

Wonca Europe 2002 in London¹

A conference to remember — what a time we had! A record number of abstract submissions produced a magnificent academic programme. The full breadth and depth of general practice was gloriously represented. All four keynote presentations were superb and each opened up a new perspective for the participants. The College celebrated its 50th anniversary in style with a day long symposium organised by Marshall Marinker. The theatre workshop made a profound impression on everyone lucky enough to attend. Every participant had a different story to tell of new things discovered, and new contacts made. The days passed in a whirl of impressions, old and new friends, and an avalanche of ideas. I am hugely grateful to everyone who helped to make it all possible – the staff of the College, the conference organisers, the poster discussants and those who chaired sessions, and the wonderfully hard-working members of the Programme and Scientific Committees. Now – I'm looking forward to next year in Ljubljana – www.wonca-europe2003.org.

Dr Iona Heath CBE FRCGP

My special interest in this conference was women's health. My chief, Olga Kouznetsova, presented the results of a study in which I had participated. It was a revelation to discover that the problem of abortions and undesirable pregnancies is not only a problem in Russia, but that poor women's health was a problem common to many countries. In the Russian Federation, the contemporary opinion is that problems with women's health are caused by underdevelopment of the health care system and that other countries have already found the solution. I was surprised to learn that this is not the case. The important conclusion that I have come to is that we Russian family physicians don't have to «copy» the preventive and educational programmes which exist in foreign countries. It is because the pattern of women's health condition is slightly different in our countries. Generally when my colleagues from Great Britain, Finland or France talked about sexual health in the population, they did not take into account relationships between sexual behaviour and sexually transmitted diseases. The solving of patients' problems in Russia related to genital infections often takes precedence over other problems including psychological and sexual disorders.

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So, the best way for Russia is to try to develop its own model for improving women's health. This could be achieved by special units to create guidelines and assess preventive and educational programmes for their validity and applicability to Russia. I also participated in a very interesting session devoted to health care quality improvement in general practice, met many interesting people and had an opportunity to socialise and make new international contacts. I enjoyed this conference very much and I am very grateful to The Royal College of General Practitioners for funding my trip. Their participation enabled me to stay in the beautiful city of London and afforded me much pleasure and professional benefit.

Dr Elena Regushevskaya MD

«It was like visiting the birthplace of my big brother to be in Wonca Europe 2002 and the RCGP. Thanks.»

Dr Fusun Yaris, Karadeniz Technical University, Turkey

Correspondence:
 Claire Burden
 International Department
 Royal College of General Practitioners
 14 Princes Gate, Hyde Park, GB-London SW7 1PU
 Website: www.rcgp.org.uk