

MEDICAL PHYSICS WORLD

Bulletin of the International Organization for Medical Physics

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President's Message — Oskar Chomicki, President IOMP



Oskar A. Chomicki
President of IOMP

Following the pattern of presenting president's messages in the form of separate issues relevant to the activities of the IOMP, I would like this time to take up the ever important problem (for medical physicists) of the radiological protection of patients. As

a representative of the IOMP, among over 30 delegates from 26 Member Countries and representatives of national and international NGO organizations and professional bodies, I took part in a meeting on developing an Action Plan for the RADIOLOGICAL PROTECTION OF PATIENTS, convened by the Nuclear Safety Department (Scientific Secretary: Dr P.Ortiz-Lopez), Division of Radiation and Waste Safety of the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna and held on January 28th - February 1st, 2002. I would also like to refer you back to the extensive paper by Professor Azam Niroomand-Rad, Vice President of the IOMP, on the Role and Responsibilities of Medical Physicists in Radiological Protection of Patients, which appeared in MPW, vol.17, no.2, December 2001. However, in what follows, I will be concerned with more general issues outlined in the Action Plan as they are seen from the perspective of an important international organization such as the IAEA.

One of the statutory aims of the IAEA is "to accelerate and enlarge the contribution of atomic energy...to health... throughout the world", and in particular, to establish or adopt...standards of safety for protection of health..." through Radiation Safety and Human Health programmes, based on the International Basic Safety Standards for Protection against Ionizing Radiation and for the Safety of Radiation Sources (the BSS).

Medical applications of ionizing radiation, as we all know very well, produce great benefits, but the risk due to the widespread medical use of radiation and resulting large exposure must be minimized. On the other hand, radiation protection programs in medicine must make it possible to use a radiation dose sufficient to obtain adequate diagnostic information and treatment. The principles underlying the IAEA Action Plan specify that (1) sys-

tems for the radiological protection of patients should be strengthened, (2) the existing sub-programs should maximize the use of activities and relevant documents, and (3) recommendations of the Málaga Conference ought to be implemented.

What is essential for ensuring the best radiological protection of the patient is, according to the Action Plan, the education and training of staff as well as effective Quality Assurance. Education and training programs, making use of distance learning and the Internet should be targeted to particular specialists, such as medical practitioners, medical physicists, equipment maintenance engineers, biomedical and clinical engineers, or even administrators and regulators. Here, an important role is attached to international organizations and professional bodies which are best suited to provide teaching materials and qualified experts in calibration, dosimetry and QA in radiotherapy, diagnostic radiology and nuclear medicine to ensure compliance with the BSS. Unfortunately, in many countries the availability and role of medical physicists or clinical engineers that carry out QA and radiation protection in medicine is limited by lack of official recognition. For example, medical physicists are not recognized by the international Labour Organization (ILO) (see A. Niroomand-Rad, MPW, vol.18, no.1, 2002). Therefore, the role of professional organizations and bodies in promoting the cause of qualified experts and information exchange and dissemination, especially on accidental exposures such as those in Panama (or recently in Poland), cannot be overestimated. Risk-informed regulations can positively affect the benefit/risk ratio. However, radiation safety regulators should only oversee good practice without unnecessary interference in the care of the patient.

There are also issues related to the transfer of second hand equipment to developing countries. We should note here that there is quite significant activity by the IOMP in this field.

The Action Plan points out that there is a need for the optimum management of doses in conventional radiology as well as in training in the application of digital techniques at facilities in transition from conventional to digital equipment and in raising the awareness of users of CT techniques (including multi slice and CT fluoroscopy) regarding radiation dose and image information. There is also a need for stan-

dardization relating to connectivity in picture archiving and communications systems (PACS) and radiological information systems (RIS) by way of conducting consultations with manufacturers.

In nuclear medicine, what is required is the proper selection of radio-pharmaceuticals and activity levels, especially regarding children and pregnant women.

