Editorial

Message from the President – Autumn 2004

IFFS is at a crossroads in its history. The world has changed and if the Federation does not take this into account, it would soon be unable to fulfill its mission. What is its mission?

Referring to the constitution, the main objective of the Federation is “to stimulate basic and applied research and the dissemination of knowledge in all aspects of reproduction and fertility”. This objective is to be pursued across the planet, and in particular in areas where this is not done by local societies. IFFS is the typical example of more developed societies (in the field of Reproductive Medicine and Science) being able to help colleagues reach a level of expertise.

Until now this has been done on the occasion of Congresses, and, in this regard, IFFS Congresses (triennial World Congresses, the 19th being scheduled in Durban, South Africa, April 29-May 3, 2007) have gained a reputation for scientific quality and educational value. The so-called “trilogies”, that are the typical format of IFFS sessions have proven to be both sharp and informative.

The time has now come to focus more and more on education, using all possible means and not just Congresses alone. Why education? Because this is where it starts, and Science evolves faster and faster. If for any reason you have missed the first train you would have no chance to catch up. How do you catch up? By going where you need to, where there is education, an important part of the future of our world. The Executive Committee has appointed Ian Cooke Director of Medical Education to initiate, promote and organize workshops in various parts of the world, as well as to create special programmes to meet the needs of younger generations. Education is the key word of my term as President, and in that capacity, I will do all that is possible to meet this major objective.

IFFS has the will, the vision, and both the scientific and the academic expertise. It also has the connections, collaboration with other Societies and Federations, as well as the recognition of colleagues. Thanks to the most valuable work of Roger K Kempers, during his term as President, IFFS has also developed the structures to implement its objectives. It lacks the funds. Major decisions have been taken in this regard, to create a stable and continuing relationship with our partners in industry, based on mutual confidence and shared interests, to enhance the profitability of World Congresses. In the near future, IFFS will organise its own Congresses, similarly to what is being done by ASRM and ESHRE. The same decision has been also taken by FIGO. This is the way to link our objectives together and to develop the necessary means to reach them.

Bernard Hedon, MD

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Member Societies and readers are invited to send all comments, reports or articles of 800 – 1200 words no later than 1st February for the Spring Issue and 1st July for the Autumn Issue.

The views expressed in articles in the IFFS Newsletter are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official viewpoint of IFFS.

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Take a moment and know the IFFS

Establishment of IFFS:
International co-operation and dialogue in the field of fertility and sterility can be said to have truly commenced in 1951 in Rio de Janeiro with the formation of the International Fertility Association (IFA). Eminent scientists from various parts of the world became members and triennial World Conferences in Fertility and Sterility were organized, the first in New York, USA in May, 1953. This was followed by Naples, Italy in 1955, Vienna, Austria 1959, and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil 1962. In 1965, the Fifth World Conference was proposed in Madrid but was not feasible due to local problems and hence the Fifth World Conference was held in Stockholm, Sweden, in 1966. At the Sixth World Conference held in Tel Aviv, Israel in 1968, the International Federation of Fertility Societies (IFFS) was born. The International Fertility Association remained as an affiliate to represent members with no national society. A constitution and by-laws were drawn up and remain today to govern the actions of IFFS.

Objectives of the IFFS:
- To stimulate basic and applied research and the dissemination of knowledge in all aspects of reproduction and fertility.
- To stimulate the creation of societies for basic and applied work in the field of reproduction and fertility.
- To contribute to the standardisation of terminology and evaluation of diagnostic and therapeutic procedures in the field of reproduction.
- To hold at regular intervals, World Congresses, each successively in a different country. To promote, on request, regional or national congresses organised by affiliated societies. Where possible, to help co-ordinate the dates of conferences which are relevant to the field of reproduction.
- To represent affiliated societies whenever joint scientific action is appropriate.
- To establish and maintain relations with other organisations and to promote activities which further the objectives of the Federation.

Membership of IFFS:
The membership of the Federation shall include those societies who have stated an interest in the clinical and research aspects of reproduction and fertility. They must have a constitution which conforms with the objectives of the Federation. Furthermore, they must have a minimum of 40 members.

Membership has grown and at present, fifty-four National Fertility Societies are affiliated. It is estimated over 40,000 specialists worldwide concerned in the areas of fertility and sterility are brought together under one umbrella organization.

An “associated” society is a society or a federation which pursues the same or similar goals as IFFS and gathers several IFFS member societies or members from such societies from several countries.

