

Reports from National Societies

Distributed in Brussels in March 2006:

These reports have been edited, I apologise for any inadvertent alterations to the meaning. H.C.S.

1. Australia:

The Balint Society of Australia formed in 2005 now has 25 members. We know of about 10 groups, the majority in Melbourne.

We ran a 4 session Balint workshop, involving 40 participants (GPs and several psychotherapists) plus a half day leadership workshop, at the annual RACGP Convention in Darwin in 2005, with visitors John Salinsky (U.K.) and Albert Lichtenstein (U.S.A.) together with Australian leaders. This year the Convention will be held in Brisbane in October and we are delighted that Heide Otten is planning to participate. We will also be running a Balint workshop at the GP Conference and Exhibition in Sydney in May.

In 2005 we had scientific meetings at which Henry Jablonski from Sweden and Albert Lichtenstein from the U.S.A. presented papers. We will hold a scientific meeting this May, presented by our own members, focused on Balint leader training.

We circulate an electronic newsletter, Balint Bulletin, to a mailing list of about 145 people. Several of our members have participated in American Balint Society leadership intensives, and 3 people will be attending the next one in March.

Two of us are working to compile a comprehensive data base of Balint literature in English. If anyone has any reference lists, we would appreciate your sending them to me (Marion Lustig, Email address below). We are also working on a literature review about the effectiveness of Balint groups.

We are working on a website for our Society at www.balintaustralia.net and have created a wikipedia space at <http://balint.wikispaces.com> where ANYONE can post information about Balint groups - we are hoping that many of you will contribute!

Anyone visiting Australia who would like to make contact with us is welcome. Let me know if you would like to help with a workshop or present a paper.

Marion Lustig (President, Balint Society of Australia)

"mailto:mlustig@optusnet.com.au"

John Barton (Vice-President)

Larry Osborne (Secretary)

Ruth Dunn (Treasurer)

2. Belgium:

Since the last International Balint Congress in Stockholm, we have organised some intra-sessions of reflexion between the members of the SBB's council meeting.

In March 2006, we will organise the third Printemps Balint (Balint Spring) during one day with several types of Balint groups and many different Balint leaders.

Throughout the academic year all the Balint leaders continue to have psychoanalytic supervision with Mrs Suzann Wolff who will propose such a session for the international Balint leaders after the IBF's council meeting at Brussels on the 11th march 2006. Each month, they can attend postbalint group to present their own cases and to learn and continue to improve their leading ability.

The Belgian Balint Society organises several meetings on "The burn-out syndrome" and on the theme of "How to conserve the pleasure of medicine?" in different locations in Belgium with the purpose of extending the Balint method.

On 18th November 2006, we will have our national meeting on Evidence Based Medicine with many lectures and Balint groups.

Our Balint groups are going well and we have new leaders since the time we built a group of coaching and training for the future and young Balint leaders. Where each candidate receives a

training program, observes a group for one year and trains a co-leading group. They also receive group dynamic training, have personal psychotherapy and attend some courses on psychopathology.

At the end of 2006 we will elect a new board for the next three years. Dr Michel DELBROUCK

3. Croatia:

6th-10th June 2005 "Muradif Kulenovic" School of Balint Method in IUC in Dubrovnik dedicated to Doctor-patient relationships in prediction of ageing.

February 2006 Hrvoje Vukovic organised Congress of Family Medicine and we had a workshop on the Balint approach to Burn-out.

In new academic year we continue with Balint training for postgraduate study in Family Medicine and published script for them. (150 students)

We have just begun a scientific project, including Balint approach, on Depression and Co-morbidity in Primary Health Care, and another in Palliative care..

We are preparing a workshop about the Balint approach to Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder for medical students (1.-6- year) for their Annual Meeting. One of them has to prepare the case.

We published three papers about Training cum research, first for Acta Medica Croatica and Danubina,- Psychiatric Journal (both cited in current contents) and two more are in publishing process.

Papers:

.1. Stojanovic-Špehar S, Blažekovic-Milakovic S, Matanic D. "Education about pharmacotherapy and psychotherapy of anxiety among primary care physicians in Croatia. Balint Group approach." Croat Med J. 2004;45:625-9 (CC). 2. Vukovic H., Blažekovic Milakovic S., Stojanovic Špehar S. Šupe S "Sensibility to the unconscious (Balint approach – Application in practice"; Croatia Iadertina, 2006 3.. Sanja. Blažekovic-Milakovic 1., Stanislava. Stojanovic-Špehar 1, Biserka. Bergman- Markovic 1, Milica. Katic 1, Gordana Županic 1, Svjetlana. Šupe 2 "Training cum research" obavezni oblik kontinuirane medicinske edukacije u Hrvatskoj (Continuing education in Croatia), Acta Medica Croatica. 2006.

