Dear Friends of EFIC!

The first "European Year Against Pain" (EYAP) has been successfully launched on the topic "Visceral Pain" with international press releases and an official EFIC press conference at the "Press Club Brussels Europe" on 12th October 2012. Topical information materials are available on the EFIC website www.efic.org or from our headquarters office in Belgium. These excellent and ready for use fact sheets have been composed by the members of our EYAP committee, Andrew Baranowski (UK), Asbjorn Drewes (Denmark), Winfried Hauser (Germany), Martin Koltzenburg (UK), and the committee chair Chris Wells (UK). I would like to thank all members of the EYAP committee for their valuable personal support and scientific contributions to this important campaign, and to encourage the national EFIC chapters to keep the momentum for their national EYAP activities throughout the whole year until October 2013.

Having been invited to the EFIC Pain Schools in Montescano/Italy and Klagenfurt/Austria, and by the Slovenian and the Russian Chapters to their respective National Congresses in Ljubljana and Moscow, I was impressed by the high quality presentations and the great hospitality I experienced there.

As already announced by email to all EFIC councilors and chapter presidents, the EFIC headquarters office has moved in November from Vilvoorde to a new and very convenient location that is closer to Brussels Airport and offers many other amenities in addition. My special thanks and congratulations to our EFIC office team, Christel Geevels and Sarah Darley, for having so fast and smoothly managed the whole relocation! The new address is: EFIC Office, Grensstraat 7, Mailbox 3, 1831 Diegem, Belgium. Please note that phone, fax and email have not changed!

The end of a very busy year is now approaching quickly, and with this last newsletter in 2012, I would like to thank all executive board members, councilors, members and friends of EFIC for their great support, and I wish all of us a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year 2013!

With best wishes,
Hans G. Kress
President of EFIC
A Word from the Editor

Dear readership,

You are holding or e-reading the last edition of our EFIC newsletter for this year. At the end of a year it is a human habit to reflect over the past months. Including a professional in the communication of a European federation such as EFIC was clearly a good choice. Four editions of the EFIC newsletter, an update of the layout and content of the website and the launch of EFIC’s presence on social media channels such as Facebook have clearly provided a dynamic boost to the communication of EFIC.

The power of an organization are its members. EFIC has no individual membership, but is a big family of national pain societies. By improving our channels of communication, the national societies and individuals of our “family” have a face. It is just this sense of family and belonging which is cherished at the end of December. Regardless of your religious or non-religious background, the holiday season is a time for individual reflexion and goal-setting for the next year. Our patients who are suffering from chronic pain also reflect and have their concerns. Most of them will continue their search for “magical solutions” which take away the pain entirely in 2013. Many of them will be disappointed as well in the new year. Others, with our help, will experience meaningful reductions in pain. They will accept the remaining pain and commit themselves to other values and joyful activities. Indeed, pain is an inextricable aspect of human life which will never be totally eradicated. The human course of life will never be immune to pain. An old Buddhist proverb states “Pain is inevitable, suffering is optional.” Let us all work together in the next year, too, to reduce the suffering in our patients. Once again: “Something to reflect about.”

Season’s greetings and have a good read!

Bart Morlion
Editor EFIC Newsletter

One in Five Europeans Suffers from Chronic Pain

One in five Europeans suffers from chronic pain, one in eleven on a daily basis. A large number of those affected receive inadequate treatment. Across the EU chronic pain accounts for nearly 500 million lost working days every year.

„Chronic pain has reached truly epidemic proportions in Europe. One in five Europeans suffers from pain that has been occurring regularly for three months or longer; one in eleven, suffers from pain daily. There are 100 million people affected by chronic pain in the 27 EU member states”, according to Prof Hans Georg Kress, President of the European Federation of IASP Chapters (EFIC). „Across the EU chronic pain accounts for nearly 500 million lost working days every year – costing the European economy around €34 billion.“

These alarming figures were presented at the launch of the first „European Year against Pain” (EYAP) in Brussels earlier this year. „Our most important goal with this campaign is to present pain, the most neglected and frequently underestimated health problem, in all its aspects and also in all its social consequences. In doing so, we want to support those affected and inform the broad public but also give a wake-up call to political decision-makers. Not only does pain, especially chronic pain, cause individual suffering, it also has much greater social and economic relevance than people often assumed.”
**Important societal impact**

A survey indicates that 19% of patients with moderate or severe chronic pain have lost their jobs. The risk of these patients having to give up their occupation is seven times greater for the healthy population. The review “Epidemiology of chronic non-cancer pain in Europe” came to the conclusion that 22% of pain sufferers who are required to take sick leaves because of their chronic pain are absent from work for longer than ten days.