An association with IFFS includes a series of relations, notably:
- exchange lectures and sessions during congresses
- links on the internet
- collaborative works on ethics, each yielding a consensus which is defined at that time and can be revised whenever needed by both Executive Committees.

The Associated Society is invited to IFFS General Assemblies as an observer. Moreover the Associated Society has a consultative status on important matters such as Congress dates and venues and other issues.

IFFS World Congress:
Holding a World IFFS Congress is certainly a big scientific, cultural and social event. The IFFS holds this important meeting every three years. Very successful world congresses were held in the past in Europe, Asia, Africa and the Americas, North & South and Australia. The next World Congress has been scheduled in 2007 in Durban, South Africa. Bids had been received for holding the 2010 IFFS Conference from Rhodes, Vienna and Munich. The IFFS General Assembly in Montreal in May 2004 chose Munich to be the venue of the 2010 IFFS Conference.

IFFS Workshops:
- A Workshop organised by IFFS:
A Workshop organized by IFFS means that IFFS holds full responsibility for the scientific programme and controls all aspects of the workshop, including the budget.

- A Workshop held under the auspices of IFFS:
A workshop held under the auspices of IFFS is a workshop organised by a member or associated society. The scientific programme is prepared by a member or associated society and has full approval of the IFFS. It includes the participation of one or more invited speakers selected by the IFFS Education Committee.

The IFFS can provide the local member or associated societies with letters to medical industry companies to help them seek financial support for the Workshop.

Any surplus money generated from the Workshop will be used by local member societies in their Continuing Educational and Training Programs.

- A Workshop approved by IFFS:
A workshop can be approved by IFFS once the IFFS Education Committee has approved its scientific programme, whatever the status of the organising society.

For more details please contact the IFFS Secretariat or visit the IFFS Website:

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REPORT OF THE 6TH MEETING OF THE EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE
Saturday, 22 May, 2004
Palais de Congrès, Montreal, Canada

Progress with the IFFS Website was reported, the site now being functional. A problem with some of the translation buttons was being remedied. The Spring Newsletter was on the site. The recommendations about attempting to reduce costs of the Newsletter had been heeded, although there had been too much material received to restrict the Spring issue to 8 pages. 10,000 copies had been printed in Cairo and most would be distributed in Montreal and at ESHRE in Berlin. There was sufficient material for the next issue, there being much IFFS detail to report following the Montreal meeting and there would be a report on the Tartu Workshop in Estonia. The deadline was 1 July for the August (Autumn) issue and 1 February for the March (Spring) issue.

Of the Consensus documents, Surveillance 2004 was published in time for the Montreal Congress. It had been distributed as a Supplement to the May issue of Fertility and Sterility. There was a presentation about the document and general discussion to inform consideration of a subsequent one. The Consensus on the Organisation of an Infertility Clinic had been placed on the website. There was now a programme attached to analyse all hits and responses, so that ongoing statistics could be maintained and reported in due course.

The VII International Symposium CER 2003, sponsored by the Argentine Society for Reproductive Medicine (SAMeR) was held on 30 October, 2003 in Buenos Aires. Prof. J. Tapanainen lectured. A Joint Workshop of the IFFS and the Argentine Society for Reproductive Medicine was held on 18-19 March, 2004 in Buenos Aires., Prof. B. Hedon being the invited speaker. Summaries of these meetings will be produced in the Newsletter. A Workshop was held in Tartu organised by Prof. Tapanainen. This was most successful, there being about 90 registrants, 15 from Lithuania, 30-40 from Estonia and 20 from Latvia. It had been very practical and of high scientific quality with a good social programme. The budget had been £10,000 ($12,000), much cheaper than it would have been in other parts of Western Europe. Arising from that experience “seed money” support for the Workshops was discussed. Although that would ease cash flow problems, IFFS needed much stronger financial support to do that. The MEFS Workshop is still awaiting financial support; there was no further word from Jordan or Saudi Arabia. There had been a meeting in Amman in April, which attracted 22 countries and there had been a discussion about establishing a pan-Arab Society, which could contemplate future affiliation with IFFS. It was intended to develop educational aspects, including guidelines and other developments in human reproduction. Future developments were awaited with interest.

The plans for Beijing & Shanghai were continuing. There was also continuing liaison with Bulgaria to develop a Workshop and it was hoped to pursue these ideas with other eastern European Societies. Peru & Ecuador Societies’ representatives were being contacted. As the Malaysian Society wished to join IFFS, it would also be contacted. There still needed to be much work carried out to develop a Workshop template, although examples were now available.