It should be noted that the Málaga Conference concluded that QA is particularly important for ensuring effective and safe treatment in radiotherapy. Audits of quality are an essential component of the system, and the IAEA, together with WHO, provides a service to radiotherapy facilities in Member States under the IAEA/WHO (IAEA/PAHO in Latin American and Caribbean countries) TDL postal dose quality programme to assist in the establishment and development of national and regional dosimetry programs. Recent radiation accidents showed the need for guidance on the testing of treatment planning system in radiotherapy.

The above remarks and conclusions drawn from the IAEA meeting point to the importance of ever-increasing international recognition and future work relating to the radiological protection of patients to which the IOMP has made and will make a significant contribution.

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An Update on Recognition of the Medical Physics Profession by National and International Organizations

Azam Niroomand-Rad, Ph.D., Vice President, IOMP

In the June 2002, Vol. 18, No. 1 edition of MPW, I shared with you the information required by the International Labor Office (ILO) in Geneva, Switzerland for recognition of Medical Physics as a profession. During the course of data gathering, the following pleasant discoveries were made:

(A) In the United States, "Medical Physics" is listed on the United States Department of Labor, Office of Administrative Law Judges Law Library, and Dictionary of Occupational Titles (4th Ed., Rev. 1991)

(B) In Canada, "Medical Physics" is listed on the National Occupational Classification, which is a joint effort of Statistics Canada and Human Resources Development of Canada. Medical Physicists were also mentioned in the 1991 version of this classification.

(C) In Europe, the European Commission has adopted the Council Directive 97/43/Euratom of 30 June 1997 on health protection of individuals against the dangers of ionizing radiation in relation to medical exposure (Official Journal of the European Communities, L180, 9.7.97, p. 22-27). This document (a) defines the Medical Physics Expert, (b) requires involvement of Medical Physics Expert in all radio-therapeutic facilities. For other radiological practices, a Medical Physics expert shall be involved, as appropriate, for consultation. In some European countries, Medical Physicists are regulated by the state and need licensure in order to practice.

From data gathered by the IOMP, we believe there are approximately 15,600 medical physicists in 73 member countries. A total of 11,200 medical physicists (~72%) work in developed countries (4,600 in the US, 6,300 in Europe, and 300 in Canada), where their profession is recognized by governmental authorities. With this data, we hope that the proposal for revision of the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-88) that was approved by the ILO Governing Body at the 14th International Conference of Labor Statistics (ICLS) in 1988, will be considered at the 17th ICLS meeting in 2003-04. If approved, the ISCO-88 will be up-dated and taken to the 18th ICLS in 2008-09 for final approval.

An Update on the Work in Progress

The immediate past president of IOMP, Professor Colin Orton, and myself are working on revising the IOMP By-Laws in order to incorporate the followings (but not limited to):

- Listing of responsibilities and election criteria for Treasurer.
- Listing of role and responsibilities of the Finance Committee.
- Establishment of an IOMP Executive Committee, to include elected officers (President, Vice-President, Secretary-General, Treasurer, and Immediate Past President). Listing of responsibilities and statement of Code of Conduct of Executive Committee members.
- Establishment of the IOMP International Advisory Committee. Listing of objectives of this committee.
- A new dues criterion for IOMP membership.
- Guidelines for electronic communication with delegates, including an E-voting process.
- Inclusion of the Editor of the Medical Physics World as a voting delegate.
- Guidelines for International Medical Physics meetings with the IOMP Chapter Organizations in an effort to improve IOMP ties with Chapter Organizations while generating more revenue for the IOMP.

Finally, Prof. Oskar Chomicki and myself are working with our IFMBE and IUPESM colleagues to examine the existing World Congress meeting cycle in an attempt to generate more revenue for IOMP while keeping our union strong. These issues will be discussed in more detail at the WC 2003 meeting in Sydney when seeking approval from your official delegate(s).

