

INTERNATIONAL BALINT FEDERATION

Officers of the Council (since 28th August 2005)

President: Henry Jablonski (Sweden)
Vice-presidents: Benyamin Maoz (Israel)
Donald Nease (United States of America)
General Secretary: Heather Suckling (United Kingdom)
Treasurer: Michel Delbrouck (Belgium)

www.balintinternational.com

Minutes of the Council meeting of the International Balint Federation

held on Sunday 19th April 2009 at 09.30

Hotel Seneca, Chicago

Those present:

Australia:

Alexa Gilbert-Obrart

Denmark:

Gunnar Axelgaard

Finland:

Kristina Toivola

Juha-Matti Toivola

France:

Marie-Anne Puel

Germany:

Heide Otten

Ernst Petzold

Sigmund Scheerer

Israel:

Benyamin Maoz

Netherlands:

Marieke van Schie

Portugal:

Jorge Brandao

Romania:

Albert Veress

Sweden:

Henry Jablonski

UK:

Andrew Elder

John Salinsky

Heather Suckling

USA:

Don Nease

Ann Sinclair

Mary Hall

Jillian Romm

Ritch Addison

Jeffrey Sternlieb

Mary Wassink

Philip Weber

Dewy Todd Detar

Maria Devens

Austria:

Nina Arzberger (not
officially representing the
Austrian society)

Canada:

Alan Ng

Miriam Salamon

(Canada does not yet have a
society)

1. Apologies:

These were received from Michel Delbrouck, treasurer of the IBF and from numerous others, so the secretary said she would only record apologies received from the national societies that were not represented. These were the Austrian, Belgian, Croatian, Hungarian, Italian, Russian, Serbian and Swiss societies.

2. Welcome to new members:

The president welcomed the two members of the American Balint Society from Canada and hoped that there would soon be a Canadian Balint society.

3. Minutes of the meeting of the Council on 19th October 2008 in Leiden:

These were agreed as a correct record of the meeting.

4. Matters arising that do not appear elsewhere on the agenda.

There were none.

5. Report from the Board:

Henry said that the Board worked as a team so all the members contributed to the report.

Henry spoke about how the Board has been involved in preparation for congresses and promoting Balint work. He in particular has been supporting Helena Nielsen to promote a Balint presentation at the Nordic GP Congress (May 2009). He is also working with Heide Otten and Marie-Anne Puel to promote Balint work at the WONCA congress in Basel (15th-17th September 2009) as it is very relevant to the title:

“Fascination of uncertainty and complexity.”

Henry is looking forward to the traditional Balint meeting in Dubrovnik in June, organised by the Croatian Balint Society and later that week to meeting Serbian colleagues in Belgrade.

The whole Board, with the assistance of Paul Sackin and John Salinsky, is working closely with the Romanian Organising Committee preparing for the 16th International Balint Congress in Brasov, Romania (5th-9th September 2009). Albert Veress will speak about this in more detail later in this meeting.

Benyamin expressed his pleasure in meeting delegates from Canada at this meeting and hoped that this was the beginning of a revival of Balint in that country. He explained that McMaster University had previously had a Balint tradition.

He then asked members to encourage Balint work in related organisations and disciplines, at international meetings of Psychologists, Psychiatrists, Social Workers and Mental Health Workers.

Don reminded the meeting that he had given a Balint presentation at the World Psychiatric Congress but he felt that much more work was needed.

He said that the American Balint Society was delighted to have the international meeting here and was excited about working together with the Canadians.

6. Treasurer’s Report:

The accounts and Treasurer’s report were circulated and in Michel’s absence Heather agreed to answer questions. She thanked Michel for the clear and concise report and for providing the accounts. The meeting congratulated him on managing to protect the funds of the IBF in spite of the “credit crunch” and for collecting almost all the fees from the individual societies. Only the Polish and Hungarian societies have yet to pay for 2009. The Hungarian society has already been in touch and Heather will remind the Polish society.

Action: Heather

7. Secretary’s report.

a. Membership:

There are now 22 national Balint Societies who are members of the IBF and one individual member from Norway. These will be recorded on the IBF website.

b. Reports from National Societies:

All the reports from the national Societies that were received by 14th April 2009 have been circulated. These help members to keep in touch with each other and disseminate ideas.