A paper had been circulated recommending annual IFFS Workshops in the two years between Congresses, although there would need to be a detailed Needs Assessment and feasibility studies for specific venues and for timing. These discussions had already included the next Congress in Durban and would continue.

The International Committee Monitoring the Assisted Reproductive Technologies (ICMART) requested recognition as a Liaison Group and this was later agreed to by the Executive Committee. A Glossary, that they had developed to standardise terminology, a prerequisite for data collection, which had been approved by a number of international and regional bodies, would be considered at our Berlin meeting.

Although the PCO for the FIGO/IFFS meeting in Barcelona had withdrawn, FIGO wished to proceed and had continued with the organisation. Another PCO had been appointed. The programme had been arranged and all speakers had accepted.

The question of certification of Fertility Centres had been referred from the Executive Committee for further discussion. Although it was possible to examine various countries’ Guidelines and develop a position paper, systems for quality assurance already existed and in Germany were mandatory for registration. This issue will be considered again at the next meeting.

No teaching material for the website had been offered, so no progress had been made on this subject.

A brief organisational meeting was held in Berlin for planning for the coming three years. It was also decided to change the name of the Committee to become the Education Committee and to be chaired by myself. The structure, the goals and the workplan of the committee are being developed and will be finalized and published at the next meeting at ASRM in Philadelphia in October 2004.

Ian Cooke
Medical Director, Education Subcommittee
IFFS Workshop in Estonia: Hot Topics in IVF/ICSI

An IFFS workshop “Hot Topics in IVF/ICSI” was held in Tartu, Estonia on 13 - 14 May 2004, one of the three small Baltic countries, where the first test-tube babies were born about ten years ago. The workshop was for all doctors and scientists dealing with infertility.

Estonia is a small country with a population of 1.4 million. As in other countries of the European Union, the demographic situation is very bad. The number of births has decreased in the last decade, and in 2003 only 13,000 children were born. This has considerably changed Estonian health care policy; there has also been better reimbursement for infertility treatment.

At the moment there are three IVF clinics in Estonia where 350 IVF procedures are carried out annually (~250 procedures per one million inhabitants). This is considerably less than in our neighbouring countries, Finland and Sweden, where up to 1500 IVF procedures are carried out per one million inhabitants a year. Related to the new reimbursement system and good results, a considerable rise in the number of IVF procedures is to be expected. In Estonia, infertility treatment is regulated by the “Embryo Protection Law” which allows up to three embryos to be transferred. However, a maximum of two embryos is usually transferred. Following our Northen neighbours, the Fimms, we have started to use elective single embryo transfer (eSET). At the moment, approximately 5% of all embryo transfers in Estonia are eSETs.

Seventy-five participants from all three Baltic countries came to the IFFS workshop. It started on the evening of May 13 with an official reception in the old library of the University. In his opening speech Professor Juha Tapanainen (Finland) talked about the IFFS organisation and its objectives. The lecture held in candlelight by Professor Ian Cooke (UK) gave an excellent overview of the causes and treatment of infertility, which resulted in a lively discussion.

In parallel with the workshop a medical exhibition was held where the three biggest sponsors - Ferring, Organon and Serono - presented their products. In the first presentation Dr. Erik Hauzman (Hungary) discussed the optimisation of stimulation schemes. Dr. Laure Morin-Papunen (Finland) discussed the problems related to PCOS and the hormonal stimulation of insulin-resistant patients, followed by Dr. Candido Tomas’s (Finland) presentation on the importance of embryo transfer.

Next came Dr. Hannu Martikainen and Dr. Christel Hyden-Granskog, whose work has resulted in eSET’s becoming very popular in Finland. Dr. Martikainen talked of his experience, and Dr. Hyden-Granskog discussed the issues related to embryo selection. Lastly Dr. Anne-Maria Suikkari (Finland) talked about in vitro maturation (IVM), Dr. Andres Salumets (Estonia) talked about the principles of embryo selection, Dr. Sirpa Mäkinen and Dr. Nina Horelli-Kuitunen about preimplantation embryo diagnosis and its results in Finland.

This IFFS workshop in Tartu was very important for Baltic IVF specialists to exchange experiences, supplement their knowledge and compare the results of their work with clinics from other countries.

Andres Salumets, PhD
Nova Vita Clinic
Tallinn, Estonia

Buenos Aires, IV International Annual Meeting of the Argentinian Society of Reproductive Medicine (SAMeR former SAEF)

The meeting was held in Buenos Aires, Argentina on March 17 - 18, 2004, “under the auspices of the IFFS”.

