

## Reports from National Societies

March 2009

*I have altered some of these reports slightly and apologise for any inadvertent alterations to the meaning.  
H.C.S.*

### 1. Report from the Balint Society of Australia

The Balint Society of Australia is having a year of growth plus consolidation. We now have 65 members and a total of 16 Balint groups with another 4 in the process of forming. As well, there are 4 Balint groups in New Zealand, and 2 in the process of forming, one of which is for remote area GPs via video linkage. We would be interested to hear of any other Balint groups which make use of video linkage.

Our committee continues to meet monthly by telephone linkups with 11 members from 4 cities across the country. This is a small group of people working to promote Balint work in Australia. Since last September, Marion Lustig has produced a brochure which is available in both hard copy and online, and is being rapidly distributed. Marion has also designed and produced a reusable A0 sized poster. A new edition of Balint Bulletin has also been distributed.

Our Committee of Management is to undertake a retreat on the 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> of April at the beach house of one of the Committee of Management members. Its purpose is to allow us to spend some time together, make connections and create an agenda as we go. We have never had this sort of time together and hope that it will be very productive.

Events since September 2008

- The WONCA Conference, 2<sup>nd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> October, included a Balint group offered as a workshop.
- Herbert Hahn, visiting UK psychotherapist and Balint group leader, presented a half-day workshop in November which was enthusiastically received.
- A 2-day pre-conference workshop was held prior to the RNZGP conference in Queenstown.
- 1-day Balint group for medical students in Auckland.

Proposed Events

- Another Herbert Hahn half-day scientific meeting/workshop in Melbourne
- A Balint group at the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners' conference in North Queensland in late September
- The Goodfellow Unit at Auckland Medical School has formally offered to run a leadership Intensive in the first half of 2010

Penny Love

### 2. Report from the Austrian Balint Society

*I had the wrong email for the secretary so this may explain the absence of a report from the Austrian Society.*  
*HS*

### 3. Report from the Belgian Balint Society

1. The 36th Day of Study took place on November 22nd, 2008 on the subject " *Who will look after me tomorrow? Medicine and changes society*". It gathered, around the administrators of the SBB, people in charge of professional defence, teaching to medical students, as well as a sociologist and a systemic psychiatrist. Conferences, debates, role play and a Balint group made this day lively and fruitful for the participants..

2. The review No.105 went out in March, 2009 on the subject of this Day.

3. No. 06 (in September, 2009) will have for subject: "*The imagination and the dreams in medicine* "

4. For the Day of November, 2009, the CA intends to invite reflection from members of medical and non-medical occupations of interdisciplinary work. Date and place are to be decided.
5. The supervision of psychoanalytical type of the leaders of Balint groups continues.
6. The post-Balint group, place of learning, experiment and questioning of animation, collecting leaders and potential leaders, met on 5 occasions (included an assessment) in 2008-2009 with as observer, a psychoanalyst outside the SBB.
7. The electronic newsletter, inaugurated in January, 2008, has just been distributed for the 6th time
8. 6th Spring Balint took place on March 28th, 2009
9. The day of May 9th, 2009 will be dedicated to internal reflection, a meeting of Balint leaders, administrators and some guests. There will be reflection on the work which takes place in Balint groups and on the spirit of the Balint Society, and from texts drafted by members.
10. The committee to help and train future Balint leaders brings several leaders in position to be able to open a group in brève term
11. Several administrators of the SBB continue to animate workshops or conferences, in particular on " *burn-out of the nursing* " and presentations of the " *methodology Balint* " in diverse medical groups. Presentation also in a day on " *the place of the feelings in medicine* ", in another one on " *the pathologies of working* "
12. Several administrators (4 - 7) will be present at the congress in Brasow.

**Dr J. Fléchet (Président) and Dr M. Delbrouck (Vice-Président)**

#### **Report from the Croatian Balint Society**

*None received*

#### **4. Report from the Danish Balint Society**

We have at the moment 59 members. There was a good attendance at the annual residential course in September 2008 in Klitgaarden, Skagen, led by Tove Mathiesen and Erik Pedersen.

It seems realistic to organise at least two courses or seminars per year.

The seminar preceding this year's general assembly 27<sup>th</sup> March 2009 was on the possible relation of non secure attachment on trust in the doctor-patient relationship.

One committee now works in the society on course organising; another is working on describing standards for (good enough) supervision.