Please feel free to contact us with any questions or concerns on these or other topics of interest to you.

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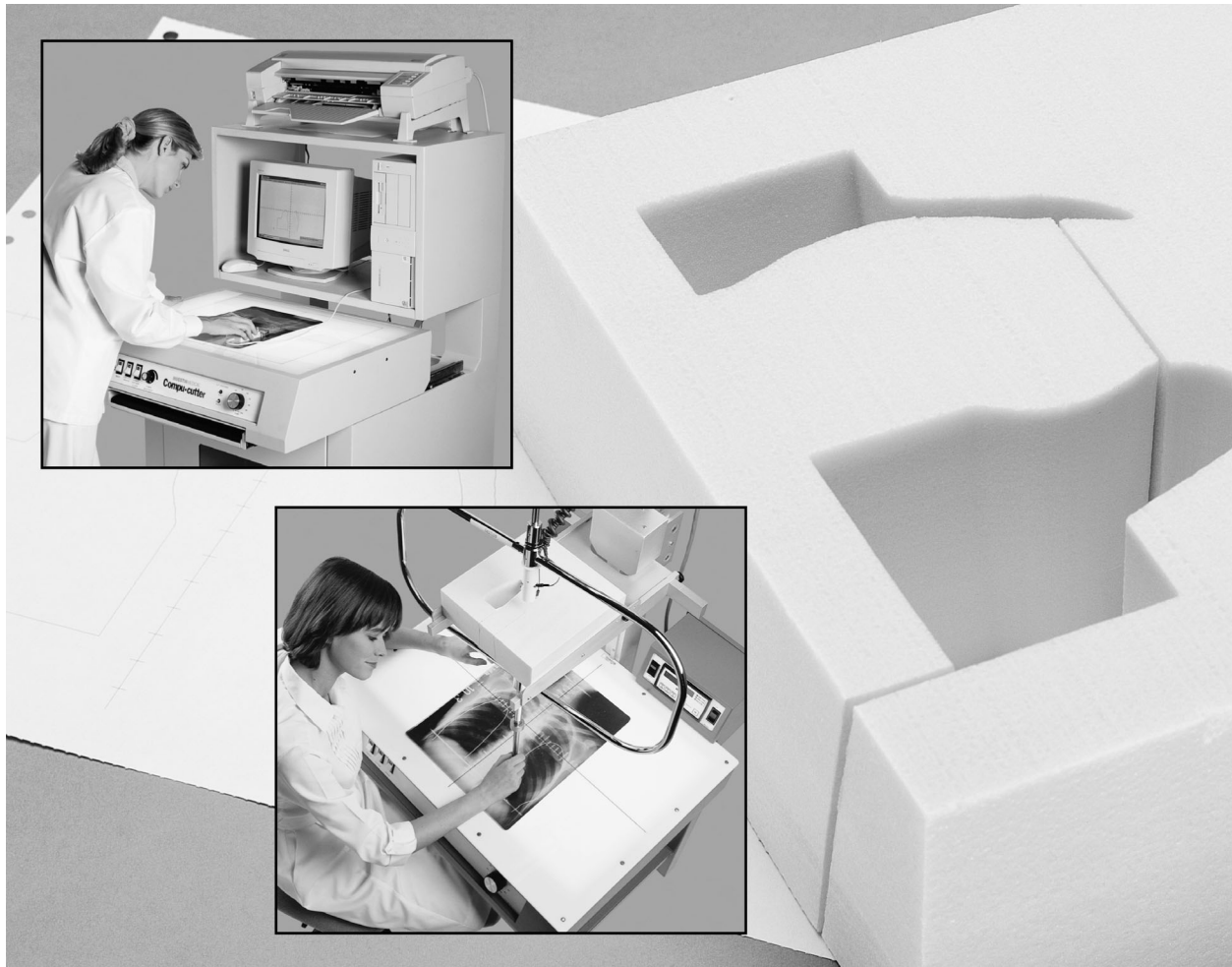
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Editor's Corner

E. Ishmael Parsai, Ph.D., Editor, MPW

The editorial staff of MPW is considering the addition of listing various sources of information related to medical and health physics in future issues of MPW and would like to solicit suggestions from the readers regarding the same. The listings could include reference to review articles, useful websites, and current innovative advances in the field. If you can contribute to this section or have ideas, please contact E. Ishmael Parsai, the MPW editor.