**Only 2% of pain sufferers are treated by pain specialists**

„It all comes down to the correct management of chronic pain, a task that is frequently neglected“, Prof. Kress said. „Many pain patients are treated inadequately, too little or not at all.“ According to a survey, only 2% of all pain patients in Europe are treated by a specialist trained in pain management, a third of chronic pain patients remaining without any treatment. Prof. Kress: „The most important cause for these deficits is probably that pain continues to be seen as merely a symptom for an underlying disease. What we need is a new view of chronic pain. We must acknowledge chronic pain as a disease in its own right.”

**Visceral pain, the “silent epidemic”**

“Visceral pain refers to common types of pain coming from the inner organs, such as the heart, blood vessels, respiratory passages, the urogenital tract or the digestive tract. It has been shown that they can have organic causes but also so-called functional causes without any detectable damage to the organ involved”, said Dr. Chris Wells (Liverpool), President elect of EFIC and Chair of the EYAP Committee. “Acute visceral pain can be extremely unpleasant and at times life threatening. However, chronic visceral pain can also pose a significant burden. Acute visceral pain is second only to trauma as a reason for patients visit emergency wards. Although of statistical significance, this category of pain has been subject to much less research than pain from tissue damage or nerve injuries, for example.”

The prevalence of visceral pain is as impressive as it is alarming, as a number of examples demonstrate:

- 20 to 30% of the population suffers from dyspeptic disorders, whereby only half of these individuals show organ-related causes.
- Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) is estimated to affect between 6% and 25% of the population depending on the study and also on gender and accounts for up to half of all consultations with gastroenterologists. In Germany, for example, IBS occurs in about 16% of women but in only 8% of men.
- Bladder pain affects women more frequently than men; surveys assume 900 pain sufferers per 100,000 women.
- Dysmenorrhoea (period pain) affects one in two women with periods; in 10% of the women affected, this pain is as severe as to cause them to take sick leave every month.
- In total, women are affected three times more frequently by visceral pain than men.

“There is no adequate treatment for chronic visceral pains in many cases, unlike for the acute forms of this pain”, Dr Wells pointed out. “That is why this disorder is often connected with far-reaching stress, which in itself, gets too little attention. With the European Year against Visceral Pain now beginning, we have set a special priority to help those who may have been silently suffering for a long time. We want to point out to them which problems their symptoms might be indicating and motivate them to seek out assistance in the diagnostic and therapeutic system”. That is why EFIC is making available thorough fact sheets on different types of visceral pain at [www.efic.org](http://www.efic.org).

---

**EFIC Fellowship Reports**

The EFIC fellowship is an individual fellowship for medical doctors supporting a training at a European Pain Centre with specific expertise in the diagnosis and treatment of all pain related problems. The selected pain centres do have educational programs dedicated to the fellow. To find out more about where fellowships are possible and how to apply for one, click [here](http://www.efic.org).
Klagenfurt, Austria

By Anita Bernharde

The fellowship started on the 4th of July 2011 at ZISOP, Klinikum-Klagenfurt am Worthersee, Austria. On the first day, after I was instructed by the people at the human resources department about the rules and regulations at the hospital, about my status as a “hospitant” – guest physician and after I signed the necessary confidentiality form, I was introduced to the ZISOP administrative assistant.

My stay at the clinic was well-organized – I started each morning at 7.15 and worked until 14.00. Every morning there was a staff meeting with Prof. R. Likar, the physicians and nurses to discuss the daily program and the patients expected. Every day I was shadowing an attending physician and took part in the interviews and examinations of the chronic pain patients in the outpatient department and the day care clinic. I had the possibility to review and discuss previous treatments, their effects, the possibility for and expected results from a change in the treatment plan with the physician.

Professor R. Likar, all of the physicians in the department as well as the nurses were very supportive and highly competent and knowledgeable. Every afternoon there was a staff meeting of the physicians and nurses where they discussed the most serious patient cases, their treatment plans and the need for additional diagnostic work and follow up. I also had an opportunity to find out more about how the workload is organized and carried out for postoperative patients in surgical departments.