For the Nordic Congress in General Practice in May 2009 Helena Nielsen has planned a symposium on Balint work from early medical school till continuing professional development in general practice with room for discussing strength and limitations of this sort of group work. There was given room for neither a fishbowl nor Balint groups during the congress.

However an event is arranged immediately after the congress with the attendance of several Nordic Balintians, Dorte Kjeldmand and John Salinsky, and hopefully Lenka Speight and Marieke Schie as well.

Helena G. Nielsen

President of the Danish Balint Society

[www.balintsociety.dk](http://www.balintsociety.dk)

#### **5. Report from the Finnish Balint Society**

Spring seminar was held in Kauniainen on the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> of May with over twenty participants, also some new young faces. The presentations were given by Professor emeritus Johannes Lehtonen on Psychic trauma and Professor emeritus Pekka Lariivaara on Systemic Work in Medicine.

Hannu Makkonen and Riitta Mäkelä are nominated Honorary Members of the Society.

( The previous Honorary Members are Juhani Rekola, Eeva Makkonen and Marja Nick. )

The Finnish Balint Society has been continuing the project to get more doctors that are acquainted with supervision and counseling for doctors and our concern is to train more certified Balint group leaders. We have a working seminar in April on the theme.

Information and posters on Balint groups are presented in various national medical meetings and conferences ( mostly for GPs ) with a lot of interest on the subject but for the moment not many new groups. But the seed is planted...

Also medical students have been informed about supervision and Balint groups. There is one student group in the University of Turku.

We have been working together with other Nordic countries in planning a Balint workshop in a Nordic GP meeting May 2009. Information about International Balint meetings has been offered in the homepage and in membership letters ( 2-4 per year ).

Kristiina Toivola

M.D. President of the Finnish Balint Society

#### **6. Report from the French Balint Society**

*None received*

#### **7. Report from the German Balint Society**

*None received*

#### **8. Report from the Michael Balint Psychosomatic (Hungarian Balint) Society**

The General Assembly of the Hungarian Michael Balint Psychosomatic Society there was held on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2009. Our board elected Dr Andor Harrach, one of the board members, as vice president of our Society. We continued regular monthly scientific sessions including Balint groups and lectures about one of psychosomatic topics. Our Society took part in the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Hungarian Psychiatric Association with a workshop including Balint group organized by Kornelia Bobay, and two papers (Andor Harrach and Kornelia Bobay). There was introduced the Humania group, which has been a group of medical students and young resident doctors who have been interested in Balint work and psychosomatic topics. In the frame of the Humania group there is the junior Balint group. Eight of them took part in a training to become Balint group leader and finished it in autumn in 2008. Andor Harrach and Endre Schnell wrote an article about the Balint work to a Hungarian medical journal.

On 14<sup>th</sup> June there was held the 21<sup>st</sup> Hungarian Balint Conference. Within lecture round table session and Balint groups. Andor Harrach travelled to the medical universities of Szeged, Debrecen and Pécs to make contact with departments of family doctors and Institutes of Behavioural Medicine.

We have continued our activity in the year 2009 organizing monthly scientific sessions and taking part in the 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Hungarian Psychiatric Association with round table session about Balint group work and with another round table session in psychosomatic topic. The 22<sup>nd</sup> Hungarian Balint Conference will be held on 20<sup>th</sup> of June. Unfortunately the number of members decreased but we will do everything to increase it. Therefore we will make contact with the Chamber of Medical Doctors offering our programmes for them.

Budapest, 04. April. 2009.

Dr Kornelia Bobay president

#### **9. Report from the Israeli Balint Society**

The Israel Balint Society, is officially a "circle" within the Organization of Family Physicians. We have about 40 paying members, mainly family physicians, but also a number of psychiatrists, social workers and psychologists..

As usual, we have also this year 2 meetings for members only, and one big Balint day for everyone who is interested.

The last meeting dealt with the cooperation between the two group-leaders and their style of leading. Every two month we have an evening session for the supervision of leaders. I assume that there are at least 10 Balint groups constantly running in our country. Recently, we had a special kind of Balint day within the faculty of medicine at Tel Aviv university. The department of medical education asked us to explain the Balint idea and to do Balint groups with the staff members and instructors, about 40 people participated, coming from many medical professions. It was a great success.

About 10-12 people from Israel will attend the congress in Romania. Mark Budow took upon himself the organization of this journey. In Chicago there will, unfortunately, be only one Israeli representative.

Benyamin Maoz

**10. Report from the Italian Balint Society**

*None received*

**11. Report from the Dutch Balint Society**

*None received*

**12. Report from the Polish Balint Society**

*None received*

13.

