

Reports from National Societies

Potsdam March 2007:

*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: March 2007

We are planning our first Balint leaders' workshop to be held in Hobart, Tasmania from May 31-June 3. We will have three guest leaders from the American Balint Society: Clive Brock, Frank Dornfest and Albert Lichtenstein.

An article by Marion Lustig and Albert Lichtenstein entitled "Integrating intuition and reasoning: how Balint groups can help medical decision" appeared in a recent edition of Australian Family Physician and is available at

<http://www.racgp.org.au/Content/NavigationMenu/Publications/AustralianFamilyPhys/2006issues/afp200612/20061205lichtenstein.pdf>

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 sharing them with us (contact mlustig@optusnet.com.au)

As always, we would love to hear from any Balint people who are visiting Australia.

Marion Lustig (President, Balint Society of Australia)

mlustig@optusnet.com.au

The Balint Society of Australia will become a member of the International Balint Federation at the meeting of the IBF Council in March 2007. HS.

2. Report from the Belgian Balint Society

1. On 18th November 2006, our annual congress, whose subject was "Evidence Based Médecine, to care over the evidence, between numbers & soul". Around a hundred people were present; the organisation was hard work, but it was a great success and we were all satisfied.
2. We are continuing the leaders supervision with Mrs Suzann Wolff, with ten participants (5 times per year). Each Balint group is represented by at least one leader.
3. In December, the triennial election led to the following changes in the committee: Jean Fléchet is the new president, Michel Delbrouck the vice-president, Christine Claix is the secretary and Christian Picard is the treasurer.
4. On 10th March, we organized the "4th Balint Spring", a day when participants had the opportunity to be in 2 different Balint groups (evening & afternoon). The aim was to permit the discovery of Balint work before entering a real group. The quality of the work and enthusiasm of the participants was very satisfying; but the low number was disappointing. We had only 12, whereas last year we had 25 and we had hoped to have 50. We have some ideas for change next year.
5. The theme of our next study day on 10th November 2007 will be "Suffering at work", leading to reflexion about our place in relation to our patients. We have invited sociologists, philosophers and psychiatrists to widen the view of the situation.

J. Fléchet,

3. Report from The Danish Balint Society

We have now 59 members.

In September 2006 the annual seminar at Klitgaarden was arranged by Tove Mathiesen and Erik Pedersen. This has been a successful tradition from the former Bendix Society, which will be repeated in the future as well.

In the vocational training for general practice the registrars are supposed to participate in supervision groups in the last year of the training. In cooperation with the Danish College of General Practitioners 5 members of The Danish Balint Society initiated, planned and subsequently executed the task of training 22 GPs to be able to lead these groups of registrars. 4 different supervision methods, Balint and also Bendix, the reflecting team and a method based on the consultation process inspired by Colin Coles. The course consisted of 4 2,5 days seminars every 2 month with 30 hours of supervision training and the recommended literature was among others The doctor as drug (Lægen som lægemiddel), which was presented at the International Balint Congress in Stockholm 2005. The last seminar was in March 2007 and it has been a great success.

As a consequence of the augmentation of members we have now been able to pay the full fee and become full members of the IBF.

Helena Nielsen

President of The Danish Balint Society

4. Report from the Finnish Balint Society

The Finnish Balint Society has published a book in cooperation with Duodecim Publishing. The book deals with different aspects on Balint work. The book is in Finnish and the title is : “Kerron ja kuuntelen “ , in English “ I tell and I listen – Work Counseling in a Balint Group “ . The book has chapters on the role of the Balint group leader, on psychosomatics, medical philosophy and case reports.

The Society had a winter seminar in Kauniainen in the beginning of February with 35 participants. We had small groups, one large group and two very fascinating presentations. Prof. Johannes Lehtonen from the University of Kuopio told us about new connections with neurology and psychoanalysis. Erkki Äärelä from Turku gave a presentation on emotions, affects and bodily illness, and presented cases from liaison psychiatry.

We have a working group on leader training establishing contact with universities, medical societies and authorities to make a new program of Balint training.

Kristiina Toivola

11.2.07

5. Report from France, Société Médicale Balint

I Regular activities:

As usual, we will have our national day for the leaders (*Confrontations des pratiques*) on the 1st of April on the theme: “**crisis in groups**”.

Our last national congress in Lille (6, 7 et 8 october) was interesting but we were very disappointed by the lack of students while for the first time we got a lot of money to subscribe their inscription.