At present these are collected twice each year, but she asked those present if they would prefer to produce the reports only once a year, so that they would be annual reports.

N.B. The meeting decided that reports should be submitted annually, instead of twice yearly.

c. Communication with the membership:

Although there are fewer errors in the list of Officers of National Societies, it is difficult to maintain. The list today will be circulated today for amendments and this amended list will be sent out with the Minutes for final amendments. **Please send these promptly so they can be recorded on the IBF website.**

Action: All

N.B. If you receive communications from the IBF and you are no longer in office, please pass on information to your successors.

There are at present 107 people in the email group of IBF contacts group, (the list of officers) and it is their responsibility to disseminate information to all their own society's members.

d. The new IBF Board:

The new Board will take over in September, after the International Congress in Brasov. This year the whole board has stood for re-election and is unopposed, so there is no need for a vote.

However, according to the Statutes, Board members (apart from the Treasurer and Secretary) must stand down after 2 terms (4 years). The Secretary said she too plans to stand down in 2011 and that there will need to be an election that year and she asked the meeting to start thinking of nominations.

Action: All

e. Criteria of membership:

- ❖ **Payment of the required fee**
- ❖ **Have an Ethical Code**
- ❖ **Have a system for the Accreditation of Leaders;**

Heather reminded the meeting that although a system of Leadership Accreditation is a criterion for a Society to be a member of the IBF, she has still not received these in English from all member societies and suspects that some of them are out of date.

She will be asking everyone to send these again during the next year, so please respond positively.

Action: Heather

f. Leadership:

She then mentioned that Andrew Elder on behalf of the British Balint Society wished to make a suggestion about leadership.

Andrew said that he felt that there is a place for more international co-operation about leadership accreditation and training. He suggested that there could be international conferences for leaders.

Don supported this and said that in the US they are now developing Continuing Medical Education (CME) for leaders.

Marieke said there was a problem in the Netherlands as all the leaders knew each other and they would welcome hearing from groups from other countries.

Benyamin said that the situation in Israel was similar.

Heather suggested that Leadership should be an agenda item at the next Council meeting and said we seemed to have two draft proposals:

- i. For national societies to work together with neighbouring societies**(see below)*
- ii. For an international conference on leadership.

**Action: Heather (Agenda)
All (to put forward proposals.)**

Henry thanked Heather for her report and for the important and hard work she is doing for the IBF to make it function well and seemingly easily, which takes considerable effort.

8. Election of officers:

The present Board is unopposed and will continue in office until Autumn 2011.

9. WONCA (Europe) 2009, Basel.

❖ **Arrangements:**

Henry explained that the IBF has secured a slot of 120 minutes in the timetable for Balint work on the theme:

“Meeting the patient: between fascination and routine, certainty and doubt – how do doctors cope and develop emotionally and cognitively.”

He, Heide and Marie-Anne will give presentations and run a group. He said the IBF will provide funding for up to four people to promote the work so he would welcome another person to join them.

❖ **Fees:**

The IBF Board has agreed to fund the Participation Fees for these four (unless they can find funding from another source) and will provide (actual) travel expenses up to 350 Euros per person.

10. EURACT - including progress of the Vasco da Gama Movement (VdGM):

Heide had nothing to report from EURACT.

Jorge explained that the Vasco da Gama Movement which was named after the famous 15th century Portuguese navigator, had originated in Portugal to promote the training of young GPs. Joao Carlos who will now step down from the presidency of VdGM, has been helpful in promoting the Balint workshop at WONCA Basel. The Portuguese Balint Society and IBF have also attempted to bring Balint to the VdGM pre-congress but without success.

Henry thanked Jorge for his good co-operation and sent thanks and greetings to Joao Carlos for his help.

Action: Jorge

11. Nordic Conference, Copenhagen (13th-16th May 2009):

This conference is for GPs and many academic GPs will be present. The participants will be mainly from Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland and Iceland.

Helena Nielsen is the mastermind behind a Balint symposium with 5 presentations from speakers from Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland and the UK.

12. International Balint Congress 2009 (Brasov, Romania):

Albert Veress reported that the plans for the Congress are well-developed and he looks forward to welcoming many participants.

