for an ESC Congress organisation is 2012. Although it looks far away, you should know that we are already working now on the 11th congress entitled 'Culture, Communication and Contraception' and to be held in The Hague, The Netherlands, from 19th to 22nd May 2010.

Should you be interested in submitting a bid to host the ESC Congress in 2012, please visit www.contraception-esc.com and go to 'About ESC, Rules of Procedure'.

Here is a short summary on the procedure:

1. At the time of submitting a bid to organize a Congress, the bidding country must have at least 10 paid up members of the ESC
2. Proposals for holding congresses are presented 4 years ahead at the General Assembly. The venue is decided upon by a vote of the ESC members during the General Assembly.
3. An official bid for the congress must be delivered to the Central Office not later than three months before the day of the appropriate General Assembly. Four copies of the bid are required. The Central Office is obliged to confirm receipt of the document and to send copies to the Executive Committee (EC) members. Bids are presented by the EC at the Board meeting before the appropriate GA.
4. An official bid to hold a congress/seminar must include some standards which are summarised on the ESC website.
5. For any further information please contact congress@contraception-esc.com

What are you waiting for?

The International Conference "Problems of woman in XXI century" Riga, Latvia - 20 and 21 April 2007

Dear Colleague,

It is my pleasure to invite you to the International Conference "Problems of woman in XXI century" in Riga, April 20–21, 2007 organised by Association of Contraceptology of Latvia in cooperation with Association of Gynaecologists and Obstetricians of Latvia, Association of Family Doctors of Latvia, Association of Country Family Doctors of Latvia and Association of Midwives of Latvia. We expect that more than 300 experienced contraceptiveologists, gynaecologists, obstetricians, family doctors and midwives from Latvia as well as from Lithuania and Estonia will take part in the conference. The 1st day programme – "Women's reproductive health" will consist of 7 lectures, the 2nd day – "Crisis and psychological and sexual aspects" – of 6 lectures followed by discussion. Several interesting presentations by pharmaceutical companies and a conference dinner will take place on April 20. Lectures will be delivered by outstanding Baltic specialists and international speakers from Germany and Russia. The exhibition of leading pharmaceutical companies in the field will be held during the conference. To register please contact the secretariat of the conference, e-mail address: vita.jostina@con-ex.com

Yours sincerely,
Melanija Orleana MD
Chairperson of the Organizing Committee
President of Association of Contraceptology of Latvia

For your agenda



5th INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH & FAMILY PLANNING

April 19-22, 2007
SWISSÔTEL ANKARA TÜRKIYE

For more information
DMR
KONGRE ORGANIZASYON
+90.312.442 01 50
www.ureme2007.org




IFFS 2007
April 29 – May 03
Durban, South Africa
www.iffs2007.org.za

IFFS 19th WORLD CONGRESS ON FERTILITY & STERILITY

WORKSHOP PROGRAMMES AVAILABLE ON THE WEB

Seven exceptional workshops will take place immediately preceding the Congress. The workshops include.

- Saturday 28-4-07 - **Hysteroscopy Workshop**
- Sunday 29-4-07 - **Laparoscopy Workshop**
- Ethics of Reproduction Genetics Workshop**
- L'organisation d'un centre d'A.M.P**
- Menopause Workshop**
- Andrology in Assisted Reproduction**
- Wildlife Workshop**

Visit the website for more information www.iffs2007.org.za




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5ème CONGRES DE LA SOCIETE FRANCOPHONE DE CONTRACEPTION

DU 31 MAI AU 2 JUIN 2007
HOTEL JNANE PALACE - FES (Maroc)

ACTUALITE ET PERSPECTIVES DE LA CONTRACEPTION DANS LES PAYS FRANCOPHONES



The British International Congress of Obstetrics and Gynaecology
4-6 July 2007
2007 ExCeL • London • UK

31st British Congress of Obstetrics and Gynaecology

Key Dates	
24 January 2007	Return Deadline for Abstracts
28 March 2007	Confirmation of Abstract Acceptance
25 April 2007	End of Reduced Rate Registration
4 - 6 July 2007	British International Congress of Obstetrics and Gynaecology

Confirmed Speakers: Cancer, Sexual Health & Fertility, Minimal Access Surgery/Urogynaecology, Perinatal & Maternal Medicine, Fetal Medicine, Reproductive Medicine (Streams 1 - 8)

Prof Zarko Atilevic	Mr Sean R G Duffy	Dr Karim Kalache	Prof Karl-Gosta Nygren
Dr Richard A Anderson	Prof Tommaso Falcone	Prof Sean Kehoe	Dr Donald M Peebles
Prof David T Baird	Baroness Finlay	Mr Stephen H Kennedy	Prof Lesley Fagan
Mr Peter Baldwin	Prof Nick M Flisk	Dr Khalid S Khan	Prof Charles H Rodeck
Prof Adam H Balen	Mr Robert B Fraser	Prof Henry C Kitchener	Prof Michael J Seckl
Dr Simon E Barton	Prof Hani Gabra	Dr Gudula Kitschig	Prof Andrew H Shennan
Dr Alison Bedford Russell	Dr Anna F Glasier	Prof William L Ledger	Prof John H Shepherd
Prof Diana W Bianchi	Prof Keith Godfrey	Dr Gillian M Lockwood	Mr Mark C Slack
Prof Peter R Braude	Prof Roger G Goaden	Prof David M Luesley	Prof Peter W Soothill
Prof Maurice A Bruhat	Prof Frances Gotch	Dr Diana J A Mansour	Prof Peter Stern
Prof John Burn	Prof Ian A Greer	Prof Neil Marlow	Mr William Stones
Prof Linda D Cardozo	Dr Evan Harris	Dr Rajneesh S Mathur	Dr Sara Thorne
Prof R Choua	Mr Paul Hilton	Prof Neil McClure	Prof Alan Trounson
Miss Sarah M Craighton	Prof P C Ho	Dr Mike P Murphy	Prof Keys Wellings
Mr Alfred S Cutner	Prof Roy Homburg	Prof Deirdre J Murphy	Mr Jeremy T Wright
Mr Timothy J Draycott	Prof Ian J Jacobs	Prof Kypros H Nicolaides	Mr John Wyatt

Confirmed Speakers: International and Lifestyle (Streams 7 and 8)			
Prof Sabaratnam	Mr Brian Hancock	Dr Douglas Laube	Dr Eva-Marie Sommer
Anukumarani	Prof Ezzeidin Othman	Dr Ruth Lawson	Lord Swinlen
Prof Peter Brocklehurst	Hassan	Ms Fran McNally	Dr Christine Tippet
Dr Pankaj Dasal	Prof Shelley Heard	Prof James McIntyre	Prof Zephne van der Spuy
Dr Mandish Dhanjal	Miss Jenny Higham	Dr Ken Milne	Dr Peter White
Prof James Dorman	Dr Jacqueline C Hill	Dr Michael Murphy	Miss Melissa Whitten
Prof William Dunlop	Dr Monir Islam	Lord Naren Patel	Prof Laurence EP Wood
Prof Brian Gazzard	Dr Jim King	Prof Robert C Pattinson	Mr Julian Woolston
Dr Cecile Gilling-Smith	Dr Alison J Kirkpatrick	Dr Gillian C Penney	
Dr Ralph Hale	Prof Jacques Lansac	Dr Duru Shah	

www.bcog2007.co.uk

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All Newsletters are also to be found on the website of the Society: www.contraception-esc.com (go to 'News')