As usual, we are ready to welcome you to our next congress, in 2008 (Le Havre?) because of the WONCA in 2007 in Paris

II New Things:

Paris was very pleased to welcome you for the council (28th October 2006) and thanks you for being so kind and tolerant.

A new workshop: A Leaders’ workshop directed by Roger Lageux, psychologist psychoanalyst who has already asked you for questions about **training for leaders**. He thanks you again.

The **Balint seminars**, which are paid for GPs and now also specialists, are going on well. We have now had several seminars (Paris, Strasbourg, Thionville, St Briec and Nice- new-) and several themes (depression, addiction). Balint groups are obviously included in the two days, and some theoretical papers are given between the groups. A very new thing has occurred about these seminars : is it actually Balint work? Some of the French leaders seem to be troubled and dare not participate. It makes everybody a little sad because we cannot find a “ consensus”.

So we are creating a **new “reflexion group”** (only for leaders) about : how to participate or not to the new seminars of continuing education.

Some groups have also been set up for **students** (Necker, Bichat...) but we know it's not enough and we have to develop that a little more.

III Future with You:

the first “e-International Balint Journal”= e-IBJn°1 March 06 is going to appear on our international web-site (and in France on our French web-site) Only one issue has been made. But we soon are going to manage a number 2= e-IBF n°2 march 07. André Matalon will read again to check the English! And then Henry will put it on the web. Thanks to them both

A new page on our international web:” New books, new articles”. Please send them to Marie-Anne Puel. Everything that you can read about Balint in your country, we will put on the web.

We do hope that many of you will be in Paris, for WONCA (17-21 october 2007) . Anyone who wants to participate should ask Marie-Anne Puel for the program (mapuel@wanadoo.fr). Three workshops can be managed: the French Balint Society will manage one about students. Helena will manage another one. One is missing. Six Balint groups can be lead in English every day, and in the language of the “ majority” each day. So we need English leaders and we need to know if some “groups” from any country wishes to run a group during WONCA.

Marie-Anne Puel
March 2007

6. Association Internationale du Psychodrame-Balint

Our association has at present 56 members, mostly from France, but also from Canada, Italy, Switzerland, Belgium and Germany. It has 26 leaders who were trained specifically in the Balint psychodrama method which was founded by Anne Caïn. Most leaders have also had personal experience participating in and animating so called “classical” Balint groups.

Several leaders are at the moment in training and follow a program adapted to their basic training and their various professional experiences. The methods and requirements of this program are in accordance with those of other Societies, members of the International Balint Federation. As in other French language Balint Societies the group leaders have to have undergone a psychoanalytic experience.

During 2006, almost all the leaders have been in charge of groups or led specific interventions working with undergraduate and graduate students (in medicine and nursing) or with post-graduates (in clinical sexology, training of internists, general practitioners and specialists).

Regular groups, comprising mainly medical personnel, took place in France (Paris, Grenoble, Lyon, Nimes, Rennes, Compiègne, Le Mans, Toulouse), Canada (Montréal), Switzerland (Geneva), and Italy (Genova). Recruiting new participants is getting difficult in recent years; nevertheless new groups are being created.

In addition to internal scientific meetings the AIPB organizes open annual scientific meetings of one day. One such meeting took place in Montréal in October 2005. Our last scientific meeting in Toulouse in October 2006 was devoted to the theme of “the differed action of the encounter” with the patient (concept of “Nachträglichkeit”, or “après-coup” in the psychoanalytic theory). In 2007 it will take place in Italy (Genova).

Our annual journal “Les Quatre Temps” groups various interventions and conferences of these meetings and also publishes articles concerning the Balint method in general.

Our association and several of its members collaborate very actively with the AREFFS (Association de Recherche, d’Etude et de Formation pour la Fonction Soignante, Paris) in the creation and animation of workshops which take place every year in Annecy (Journées d’Annecy) but also in the framework of the AREFFS-FMG. This latest association organizes workshops of 2 days. They allow general practitioners to experience case studies in a big group, in a small Balint group or in a small Balint psychodrama group. In 2006 these trainings sessions were opened to specialised physicians. In 2004 and in 2005 nine workshops, each of 30 to 40 participants, took place in different towns of France (Paris, Lyon, Amiens, Compiègne, Strasbourg and St-Malo). Seven workshops are scheduled for 2007.