- The Romanian Organising committee is offering subsidised places to participants from Serbia, Bulgaria and Moldova.
- An agreement between the Organising Committee and the IBF has been signed to clarify the responsibilities of the Organisers and participants. The papers have all been agreed by the Scientific Committee and the timetable planned.
- There will be one parallel session, in order to accommodate two interesting parallel workshops.
- Plenaries will usually be for 90 minutes but the parallel sessions will be for 120 minutes.
- The Balint groups will be for 90 minutes apart from the final one which will be for 1 hour.
- The arrangements for transfers from and to the airport have been clarified.

The agreement, Congress schedule, abstracts of all the presentations and arrangements for transfers will all be shortly on the Congress website www.balintcongress2009.com

Action: Albert

13. Ascona Awards:

Ernst said that they have received 16 entries from 6 countries. Six of these papers are very good, but they can only award 3 prizes.

- The first prize has been awarded to a student from Romania
- The second prize has been awarded to a student from Israel
- The third prize has been awarded to a student from Germany

The prizes will be awarded at the Congress in Brasov where the students will present shortened versions of their papers. The full essays will be published in the Proceedings of the Congress.

Ernst hopes to be able to publish the other three good papers, perhaps on the website, or in the e-International Journal.

Action: Ernst

14. e-International Balint Journal:

Marie-Anne has produced the latest edition that will be circulated after this meeting. She said that all contributions will be welcome and as yet there are no rules about length, style etc.

The meeting thanked Marie-Anne for her work as Editor and suggested that she should draw up any rules that she thinks fit.

Action: Marie-Anne

15. Comprehensive list of Balint books and articles:

Don reported that this work is progressing. The structure of the website has been prepared and it is hoped that they will be able to add the abstracts of the articles with links to the original article/book.

Action: Don Nease, Marion Lustig, Stanley Rabin and John Salinsky

16. Translation Board:

Don reported that the Board (Paul Sackin, Andre Matalon and Don Nease) have developed criteria. The aim is to provide funds to translate a chapter for consideration by a publisher for funding. Several members of the meeting felt that this would not be sufficient as publishers usually will only consider a whole book (already translated) for publication. It was suggested that proposals for funding should be sent to the Translation Board..

17. Website for the International Balint Federation www.balinternational.com :

Henry reminded the meeting that the website is updated twice a year.

The deadline for alterations this time is **31st May 2009**.

Please send any additions or amendments to Henry before that date.

Action: All

18. Future Council meetings and responsibilities of hosts:

The IBF board has, as requested, drawn up a list of responsibilities for the hosts of Council meetings for consideration.

Responsibilities:

- i. The Council meeting should take place in conjunction with a local/national Balint event.
- ii. There should be a scientific and social programme in English
- iii. It should take place over 1-2 days
- iv. Meetings rooms should be provided for the IBF free of charge
- v. The conference fee for IBF members should be the same as for local members.
- vi. The host country is invited to use the skills of the IBF members.

These responsibilities were agreed unanimously.

Future Council meetings:

The following were proposed and agreed:

Autumn 2009 (General Assembly) - Brasov, Romania

Spring 2010 - Gornitz, Germany (in association with the Polish Balint Society and Czech Balintians.)

The following have been suggested:

Autumn 2010- ? Salzburg, Austria

Spring 2011- ? Denmark

It was agreed that Heather would email the officers of these societies to ask if they are willing to host these meetings.

Action: Heather

19. International Congress 2011:

Don Nease and Ann Sinclair made a provisional bid for the American Balint Society to host the next Balint Congress.

This suggestion was welcomed by the meeting.

The venue will be suggested and offer confirmed by the next meeting of the Council in September.

20. Any other business:

- Heide gave Vivian Pramataroff's best regards to the meeting and said that she is running Balint groups in Bulgaria.
- Albert said that so far about 80 people had registered for the Congress including one Serbian and one Moldovan

21. Reports of the National Societies:

Henry reminded the meeting that the Reports from the National Societies had been circulated before the meeting.

Henry thanked the American Balint Society, and in particular those responsible for organising this conference and meeting. It was agreed that it had been a most enjoyable and successful week-end.

The meeting closed at 12.10 p.m.

***Leadership:**

After the meeting it was suggested that leaders from the Netherlands, Germany and Israel – and other countries - might hold a meeting about Leadership in Cyprus.

Action: Marieke, Heide and Benyamin

HCS 8-May-09