Prof. Bernard Hedon gave three presentations “A Review of new knowledge on PCO and Infertility Therapies”; “The use of GnRH analogs (agonist and antagonist) in Reproductive Medicine” and “Improvement of the ovulation induction protocols”. Different ART centers and hospitals from Argentina presented their experience and summarized the literature regarding different topics in andrology, endocrinology and ART.

Two hundred and twenty eight attendants participated in the meeting. They included gynecologists, embryologists and infertility specialists.

Three simultaneous workshops were held during the afternoon of the last day. The workshops were very well attended. They covered the topics of psychology, biology and biochemistry. The meeting was characterized by an atmosphere of relaxed discussion and was highly educational.

Ester Polak de Fried, M.D.
President,
Argentine Society of Sterility & Fertility

Picture: Dr. Armando Mendizabal (past President of the IFFS) Dr. Ester Polak de Fried (Treasurer of the IFFS), Dr. Bernard Hedon (President of the IFFS)
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**IFFS Education Committee 2004 - 2007**

Ian D. Cooke, MD (Chair)  Janos Urbancsek, MD
Bernard Hedon, MD         Roberto Matorras, MD
Basil Tarlatzis, MD       Jean Cohen, MD
Gamal I. Serour, MD       Roger D. Kemper, MD
Juha Tapanainen, MD, PhD  David Healy, MD
Ester Polak De Fried, MD  Paul Dalmeyer, MD
Joe Leigh Simpson, MD     Christine Yap, MD
Yung Kuei Soong, MD       Jean-Jacques Chabaud, MD

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**IFFS Industry Subcommittee 2004 - 2007**

David Healy, MD (Chair)
Bernard Hedon, MD
Basil Tarlatzis, MD
Gamal I. Serour, MD
Paul Dalmeyer, MD
Robert Talley, *ex officio*

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**International Federation of Fertility Societies**

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A dedicated group of people selected by the Canadian Fertility and Andrology Society has been working on this Congress since 1998. The committees worked together in harmony, the Board met twice a year while the Executive Committee met more frequently and almost weekly at the end. It was a wonderful group effort that culminated in the actual Congress.

We faced many challenges in the process, namely, the aftermath of September 11, 2001, the recent Madrid incident, the SARS outbreak, and the tightening of the security for the issuing of visas which obliged us to reimburse some 40 delegates.

A great effort was made to promote this Congress beginning in Melbourne where the Canadian Embassy graciously offered to host a reception to promote IFFS 2004. We had a booth at every major national and international congress. We produced many publications to promote the Congress beginning with a bookmark, First Announcement, Second Announcement, Program Update and an Advance Program. A website was developed in the early planning stages and constantly updated. E-mail blasts were sent out regularly to approx. 30,000 potential delegates.

We had a total of 1803 registrants from over 60 countries and notably 390 were from developing countries. This represented a net income from registrations of $377,162 USD.

With the help of the Canadian International Development Agency, we were able to invite and host 18 health care providers from developing countries under our outreach fellowship initiative.

There were 62 invited speakers for keynote and trilogy lectures and, we would like to acknowledge the support and guidance of the scientific committee in their selection.

Some 600 free communications were judged by our scientific committee and 460 were rated highly enough to be presented as oral and poster presentations.

The abstracts of the invited lectures were published in the final programme while the complete texts were compiled in the proceedings of the Congress.

Media coverage surpassed all our expectations.

There was keen interest in the subject matter, the presentations were state of the art and our spokespeople excellent.

84 journalists registered for the congress.

After just three days, there were more than 40 articles in a combination of print and electronic media.

During that week we consumed:
1200 liters of coffee
3800 assorted Danish, muffins and croissants
4000 cookies
315 bottles of wine
150 pounds of Quebec cheese; and 24 boxes of maple cookies – handed out from the IFFS management booth.

We believe a new record has been set during one of the coffee breaks when 120 dozen cookies were eaten within five minutes.

Two recommendations for the future IFFS Congresses were adopted by our Board on February 12, 2004.

a) The Board of IFFS 2004 recommended to IFFS they waive the registration fee of the President of IFFS.
b) The Board of IFFS 2004 recommended to IFFS that in the future, the registration of local board members be waived for the organizing committee.

A number of factors contributed to the success of this congress, the most important were:

♦ Strong leadership by Dr. Kemper and the IFFS
♦ Excellent local committees with the necessary autonomy and power vested in the chairs to do their work.
♦ A reputable PCO and a determined treasurer who monitored the budget carefully.
♦ Enthusiastic cooperation between staff and committee members.

