

Edy Riesen, family doctor in Ziefen, a village 30 km from Basel

## Hopes and wishes for Wonca 2009



One of my highly regarded colleagues taught me, many years ago, to practise medicine bearing in mind the three big "E's": *Evidence*, (personal) *Experience* and *Empathy*. This is really a helpful rule demonstrating that Evidence-based Medicine is not more than one important cornerstone of the house of Family Medicine. I am now sixty-one years old and I am still

in love with practising Family Medicine in a rural community. I continue trying to improve, to learn more and to gain a deeper understanding of people, with all their problems. Understanding that the rational part is not enough to explain the satisfaction or frustration in ones professional and private life, I would like to add some expressions to the above ones: It is *passion for the profession* and the *feeling for the spirit of Family Medicine*. These emotional and highly motivating words are in danger under the burden of our daily work and the pressure of time. When we, as family doctors, are not able to be normal cultural beings among the population, participating in social meetings, sports, arts and so on, we lose contact and do not understand "normal" people. We should not act as medical machines but as human beings with all our qualities and errors. More than any other medical professionals we work in the middle of the community. This means, that people may know us as neighbours or even friends. We can not hide behind the walls of a hospital or sophisticated equipment. Let us be "feel-

ing doctors" based upon a solid, continuous medical education. Being passionate means also having visions, sometimes even utopias, and trying to develop new ideas.

In Basel we will perceive the atmosphere of a European event, being part of the movement of thousands of family doctors, and amongst them more and more young women. To see their enthusiasm, to hear their different languages, to learn from their ideas, and to be aware that everybody – although with different cultural backgrounds – has one aim: to perform better in this beautiful and fascinating job.

Let us be interested in the manner of how others do it. As a Swiss doctor I work and live in a privileged situation. Although I worked for four years in the Peruvian Altiplano, I don't know the reality of many countries in Europe. With great respect, I have colleagues who work bravely in other countries in, sometimes, unfavourable conditions. Meeting and listening to each other, also means appreciating each other's work. There are many reasons to go to Basel and celebrate some hours together with the international community of family doctors.

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