One of the goal of this fellowship has been to witness as many interventional pain procedures as possible. I had the possibility to observe the full spectrum of these procedures – specific trigger points injections, specific neurolytic block of Gasserian ganglion, lumbar and sacral plexus blocks, lumbar facet joint injections, lumbar and cervical epidural infections, spinal cord stimulation procedure and injection of neurolytic agent into the coeliac plexus. Also I was able to observe intrathecal and epidural drug delivery systems used in patients whose pain and spasm problems have not respond to less interventional modes of treatment.

The learning opportunities at the pain clinic from my point of view are excellent - there are a lot of patients suffering from the full spectrum of possible painful conditions and the pain clinic offers a great variety of treatment options. This gave me the chance to learn and witness a lot over a comparatively short period of time. I got more information about the combination of different medications, how to create these combinations and how to do interventional procedures under the ultrasound control.

During my fellowship in this pain clinic, I have obtained great experience and formed valuable connections with colleagues. As I would like to establish a pain unit in the hospital where I work, this was an amazing opportunity to learn about the pain clinic's structure and its multifunctional team work.

Klagenfurt, Austria

By Romana Lugin

I arrived to Klagenfurt on September 2nd, 2012. I was happy to find very caring and hospitable Gasthof, where the owner of the hotel gave me a lift to the city centre and assisted me in buying a monthly ticket for the bus since I did not speak any German. The Klagenfurt hospital is a new and impressive building, and the pain clinic is a part of department of anaesthesia and intensive care and includes: An outpatient clinic, a day clinic (for interventional procedures), physiotherapy, psychotherapy, a palliative ward, a mobile palliative team, and a pain management program (“Multimodale Schmerztherapie”).
I was free to join any team. I spent a lot of time in the outpatient clinic and the day clinic, and I also joined the pain management program. I was really impressed with the interventions proceeding under CT. I've never seen this technique before, and I was happy to try it by myself, of course under supervision. Another novelty to me was the use of pumps delivering different medicines epidural. For the whole time everybody was talking and explaining everything to in English. I appreciate this, because it is a big effort. Prof. Likar invited me and another fellow to participate in the EFIC Pain School and the Austrian Congress of Anaesthesia and Pain, which was fantastic opportunity.

My time at the Klagenfurt Pain Clinic was a very interesting and fruitful time. I am grateful to Prof. Likar that I was able to do the fellowship even though I don't speak German. I am also indebted to the whole team at the pain clinic, especially to Dr. Jelen, Dr. Al-Qassab, Dr. Jabarzadeh and Dr. Rozenzoph and all the nurses. I also wish to express my sincere thanks to the doctors from the radiology department who helped me with the CT procedures.

I was an EFIC grant holder for the second time, and I am very grateful to this organization for giving me the opportunity to learn from international experts.

------------

News from our Chapters

Pain Management Activities in Bosnia-Herzegovina

By Amira Karkin-Tais

The Association for Pain Therapy Bosnia and Herzegovina started a new project in August 2012 which focuses on pain education through courses in hospitals. Until August 2013, these courses on chronic pain are scheduled for 140 doctors in five hospitals in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The course includes a workshop, an interactive Q&A session, and a case study. The speakers are national experts (IASP and EFIC members). Participants of the course include doctors in primary care, palliative care, specialist anesthesiologists, neurologists, oncologists and others involved in treating pain.

An essential part of this project is to research epidemiology; it also involves examining the prevalence of chronic pain in patients. Epidemiological and health cost data of patients suffering from chronic pain will help trained doctors from the hospital in five cities of Bosnia and Herzegovina expand their knowledge in this field.

The first three interactive workshops were already successfully held in October and November 2012. Participants can register for the courses until August 2013 via apt_bh@yahoo.de.
First European School on Person-Centered Pain Management in Yalta, Ukraine

By Vladimir Romanenko

The First European School on Person-Centered Pain Management was held in Yalta, Crimea, Ukraine from September 25 to 29, 2012.

18 physicians of different specialties (neurologists, anesthesiologists, neurosurgeons, gynecologists, psychiatrists, psychologists, orthopedists, physical therapists) from Croatia, Germany, Iran, Nigeria, Russia and Ukraine were in attendance.

Prof. Igor Romanenko, President of Ukrainian Association for the Study of Pain opened the school and mentioned that this is the first multidisciplinary pain school in Eastern Europe. The program was comprehensive and targeted physicians of different specialties. The program was covering basic topics in pain, such as the physiology and pharmacology of pain, the role of microglia in chronic pain, an overview of peripheral and central mechanisms of pain; special topics in pain management, such as neuropathic pain, low back pain, headache, pelvic pain and pain comorbidities, such as depression, stress, anxiety, sleep and food behavior disorders; special neurosurgical approaches to treatment of pain, such as radiofrequency facet joint denervation and epidural blocks and questions of person-centered pain management.