**14. Report from the Portuguese Balint Society**

- **Balint Groups:** In the moment, the following groups are running: 3 groups in Lisbon, mainly with GPs trainees, with a meeting once a month; 2 in Aveiro, with more mature GPs and 1 in Oporto, with young GPs.
- **Intervision group** We maintain a once a month *intervision* meeting in Lisbon, joining some of the present leaders from the groups of Aveiro, and Lisbon.
- **Presence in Congresses** Last January, we have been in a GPs Congress, presenting a talk concerning the Balint group as a continuing way of helping doctors in their professional activity. After that we performed an experimental session with about 15 doctors, that was leaded by Antónia Lavinha and Jorge Brandão
- **Elections** Next May we are going for elections in our Association, to choose new members for the Administration Board. We are expecting to renew it a little, with the entrance of young Balint doctors.

2009-07-07

APGB

**15. Report from the Romanian Balint Society**

Since the last report made for Leiden, the Romanian Balint Society organized the following Balint events in our country:

\*The XVth National Balint Conference -September 26-28, 2008, including the General RBA meeting where a new steering committee was elected.

\*Inter-regional Balint Weekend in Satu-Mare (North-East of the country)-November 21-23, 2008 with 33 participants. It was a good opportunity for initiate a new group in balint work and to promote Balint's idea in this region of the country.

\*Inter-regional Balint Winter-Weekend in Roman (North-West of the country)-December 12-14, 2008 with 48 participants. Here were presented two papers in a very interactive manner witch generate intresting and useful debates. A new Balint group started his activity after this meeting in this moldavian town.

\*National Balint Winter-Weekend in Izvorul-Muresului (Central region of the country)-January 16-18, 2009 with 95 participants. Were exposed 4 papers and in the program of the weekend was included the council meeting of the RBA.

\*We had Michel Delbrouck at the second workshop of our Leader Training Course on March 13-15, 2009. The course had the same location that the Congress of the IBF will have in September in Poiana Brasov. Here we had debated also questions connected to the organisation of the future 2009 IBF Congress.

In this period before the IBF Board meeting, the Romanian Organizing Committee of the next International Congress is working to elaborate a complete report to be presented by Albert Veress in Chicago.

Hoping to meet you in Romania in September and to have a successful Congress together,

Tunde Baka

President of RBA

#### **16. Report from the St. Petersburg (Russian) Balint Society**

Since our last report the Society was supporting the activities in the ongoing Balint groups in the St. Petersburg Medical Academy for postgraduate studies and other educational institutions in St. Petersburg (State University and State Academy for postgraduate studies of teachers) for post-graduate students and trainees.

The Society took an active part in the organizing and providing the regular psychosomatic conferences and training courses for physicians and medical psychologists from different regions of the country.

Last December in cooperation with the East-European Institute of Psychoanalysis we provided the national Conference "Balint Groups in the professional growth of physicians and psychologists: history, achievements, perspectives". Our paper on Balint supervision technology was presented in the program of Russian national Congress of psychotherapists (Moscow, October 2008).

The Society presented regularly our papers and supervision work-shops in the Institute of Psychoanalysis.

The Society was keeping on-going Balint leadership training courses in Moscow and in South Ural region.

This January the national Psychotherapeutic Association established the Balint section. I was elected as head of the section. We believe this will help to implement Balint activities into psychotherapists and other physicians.

Prof. Vladimir Vinokur,

President

March 2009

#### **17. Report from the Balint Society of Serbia**

In the last period The Balint Society of Serbia had the following activities:

- we managed to finish the registration process of our Balint Society and since January 2009 our Balint Society has been named The Balint Society of Serbia.

- we made a request to The Serbian Ministry of Health and to The Medical Chamber of Serbia (to their commissions) for the accreditation of an educational program of our Balint Society in order to be accepted as a mode of an obligatory continuative education of the doctors. We haven't had legal possibilities for that until now.

The other activities of the Society are as usual:

- collaboration with The Medical University of Belgrade  
(The Balint Group for the doctors from The Medical University specialising General medicine)
- bi-monthly continuative Balint Seminar (continuative Balint Group)
  - the new is collaboration with the Section for the general medicine of The Medical Society of Serbia which we consider very important. On one of the regular meetings of the Section dr N. Vranjes and dr Tatjana Popovic Vasilic gave a lecture about The Balint Groups.
  - on June the 4th, 2009 The President of IBF is expected to come, dr Henry Jablonski, which we are looking forward to see.
  - We have send an Abstract for The Balint Congress that will take place in Romania in September, 2009, where we hope we can participate.