Examples of some reference educational articles:

- A Quality Management Program in Intravascular Brachytherapy, by Abderrahim Chakri and Bruce Thomadsen. Reference can be obtained from: <http://ojps.aip.org/medphy>
- Is Radiation an Essential Trace Energy? Physics and Society October 2001; Cameron, J.R. This article may be viewed at: <http://www.aps.org/units/fps/oct01/a5oct01.html>
- Radiation increased the longevity of British radiologists. J Cameron. Br J Radiol 2002;75:637-8. Electronic copy may be obtained by contacting the author at: jrcamero@wisc.edu
- Visit the Virtual Radiation Museum by John Cameron at: <http://www.medphysics.wisc.edu/~vrm>

Some recent news of current innovations in medical/health physics

Compiled by Mohammed K. Zaidi, Ph.D. Net address: zaidimk@id.doe.gov.

Can A Vaccine Prevent Cervical Cancer?

Researchers in the United States have been credited with developing a vaccine which will reportedly prevent the occurrence of cervical cancer. In developing countries, implementing the use of such a vaccine could mean saving countless lives that would have otherwise been lost. This type of cancer does not strike men; however, the same virus which has been linked to over 200,000 cervical cancer cases worldwide may also manifest as genital warts in the male population. Although not life threatening, genital warts present the risk of significant genital disfigurement and may serve to repel potential sex partners. Thus, men may also benefit from this vaccine as a preventative measure for genital warts.

For more information regarding this investigational vaccine, please refer to "Beginning of the End for Cervical Cancer by C. P. Crum" in the November 2002 issue of the New England Journal of Medicine or visit www.merck.com.

Chemotherapy-Induced Nausea and Vomiting

According to recent studies, patients undergoing chemotherapy for cancer treatment reportedly suffer from treatment-induced nausea and vomiting to a much greater extent than generally recognized by healthcare providers, despite the availability of current antiemetic therapies. More information may be obtained by reviewing abstracts #2898, 2002 at www.asco.org.

Medical Physics Education via the Internet

As reported in last issue of MPW Vol 18 (1), 2002 by Dr. Tabakov, a process has been developed to optimally utilize the Internet for real-time interactive remote education of medical physics. The project was the result of a collaborative effort between the Department of Medical Physics at Toronto, Canada and the Department of Radiology, University of Malaya in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The abstract describing this pilot project was published in Radiotherapy and Oncology, Vol 65, supp 1, 2002. For more information, please visit www.caro-acro.ca.

EMERALD training materials hold high educational value as a resource for use in any training scheme either through the internet or through CD's. Interested parties in developing countries may take advantage of the training being provided by EMERALD2 by visiting www.emerald2.net.

Report from the Education and Training Committee (ETC)

Slavik Tabakov, PhD, Chairman ETC

There were several important activities of the IOMP Education and Training Committee during the period April 2002 - September 2002. A Regional Radiotherapy Physics Course and Workshop in Sudan was approved by ETC for financial support. The event will take place in Khartoum (12-18 December 2002).