Prof. Reinhard Sittl then presented five interactive cases in neuropathic pain. Participants had a chance to be engaged in a clinical situation solving to vote for preferable treatment options for each case and discuss it with the colleagues from different countries. This created an invaluable opportunity of sharing experiences in intercultural environment and in interdisciplinary way. Later on Prof. Sittl presented a multimodal pain treatment program as a very effective solution for chronic pain patients. Professor Nikolai Kvasnitskiy presented the methods of radiofrequency facet joint denervation and epidural blocks as effective neurosurgical instruments of pain treatment and shared his personal experience. Dr. Iryna Romanenko pointed out the problem of pelvic pain and described most common reasons, mechanisms and therapeutical approaches.

Special focus throughout the program has been put on a person-centered approach in pain management. Marijana Bras, Veljko Dordevich and Lovorka Brajkovich, who came from Center for Palliative Medicine, Medical Ethics and Communication Skills, School of Medicine, University of Zagreb, Croatia showed to the students their novel model of the medical interview. The model of the medical interview was supported by the International College of Person-Centered Medicine and for the first time in the world it was presented and practiced here in Yalta in an interactive way.

Overall, the first pain school was very successful and highly praised by all participants. It also offered an extensive social program which gave an opportunity for the students to better learn the history and culture of Crimea, experience its unique nature, fall in love with the Black Sea and make new friends from different countries. Everybody enjoyed the atmosphere, which was full of high professionalism, respect, equality and friendship.
The Pain Nursing Magazine: An Italian Online Journal

By Lorenza Saini

The Pain Nursing Magazine is a publication for nurses entirely dedicated to pain patients and to those taking care of them – nurses as well as physicians – addressing not only health issues, but also more and more urgent cultural, social and economic needs related to chronic pain. The magazine is published four times a year by the Paolo Procacci Foundation in cooperation with the Italian Association for the Study of Pain and the Association for the Study of Pain of the Republic of San Marino.

Now included in the Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature (CINAHL), the magazine welcomes contributions in English or Italian from all over Europe. The 4th issue of the Pain Nursing Magazine is now online and can be found here.

1st European-American Spine and Chronic Pain Symposium and Workshops in Bol, Croatia

By Mira Fingler

The conference took place from September 14th to 16th 2012. It was organized by the World Institute of Pain, USA; St. Catherine Hospital, Croatia; Carolinas Pain Institute, USA; Croatian Association for the Treatment of Pain, Croatia; Croatian Society for Spine Surgery, Croatia; and the International Society for Applied Biological Sciences and Sceptor Pain Foundation, USA to promote minimally-invasive approaches in spine care and pain management. Participant-friendly yet intense educational activities together with hands-on workshops were delivered by internationally acclaimed experts in the field of pain management.

The symposium covered existing techniques, novel approaches and possible new treatment methods to further improve therapeutic performances. The scientific board had worked hard to prepare a comprehensive program presenting the very latest evidence-based and best-practice-based spine care and pain management in all areas and disciplines in this specialty field.

The conference was structured to allow close interaction between the international faculty and participants. In addition to formal presentations there were “meet-the-professor” sessions and other numerous informal meetings and gatherings to enhance opportunities for scientific dialogue. Participants also had the chance to get to know the town of Bol, one of the most beautiful cities of Croatia due to its unspoiled nature, beautiful beaches, cultural and historical attractions.
The 4th EFIC Pain School Montescano

The EFIC Pain School Montescano took place from Oct. 8th to 11th, 2012. The course focused on "Neurological Diagnosis in chronic pain: Clinical and instrumental processes". To receive more insight into this pain school, we have asked participants for their feedback:

"I would like to thank you and all the lecturers for the great teaching event in Montescano EFIC school 2012. The very first impressions were informative and clinically useful. These impressions did not change during all the course. I am glad and going to use the acquired information and skills in my daily clinical practice.

Understanding mechanisms and using neurodiagnostic methods is the right way pain medicine should further focus on. In the current time, it is no more acceptable just to prescribe pills for pain without establishing a precise diagnosis and understanding the involved mechanism. Without this approach, any clinician will be simply lost in the mass of treatments.

I would say this teaching course is a must for everyone who is involved in chronic pain management. As I am actively involved in the teaching of pain medicine, I highly support the idea of these EFIC pain schools. I would also like to thank Ms. Alice from Defoe for the smooth organizations and Mr. Alessandro for every day technical care, excursions, translations and for his kindness when spending time with our group."