In spite of the great satisfaction expressed by the participants, it is too early to know what repercussions this training will have in the long run on the creation of new groups or in the participation in other workshops organized by our association.

We are pleased to announce the creation of our website: www.psychodrame-balint.com

Annie Bouillon (President) Jean-Pierre Bachmann (Vice-president)
Grenoble and Geneva March 2007

7. Report from Germany, March 2007

Since we met in Paris in October last year, the German Balint Society organized workshops in Würzburg at the end of November, in Bonn in January and in Göttingen in February.

Würzburg is always special. We integrated so called “Interactional Case groups” from behavioural science into our workshop. In the last years we provoked a strong defence in the Balint people, but now the behavioural therapists are really welcome and integration was signalled from both sides. (read more about it: Balint Journal 4/06)

We decided to give a credit voucher to all the group leaders in our society, so they have one Supervision group free every second year. It is well accepted and the number of participants in the Supervision groups has grown.

In Bonn we had several newcomers, who have to do Balintwork. At the beginning they often are sceptical, at the end they tell us that they take home a lot. In Bonn we had a lecture by Benyamin Maoz about different religions and cultures and psychotherapy, and we integrated the sculpture in Balint group work.

In Göttingen we put a topic: “Relative Medicine – evidence based, an illusion or nonsense?” We heard very interesting lectures. Our guests as group leaders were Benyamin Maoz from Israel and Rudi Honegger from Switzerland. Some students participated in the groups. We had a meeting of the members of the German Balint Society and election for the board. Ernst Petzold, Thomas Kanzow, Sigmar Scheerer and Heide Otten were re-elected. We had to find a new treasurer, because Steffen Häfner does not have the time to do this job any longer. We found a nice young GP Olaf Templin, who was elected.

Ernst Petzold, Johanna Dreger and Heide Otten were guests of the Israeli Balint meeting in November 2006. It was an excellent experience, thanks to the hospitality of our friends in Israel. Heide Otten was invited to Stockholm in February to lead a Supervision group, a leaders' training group and a sculpture. A wonderful experience!

For the Ascona Student Prize we had 11 papers by December 31st: 2 from the UK, 1 from Israel, 4 from Rumania and 4 from Germany. Hopefully we will be able to invite at least three of them to Lisbon. Those German students, who do not get a prize, will get an invitation to come to one of the German workshops.

We are looking forward to the International board meeting in Potsdam now and of course to Lisbon.

Heide Otten

Ernst Petzold

March 2007

8. Report of the activities of the Hungarian Balint Society in 2006:

There are 188 members. Five Balint Groups were held during the 19th Balint National Conference on 9th September 2006 celebrating the 110th birthday of Michael Balint and the 15th Anniversary of our Society. Invited lecturers were A Haynal from Geneva and A Harrah from Germany.

Our society held a Balint group session during the 6th Congress of the Hungarian Psychiatric Association.

At the medical universities in Budapest, Szeged, Debrecen Pécs Balint groups are organised for students.

Our plans for 2007: include a Balint group session at the XIII conference of the Hungarian Psychiatric Association.

We will continue Balint group work and organise the 20th National Balint Conference in June. We hope that we will continue our Balint activities more and more.

Kornelia Bobay, President

Maria Szirtes, Secretary

9. Report from the Israeli Balint Society

Our chairman Andre has asked me to send to you an account of the activities of the Israel Balint organization.

In Israel at the present time there are operating regularly about 10 Balint groups. They are partly composed of residents in Family-Medicine and partly of physicians and other therapists who work in the field. Most groups are led by two leaders and meet every 2-3 weeks.

Besides that, we have 3 national Balint meetings. Two smaller meetings, at which about 30-35 colleagues meet. These are mainly leaders or active participants in Balint groups, for many years. In these meetings we demonstrate and discuss alternative styles of conducting Balint groups and problems that have occurred. These meetings are held in different places in our country and are always organized by a number of volunteers. Our last meeting in this frame was held in November 2006, at Mount Carmel in Zihron Yaakov. Fortunately some Balint friends from abroad joined us in this meeting.

Then we have, usually in the summer, a national Balint day, open for every physician or therapist, who is interested and wants to go through the experience of a Balint group. About 80 people participate in this bigger meeting. At this Balint day we usually invite a famous writer to give us a lecture on a subject that is close to the Balint world, such as: family, relations between generations etc.