Natasa Vranjes

President

#### **18. Report from the Swedish Balint Society - March 2009**

The annual meeting of the Swedish Balint Society was held on March 12. Kjell Reichenberg, MD, Ph D, pediatrician, licenced psychotherapist and Balint group leader from Gothenburg joined the Board.

The jury for the Writer's Award of the Swedish Balint Society completed their work judging 25 essays in the competition that was open to all kinds of medical and paramedical professionals and five papers for the

medical student's special prize. Two of the students also translated their papers (with some help of us) and submitted them for the Ascona Prize. Generally the quality of the papers was very high and the jury had a hard work to choose the total of 7 prizes - a first prize for each category and four + one second prizes.

We have worked in close cooperation with Helena Nielsen for the Nordic GP Biannual meeting to assist her in producing a comprehensive Balint programme. And we are pleased to see a Nordic cooperation emerging. We have approached institutions and other societies for doctors to introduce and promote the Balint group method. We connected GP specialist registrars who wished to form a group to a very experienced GP in our society who is now leading. We are working on criteria for Balint group leaders accreditation. We proposed a new Balint symposium for the National Meeting of the Swedish Society in Medicine (the last one in 2006 was successful). We are also preparing for a Balint study day in those Noember days when doctors from all over Sweden will be gathered in Stockholm.

Henry Jablonski

## **19. Report from the Swiss Balint Society (Schweizerische Balint)**

### **Board:**

Monika Diethelm Knoepfel (President)

Philipp Portwich (Vice President)

Heinrich Egli (Treasurer)

Kathrin Bichsel (Protocol)

Felix Altorfer

Samuel Wiener Barraud

### **next board meeting: 16.5 in Zurich**

-in 2008, we could welcome two new members who proved to be qualified as Balint group leaders (one received his training in Switzerland, the other one in Germany); we regret that our balint friend Hans Brändli died, formerly leader and active at the sils meetings.

### **Total number of members at the present: 53**

-**Recent discussions** about the state of the society and the situation of balint work in general ended in establishing a new project (called "quo vadis?"): A group of 4 members (Samuel Wiener-Barraud, Gerold Roth, Hanspeter Kunz, Philipp Portwich) prepared suggestions for future developments of the society: How can the swiss balint society work more effectively? How can we promote balint work and achieve a better acceptance? First results were presented at the general assembly in Berne (November 2008) and the group was asked to continue their activities, in particular to reflect the criteria for the leadership training.

- Following invitation of the organizing committee, the SBG became member of the advisory board of the **Wonca congress (September 2009)**, where a balint symposium with group work will take place (organized by Henry Jablonski) important dates:
- **Intervision für Balintgruppenleiter Zürich 16.5.**
  - Journées Balint d'Annecy (F) 20.-23.5.**
  - 10. Interdisziplinäre Balinttage auf Wartensee 18.-20.6.**
  - 48. Balint-Studienwoche in Sils 13.-19.9.**
  - 5. Interdisziplinärer Balinttag in Thun 31.10.**
  - Generalversammlung der SBG in Bern 7.11.**

Philipp Portwich,

- Bern, March 2009

for further information: ask [philippportwich@aol.com](mailto:philippportwich@aol.com) or have a look at [www.balint.ch](http://www.balint.ch)

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## **20. Report from the UK Balint Society**

The secretary apologises for his absence but knows the Balint Society is represented by others at this meeting and Dr Watt will see everyone in Romania.

The Balint Society continues to improve its leadership training and accreditation in response to increased need. We now have three annual weekend events: Oxford, Lancashire and Newcastle. We also had the first day of Balint groups in London for some years and hope this will become an annual event. Two of the weekends this year feature a group leaders group, both Oxford and Newcastle. Balint groups are now stated in

the RCGP curriculum to be a good source of reflective group work and are thus recommended. Training psychiatrists are also now obliged to participate in Balint group work, and many are taking place, not linked to the Society. We must try to link better with this work

The Society has received a large charitable donation which is to be used for the development of Balint work in the North-west of England, which includes Lancashire, where a network of Balint people is being set up. Lastly, Dr Elder and Dr Watt are travelling to Boston in June to continue work with the Harvard Programme in Refugee Trauma to try to take our work to “front line “ situations where health care workers are facing very severe case work which must need support.