Alfredas Vaitkus, MD, FIPP

"Thank you very much for allowing me to attend EFIC Pain School Montescano 2012. Since I work as an anaesthesiologist, all topics and lectures have been very helpful for me. I have only words of praise. I have learnt a lot of new things. I have had the chance to exchange opinions with colleagues and pain experts from all over Europe. Many doubts I had about pain and pain therapy have now dissipated. Thanks to the EFIC Pain School Montescano, I can now successfully help patients who suffer from various pain syndromes. I hope there will be more opportunities for me to learn something new about pain management and pain therapy in the future.

Once again, thank you very much for the invaluable and a beautiful experience!"

Sanja Maric, PhD, MD
How did you enjoy the EFIC Newsletter 04/2012? Let us know at newsletter@efic.org. We look forward to receiving your feedback on this issue.

If you wish to unsubscribe from the EFIC Newsletter, you can do so here.

The next EFIC Newsletter will be published on March 25th, 2013. The deadline for contributions is March 15th, 2013. All contributions must be emailed to Bart Morlion at bart.morlion@uzleuven.be.

If you are interested in contributing to one of our next issues, please have a look at the EFIC Newsletter Contribution Guidelines.

EFIC Newsletter 04/2012 Contributors

Prof. Hans G. Kress MD, PhD
Chair of Anaesthesiology and Pain Medicine, Medical University of Vienna AKH/ Austria

Prof. Bart Morlion MD, PhD
Director of the Leuven Center for Algology & Pain Management
University Hospitals Leuven, Belgium

Anita Bernharde
Romana Lugin

Amira Karkin-Tais MD
Centre for Pain Relief
Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina

Vladimir Romanenko MD
Ukrainian Institute of Pain

Lorenza Saini
Fondazione Paolo Procacci
Rome, Italy

Prim. Mira Fingler, dr. med.
President of the Croatian Society for Pain Treatment
University Hospital Osijek
Osijek, Croatia

Alfreda Vaitkus
Sanja Maric

Inner Circle Company Members of EFIC 2012:
8th Congress of the European Federation of IASP® Chapters (EFIC®)

Florence, Italy
October 9-12, 2013
ARE YOU
A MEMBER OF EFIC THROUGH
YOUR NATIONAL SOCIETY?

Access to the online version of the
European Journal of Pain is freely available
to members of your National Society via the EFIC website.
Alternatively you can subscribe for a printed version at reduced rates.
Visit www.efic.org to learn how

Contact EFIC today for more info! Email: secretary@efic.org
EFIC®, the European Federation of Chapters of the International Association for the Study of Pain, is pleased to announce:

**EFIC-GRÜNENTHAL GRANT 2012**

RESEARCH GRANTS FOR CLINICAL AND HUMAN EXPERIMENTAL PAIN RESEARCH

- These biennial grants totalling up to € 200,000 from Grünenthal GmbH are supporting young scientists early in their career to carry out innovative clinical pain research in any member country of EFIC® (see www.EFIC.org).

- Individual research grants are valued at up to € 40,000 per project for a duration of up to two years.

- Research grants are intended for clinical and human experimental pain research. Research proposals on animals, computer simulations, cell lines etc. will not be considered.

- The decision of the awards is made independently by the EFIC® Committee on Research.

**DEADLINE FOR APPLICATION:** December 31st 2012

**GUIDELINES, QUALITY CRITERIA, ONLINE APPLICATION FORMS:** www.e-g-g.info

**CONTACT** Mrs Gaby Erkens - E-G-G administration, c/o Grünenthal GmbH, e-mail: admin@e-g-g.info, phone: +49 241 569-1304

**EFIC COMMITTEE ON RESEARCH** Chair: Prof. Martin Koltzenburg, FRCP, (London, United Kingdom) - Vice-Chair: Prof. Luis Villanueva, DDS, PhD, (Paris, France) - Members: Dr. Christine Cedraschi, PhD, psychologist, (Genève, Switzerland) - Prof. Michele Curatolo, MD, PhD, (Bern, Switzerland) - Prof. Hans Georg Kress, MD, PhD, (Vienna, Austria) - RNDr. Viktorie Vlachova, D.Sc., (Prague, Czech Republic) - Prof. Oliver H.G. Wilder-Smith, MBCHB MD, PhD, (Nijmegen, The Netherlands) - Prof. Hanns U. Zeilhofer, MD, (Zurich, Switzerland)