We have so far only 40-45 paying members, and our organization is a part of the big organization of Family Medicine.

We still hope to invite the members of the IBF for an official meeting in Israel.

Benyamin Maoz

Honorary chairman of the Israel Balint organization

10. Report of the Balint Society of the Netherlands 2006

The Dutch Balint Society (Balint Nederland) was established on January 1st, 2006. The Society was the successor of a body working under the aegis of the Dutch association of general practitioners (Nederlands Huisartsen Genootschap) which had been looking after the interests of the participants in Balint groups since 1991. The Dutch Balint Society was originally established after the war and at that time many G.P.'s took part in the intervision groups that were supervised by a psychiatrist or psychologist. Sadly, the enthusiasm declined and in 1984 the contact with the International Balint Society was severed, although the membership fee of the IBF continued to be paid in order that delegates could attend the international symposia.

During the past 15 years the institutes charged with the training and education of general practitioners again started to emphasize the importance of supervision. The NHG promoted training in this method of managing doctor-patient relationships. This together with the efforts of the remnants of the old Balint group resulted in the establishment of the Dutch Balint Society. Both group leaders and participants of Balint groups are members of the Society. This way they will be able to accumulate the accreditation points awarded by the accreditation college of general practitioners (College van Accreditering van Huisartsen - CvAH). Each GP is obliged to accumulate 40 "points" per annum as proof that they have followed the required post graduate training courses designed to keep professional knowledge up to date. For 2006 the CvAH gave the Dutch Balint Society limited accreditation rights, enabling them to issue accreditation points for the activities of the various Balint groups i.e. participation in intervision and training courses. The Dutch Balint Society has found a partner in the Society for Psychosomatic Medicine in The Netherlands and Belgium for the purpose of organising training courses. These courses are open to members of both Societies which also both accredit the courses. In the future the Dutch Balint Society would like also like to work more closely with the Flemish speaking Balint groups in Belgium.

The Dutch Balint Society organises twice-yearly intervision meetings for the supervisors of Balint groups: psychologists, psychiatrists, psycho-therapists and G.P.-chairs who work as joint therapists. In addition, the first Balint members meeting was held on 8th December 2006. During this meeting Professor dr. Heert Dokter was installed as honorary member of the Society. The participants took part in a Balint group and a "fishbowl session" and heard two presentations as introduction to a discussion about Balint methods as used in doctor-patient relationships. A delegation of the Board took part in a Council of the IBF in Paris.

The Dutch Balint Society has re-joined the IBF and now has its own website www.balint.nl. Some 40 Balint groups are active in The Netherlands, of which about half are member of our Society. We now have 150 paying members. The Board is made up of a psychotherapist, a psychiatrist and three general practitioners.

In 2007 we will organise a training course for future group leaders and co-leaders of Balint groups. We hope to get support from the IBF to further expand our activities. In September 2007 a delegation of the Society will attend the international conference in Lisbon.

Marieke van Schie, G.P.
Secretary Dutch Balint Society

18th December 2006

11. Report from the Portuguese Association of Balint Groups

Concerning the organization of 15th International Balint Congress:

The main task of the Portuguese Association is being the organization of the 15th International Balint Congress:

- We made an agreement with the Portuguese Association of General Practitioners in order to make the Congress a public joint organization, in order to turn easier the penetration and some aspects of the organization
- We received 23 papers that are being selected by the Scientific and Organizing Committees, in order to reach the adequate number to be presented
- Logistics is going arranged in the adequate time frames
- We are preparing the launch of announcements in the Portuguese medical press during the next months

We are trying hard to organize a very nice and useful Congress to all the participants, hoping that they will last with very good memories from the 5 days they will stay in Lisbon.

Balint Groups:

The same number of Balint groups announced in the previous report, are still running:
Lisbon; Coimbra; Aveiro; Oporto.

Supervision group

It maintains its monthly meetings, in Lisbon.

Web-site of the APGB

We are preparing the launch, probably during next month, of our own web-site. By now, we already hve some news about our association and about the 145th Congress in the web-site of APMCG

Workshop during the Annual Meeting of the Portuguese Association of General Practitioners

It will be held in the 22nd of March, in Algarve, during the 24th National Meeting of General Practitioners. It will be a two hours workshop, with 3 speakers (João S. Carlos, Jorge Brandão and Rizério Salgado). It will be inserted in the activities of promotion and sensitization to Balint thinking and practice that we are performing since some years during this important annual conference for GPs. We'll also perform a demonstration Balint group.