Forthcoming Event: date for your diary:

5th -10th June 2006 the "Muradif Kulenovic" School of Balint Method will be held in Inter University Centre in Dubrovnik. (All sessions are in English). This year's theme is "The patient at cardiovascular risk: the Balint approach." "IT IS NOT WHAT YOU EAT THAT KILLS YOU: IT IS WHAT EATS YOU THAT KILLS YOU. "

4. Denmark:

On 25th November 2005 The Danish Balint Society fused with another Danish Society (Bendixselskabet for psykoterapeutisk samtale). This society is based on the ideas of a Danish psychiatrist, Torben Bendix, who had a great influence in training GPs in talking treatment in a special way, using audiotapes. His work was very much inspired by Michael Balint and a psychodynamic approach. The new rules were discussed and agreed upon. We have agreed on the international name to remain The Danish Balint Society but our Danish name will be: Selskab for Samtale og Supervision i Almen Praksis (Though not quite exact the meaning the translation would be: society for talking treatment and supervision in general practice). On the list from the former Bendix Society were about 35 members. We are just about to ask for the fees, then we shall see how many members will still be there from the two societies. Our website remains:

www.balintsociety.dk

Best wishes

Helena Nielsen

President of The Danish Balint Society

5. France:

Report from Société Médicale Balint

1 Regular activities:

As usual we had our national congress, this year in Metz, last October on the theme: "Borders, limits and frontiers .." As usual, we will have our national day for the leaders on the 19th of March on the theme: "Balint groups'leadership: differences between the leadership in congresses, in seminars (short-lived groups) and traditional groups." As usual, we are ready to welcome you to our next congress, in Lille, in October (7 and 8) (cf websites) and we know that many English and Belgian people are going to come, so near it is to their own country (swimming, jogging...)

2 New things:

The seminars Balint, which are paid for the GP, are going on well. We have now several seminars (Paris, Strasbourg, Thionville, St Brieuc) and several themes (dépression,addiction). Balint groups are obviously included in the two days together with some theoretical papers. Some groups are also set for students (Necker, Bichat...) but we know it's not enough and we have to develop that a little more.

3 Future with you:

The French Euract delegates never answered our question about the bad experience of Euract on the subject of the Balint formation.

Very good news: we can announce the first "e-International Balint Journal". The first three abstracts are from Tunde Baka, David Watt and Marie-Anne Puel. But many people agree to contribute.(Germany, Spain, Portugal, Belgium) We do hope there will be many of you in Paris, for the Wonca meeting (17-21 October 2007) but more information will be given in Brussels) Marie-Anne Puel

6. Germany:

Activities of the Balint Society from August 2005 to March 2006

Stockholm was a wonderful experience. The German participants say thank you again to the Swedish hosts!

In September we had three more of our 16 Balint weekend workshops during the year; it was in Freudenstadt/black forest, in Schwerin/MeckPom and in Heiligkreuztal, a cloister in South Germany. In October we were in Berlin and in Bern, where the Ascona-prize board was meeting and discussing the future of the foundation. In November I was invited to a Balint workshop in Israel, which was very impressive. We also planned our next board meeting for the IBF to take place on Lake Kinneret in November 2006. It is a marvellous place! Our final German weekend workshop for the year is always in November in Würzburg. It is from Wednesday to Sunday, with vivid discussions. This time we had a neurophysiologic topic, "the mirror neurones", which are very important for our empathy and anticipation. And since three years we cooperate with the behaviourists there. We exchange thoughts about their way of having case supervision groups and our Balint groups. It used to be a discussion full of fear and aggression. Now it turns out to be cooperative and fruitful. This year we started with our workshop close to Bonn. We have a lot of young people there; most of them have to participate in Balintwork. Nevertheless it is a very good atmosphere. An experiment was our next meeting in Göttingen. We transferred this from the Harz Mountains to the University town, because we wanted more students and young people – and succeeded. Our special guests were Benyamin Maoz from Israel and Rudolf Honegger from Switzerland. The exchange with the Swiss Balintgroup leaders exists since many years. One of our leaders is invited to Sils-Maria in September. In Göttingen we had a series of very interesting lectures besides the group work. In our yearly meeting of the members we discussed to allow clinical psychologists to become members in our society. We will pass a new statute in Potsdam in May 2006. And we decided to have Supervision groups in more regions and to offer them for free for our Balint leaders every second year.