Dr D Watt(Hon Sec) 28.3.09

## **21. Report from the American Balint Society**

*None received*

## **22. Report from the Association Internationale du Psychodrame Balint (AIPB) (August 2009)**

Since our last report our association (we count 51 members) has continued with its regular activities in France, Switzerland and Canada.

Our 2008 annual symposium took place in Paris, on October 18th, on the theme “Body, language, memory and Balint-Psychodrama”. The latest issue of our review “Les Quatre Temps” has been published recently with the contributions of this symposium.

We now have 16 regular groups, most of them in different parts of France, but also three in the French speaking part of Switzerland, and one in Canada. A new group opened in Lille (France), but on the whole the recruitment of new participants remains difficult. In spite of our presence in Italy and the organization of our annual symposium in 2007 in Genova, our Italian leaders did not succeed in opening a new group.

Some of our regular activities take place during the training of young doctors or are part of the training of specialists, as it is the case in the postgraduate training in sexology in Paris.

Our close and long collaboration with the French association AREFFS, (an association devoted to the research and training in the domain of the relationship between health professionals and patients) manifests itself each year in the “Journées Franco-Suisses d’Annecy”, as well as in the organisation of CME’s (continuing medical education) workshops, and in an annual meeting of all the group leaders involved in all these activities. Our last reunion of leaders was dedicated to the discussion of the psychotherapeutic work of general practitioners.

The yearly four-days symposium in Annecy that has occurred regularly for more than 40 years is strictly devoted to Balint group work and is opened to all members of the health professions. This year we counted around 50 participants.

The regular CME’s two-days workshops take place in different cities throughout France. These workshops are mainly open to GPs; less frequently to specialists. They meet with considerable success, fulfilling the needs of many regular and faithful participants. Some of the participants are newcomers who discover Balint work for the first time. Next year there will be a significant increase in the number of workshops throughout France. These workshops seem very promising for the future of Balint work in France.

A constant concern for us remains the recruitment and the training of new group leaders, as well as the modalities of our continuing training. We hope that some of the psychiatrists and psychotherapists who already are participants in some regular groups will be interested in joining the training process and will work in co-leadership roles with leaders coming from different fields. Whatever the difficulties, it seems to us very important to maintain a psychoanalytical dimension in the training in Balint work.

During these last two years, on the occasion of congresses and in some institutions, we have met with some difficulty in having our method of Balint psychodrama accepted. We have had to confront some prejudices and have had to challenge some preconceptions concerning our work. We hope that a fruitful collaboration with our colleagues of other societies may develop.

We are looking forward to participating at the next congress in Brasov.

Our next symposium will take place in Nîmes on the 26th of September.

For more information please visit our website: <http://www.psychodrame-balint.com>

Annie Bouillon  
Présidente  
Grenoble

Jean-Pierre Bachmann  
Geneva

25th of August 2009

### **23. Balint work in Bulgaria (no society y)**

My efforts in Bulgaria for spreading Balint work is more than successful. Since the last two years I have been training and supervising a group of experienced psychotherapists as Balint group leaders. I use the training programme already established in Germany and visit Bulgaria 3-4 times per year. I am very satisfied with the results of my training, the group members work very hard and make great progresses.

At the same time it was necessary to underline the importance of psychosomatic medicine in general and to teach doctors some skills, e.g. how to provide a psychosomatic consultation. This kind of lectures I have organized for the gynaecologists in Sofia: My newly established psychosomatic training courses at the Medical University Sofia include also Balint work. My goal is to inform the colleagues about the benefits of the psychosomatic way of thinking and to promote Balint work, which could support them further. Since September 2009 I will have lectures on psychosomatic obstetrics and gynaecology in the regular course for medical students at Medical University in Sofia and I intend to offer a Balint seminary as well.

The next project is to make contact with the Bulgarian GP society and to offer organising Balint groups for GPs. I hope, that in the meantime my group of Balint group-leaders will be ready autonomously to lead Balint groups and I will only supervise them.

Some members of my group were very interested to participate in the International Balint Congress in Brashov, but unfortunately they couldn't afford even the reduced participation fees and the accommodation. So this year there will be no Bulgarian participation. I myself won't be in Brashov too, because of a congress in Shanghai, the travel had been arranged a long time ago. I hope the best that in the next congress the Bulgarians will be able to join the international Balint world.

Dr. Vivian Pramataroff-Hamburger  
Munich / Germany  
Aug-09