APGB

Jorge Brandão

12. Report from the Romanian Balint Society.

This is a comprehensive report on the national winter weekend meeting held between 19-21 January, at which we also organized a party celebrating New Year in a Balintian way. Neverbefore did we gather in such great numbers for such an occasion. We were 77 all in all, we had 3 large groups and at one occasion 4 small ones. Three leaders were under supervision and will soon be ready for accreditation, so that, at the coming national conference in September, the number of the fully-fledged leaders will increase to 10. Ten new members were accepted for the occasion. We also held a Bureau meeting where they agreed to establish the "Prize for Excellency" whose financial basis was offered by the Veress family namely 3000 Euros, the interest from this will constitute the yearly prize. The badge, diploma and the prize will go to those who promoted Balintian ideas or excelled in theoretical work during the year.

Albert Veress

13. Report from Sweden, February 2007

Since November 2006 the specific Balint-oriented activities of the Board of the Swedish Society included

- efforts to revitalise the interchange between group leaders in the various regions of the country, planning for future national work-shops and seminars
- encouraging members to participate in international Balint meetings
- encouraging members to contribute to the World Congress in Lisbon. It seems at least four Swedish papers have been submitted.
- encouraging Balint-like group work for medical students in the Stockholm area at the training boards
- launching a pilot short term Balint-like course for registrars and junior doctors at a hospital department in co-leadership with a senior psychosomatically and psychotherapeutically trained senior specialist at the dept (Henry Jablonski)
- participating in the discussions for starting another training course for Balint leaders at the Institution of General Practice, Huddinge (Anita Häggmark)
- participating at the leadership workshop of the Israeli Balint Society at Zichron Yaakov in November, (Henry Jablonski) attended by some 40 leaders and visitors from Germany i.e. Heide Otten and Ernst Petzold – a very intense and interesting meeting.

Among other activities of the Society should be mentioned

- A symposium at the Annual Meeting of the Swedish Society of Medicine in Gothenburg in December on trans-cultural and multiethnic challenges in the Swedish health care system. The meeting attracted some 200 doctors (Göran Roth)
- A seminar in cooperation with gynecologists and a journalist on the cultural and the doctor-patient complexities in treating women who have been subjected to “Female circumcision” - ritual mutilation of their sexual organ (Henry Jablonski)
- A writers competition inviting doctors, paramedics, and medical students to write on clinical meetings and similar subjects. With regard to the students the Ascona criteria were stated. Unfortunately this year we had no student contributions. We will increase our marketing efforts in the future! But we had 29 contributions! And so many good ones that the jury (Lena Svidén, Bengt Hamark, Inga Carin Landerö, Henry Jablonski) will have a difficult decision for the 6-7 awards.
- Henry Jablonski

14. Report from the American Balint Society: (Spring 2007)

As I write this our Spring Leadership Training Intensive is under way in Santa Rosa, California with 37 attendees, including international guests from Sweden, Italy and Finland. Ritch Addison has organized a great meeting as usual, and the weather is grand. Jeff Sternlieb in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania has agreed to again host our Fall 2007 Intensive. Dates have not yet been set, and I will communicate these when they are available.

Our Spring Balint Weekend will occur on April 13 – 14 in Providence, Rhode Island. Kim Salloway is hosting with 4 leaders signed up in addition to Kim.

We are in the middle of election season for the Society. Our nominating committee met through January and February, producing the following slate:

Don Nease – President

Ann Sinclair – President-elect

Jillian Romm – Secretary

Janet Walker – Treasurer

Regular Council members: Clive Brock, Mara Rubio, Kim Salloway, Jeff Sternlieb and Greg Troll for their second term and Chiara Gheti and Maria Devens for a first term

Our membership renewals for 2007 stand at 111 currently, with our membership process recently having been moved to an online database. This will greatly facilitate member tracking and communication.

In other activities, our Intensive Committee recently completed work on a manual for Course Directors. This has been placed on our Society wiki website so that it can be easily updated and made available. Finally, our Balint Outcomes research project continues to hum along with our second wave of surveys coming in now.

Donald E. Nease, Jr, MD

The following countries have not submitted reports:

Croatia, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Serbia, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

HCS 17-Mar-07