Ernst Petzold was in Australia in October 2005 and contacted Marion Lustig. They will have a Congress in Brisbane in October 2006. Ernst and I are invited to participate and we will. On

Wednesday I will go off to Portugal to a GP Congress and introduce Balint work there and invite the colleagues to come to Lisbon next year.

Also we are planning an Ascona meeting in May.

And we will have 15 weekend workshops this year and will be present at some more psychotherapeutic and psychosomatic congresses in Germany.

Heide Otten, Secretary of the German Balint Society Wienhausen, 2006-03-06

7. Hungary:

There is no formal report from Hungary but a message from Maria Szirtes to say that she and Kornelia Bobay continue Balint work in Budapest. They regret that they are not able to come to Brussels.

8. Israel:

General:

The Israeli Balint Society still has only 40 – 45 paying members.

There are a number of Balint groups running in our country.

Balint Groups became an obligatory part of the residence program in Family Medicine in most of the faculties.

For the first time a psychiatric hospital has asked a G.P who is a Balint leader to conduct a Balint group for the psychiatric residents.

Meetings:

In November 2005 we had an open Balint meeting, to which every interested professional could come. Heide Otten visited this meeting and addressed the audience. There were about 60 participants. As usual, we had a lecture by a well known writer.

In March 2006 we had a meeting of Balint leaders. There were about 32 participants. A part of the program was dedicated to the possibility of the documentation, evaluation and qualitative research of Balint groups. There was also a very creative discussion of the question: How does the personal development of the leaders influence the way they conduct Balint groups?

We have started to plan the international meeting on November 16 in Maa'gan at the lake of Genezareth, Israel.

9. Portugal:

During the last months of 2005:

In September, during the Family Medicine Congress promoted by the Portuguese Association of General Practitioners (APMCG), we performed several activities of promotion of Balint work, which included a demonstration group;

In October, we organized the "I National Meeting of Balint Groups", in Lisbon, during two days, with the attendance of about 45 persons. It was a successful event, as it allowed the interchange of experiences among several actual and past participants in Balint Groups;

During 2006:

Some changing in the way of functioning of the Balint Group of Lisbon (APMCG), with the perspective of starting a new one

Very active participation in the 23rd National Meeting of General Practice, promoted by APMCG, with the following activities:

Participation in a plenary session dedicated to the Complexity in Medicine, with the presence as speaker of Heide Otten

Organization of an International Balint Group, leaded by Heide Otten

Organization of a traditional Balint demonstration session, co-leaded by two Portuguese colleagues from APGB (Antonia Lavinha & Rizério Salgado)

Maintenance of two Balint Groups in Aveiro (Fernanda Jesuíno & Jorge Brandão) with GPs; one

group in Beja (Maria José Palma & JB) with nurses and another group with GPs in Porto (Fernanda Santos & Guimarães Lopes).

Maintenance of monthly four pages annex in the newspaper of APMCG. It's entitled InterFace and all the texts are of our own responsibility, being constituted by report of cases from the groups, news from the activities of APGB and IBF, etc.

Collaboration with a generic medicines company in the edition of a quarterly edition of a four pages brochure dedicated to the doctor-patient relationship, entitled ConTacto

10. Romania:

Since we met in Sept 2005, the Balint Association has organized two more large scale meetings: The first between 9-11 December, a Weekend inter-county meeting with 44 members taking part, and the second, a national Weekend meeting with 78 participants. The new board was elected in September 2005 The Romanian Balint Society would like to be the host to the board meeting in spring 2007, we would organize it at Poiana Brasov, a wonderful mountain resort here in the country, about 150 km from the airport. We would like the Federation Board to consider this proposal.
Albert Veress

11. United Kingdom:

The Balint Society continues as usual in the year 2005/6.

New developments:

There is a new group in London for working GPs;

Dr P Shoenberg continues to run student Balint groups at University

College Hospital with Heather Suckling and Sotiris Zalidis-this project is now in its third year and has secured funding for next year.

The Oxford weekend this year will be preceded by a day devoted to Group leadership learning, to complement the ongoing London group Leaders workshop.

The Society has been in correspondence with the RCGP and is pleased that some positive mention of Balint Group work appears in the future Curriculum for the Teaching of General Practitioners

Forthcoming Conferences:

June 16th -18th 2006. Whalley Abbey, Lancashire.

Contact: Dr Caroline Palmer Tel: 01282863361 Fax: 01282871698

September 15th -17th 2006. Exeter College, Oxford

Contact Dr David Watt. David.watt@gp-f84093.nhs.uk

David Watt