Serge Belisle, MD, M. Sc.
Congress Chair

Four physicians who have made important contributions to the federation were awarded IFFS Honorary Memberships during the Opening Ceremony of the 18th World Congress of Fertility and Sterility, Montreal, Canada on May 23, 2004. Left to right: William Thompson MD, Belfast, Ireland; Arnaldo Acosta MD, Asuncion, Paraguay; Liselotte Mettler MD, Kiel, Germany; Robert Harrison MD, Dublin, Ireland; and Roger D. Kemper MD, President IFFS, United States.
FIGO-IFFS Joint Conference on
Recent Progress in Reproductive Medicine
November 5-6, 2004

Fira Palace Hotel, Barcelona, Spain

Honorary Presidents
Prof. Arnaldo Acosta, President of FIGO
Prof. Bernard Hedon, President of IFFS

A two day programme bringing together 28 renowned experts in the field of infertility from Europe, the Middle East, North and South America, to present the most recent developments and controversial issues in reproductive medicine.

Panel Topics
Infertility Diagnosis
Ovarian Stimulation in Assisted Reproduction
Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome (PCOS)
Fertility Preservation
Preimplantation Genetic Screening (PGS)
First Trimester Follow-up
Prevention of Multiple Pregnancies
Endometriosis

Keynote Lectures
Quality Assurance in ART
Different Religious Visions of ART
Stem Cells
Inclusion of Infertility Treatments in National Health Systems

The IFFS is pleased to be a partner in this event and to join with FIGO in celebrating its 50th anniversary.

For further information, including how to register and book your accommodation, please visit the conference website at: www.eventsintl.com/figo-iffs2004.
IFFS 2007 CONGRESS

The Southern African Society of Reproductive Science and Surgery is gearing up and launched its marketing drive in Montreal in June to host the IFFS 19th World Congress that will take place in Durban between the 30th April and 5th May 2007.

The award winning International Convention Centre Durban is the venue for this event. This renowned convention centre offers world class meeting and exhibition facilities, a wealth of experience and a friendly atmosphere. It has hosted such prestigious events as the XIII International AIDS Conference which attracted over 13,000 participants and many others.

It is well placed to present this conference successfully to you.

The 2007, 19th IFFS World Congress will be the first in Sub-Saharan Africa and promises an excellent program of scientific content with innovative and informative presentations and an outstanding exhibition where delegates will have exposure to the cutting-edge technology of our discipline.

We are planning to reduce the conference to 3 days. An initiative is to add a number of workshops to the event. A number of hands-on workshops by international experts on the surgical aspects of our discipline, i.e. Endoscopy, Hysteroscopy, as well as a Semenology workshop, are to be offered in Cape Town. We will structure them such that all will be able to participate in the main event in Durban. We believe Cape Town is a major attraction for those that want to see more of South Africa. For this reason we would also like to make available some of the activities in Cape Town. Further a number workshops will be offered in and around Durban. Topics such as HIV/AIDS in reproductive medicine, Ethics, Infertility for the developing world, IIOC (International Infertility Counselling Organisation) post-graduate course, and NAMS (North American Menopause Society) post-graduate course and competency examination and others are being investigated. We hope to be able to develop some of these workshops with and under the auspices of the ASRM and ESHRE. We are striving to offer a number of the smaller workshops in private game farms.

An African focus will be incorporated into the program as either keynote addresses or lunch time talks which will be of interest to all delegates and spouses. Possible topics: “Africa, the cradle of human kind”, talks on the protection of endangered species as well as “Africa, the mammal continent – Afrotheria/Africa”.

Further we are planning to screen some of the activities in Africa as part of the IFFS education and outreach program.

Social activities will be the focus of the warm hospitality that awaits you when the business is done. The program will include a wide range of pre- and post- Congress tours encompassing wildlife safaris, cultural events and our geographical wonders.

There will be sports activities and shopping excursions to name but a few.

Durban nestles on the shores of the Indian Ocean and is blessed with a sub-tropical climate that makes it an ideal destination for visitors all year round. South Africa has first world accommodation, transport and airline infrastructures, and vibrant modern cities with a wide variety of cuisine and entertainment. Come, experience our cities, magnificent country and its friendly rainbow people, and enjoy all that we have to offer.

Visit our website: www.iff2007.org.za

The Kingdom of the Zulu awaits you.

Paul Dalmeyer
Chairman of the Organising committee