Aiming to help the development of Medical Physics in Africa, the ETC Chairman organized a special meeting during the International Medical Physics College in ICTP, Trieste, Italy (the event is described in another article in this MPW issue). The meeting was attended by colleagues from Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Libya, Nigeria, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe. The objective of the meeting was an exchange of ideas about the future development of an African Chapter of IOMP (activity discussed within IOMP Excom during the spring). The colleagues attending the meeting supported warmly the idea and will further discuss it with their own societies. The Treasurer of AFOMP, Dr. Krisanachinda, also attended the meeting, sharing with the attendees experience from the Asian-Oceania Federation of Organizations for Medical Physics. The first results from this meeting could be seen after the Radiation Protection meeting in South Africa next year. Another result from this meeting was that colleagues from several African countries, where Medical Physics Societies do not exist, were given explanations on how to organize their activities and contact IOMP for future guidance on the matter.

During this period, discussions were initiated with AFOMP and the organizers of WC2003 for an IOMP Regional Meeting on Medical Physics Education and Training during the World Congress in Sydney.

ETC is continuing the collection of Graduate Education Programs for the Global Directory and encourages all colleagues to submit information on their courses. A collection of materials related to the development of Medical Physics programs in various countries was made at ICTP Trieste and will soon be published as a free e-book.

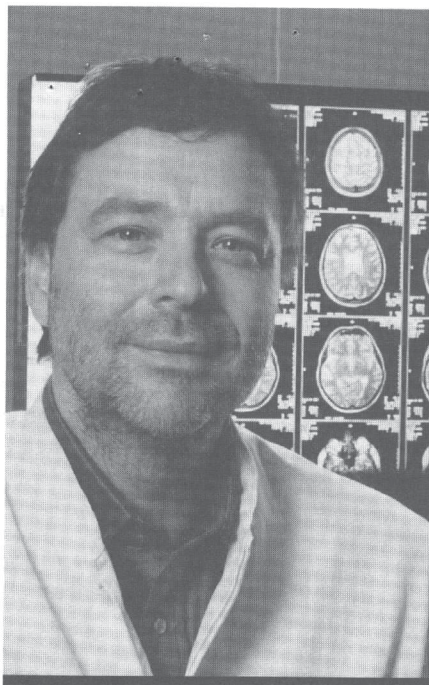
A New Editor-in-Chief for the Journal of Applied Clinical Medical Physics (JACMP)

The American College of Medical Physics is very pleased to announce the appointment of Edwin C. McCullough, Ph.D. as the new editor-in-chief for the Journal of Applied Clinical Medical Physics. Dr. McCullough succeeds Dr. Peter R. Almond who successfully pioneered the Journal through its conceptual years and the first two years of publication.

Dr. McCullough has a distinguished record in medical physics and is well known throughout the medical physics community. Dr. McCullough is certified by the American Board of Radiology in Therapeutic Radiological Physics and is a Fellow of the American Association of Physicists in Medicine and the American College of Medical Physics. Professor McCullough was the head of the Radiation Physics Section, Division of Radiation Oncology, at the Mayo Clinic/Foundation in Rochester, Minnesota, for 27 years from 1973 to 2000. He is the past president of the American Association of Physicists in Medicine (AAPM) and the past Vice-President of the Radiological Society of North America (RSNA). Dr. McCullough has over 100 publications in various journals, books, and conference proceedings. He has served on the editorial boards of the Journal of Medical Physics, Radiology, Neuroradiology, and the Journal of Computer Assisted Tomography. In addition, he has served as a reviewer for the International Journal of Radiation Oncology, Biology, and Physics.

The Journal of Applied Clinical Medical Physics is one of IOMP's official journals. The JACMP is an international electronic medical physics journal dedicated to applied medical physics topics. Currently, internet access to the journal is free. One can access the excellent clinically oriented articles at <http://ojps.aip.org/acm>.

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Report on the 2nd Asia-Oceania Congress of Medical Physics (AOCMP) Held in Gyeongju, Korea; 26-28 September 2002

Tae-Suk Suh, Ph.D., Chairman of Scientific Committee, AFOMP

The 2nd Asia-Oceania Congress of Medical Physics (AOCMP), which was an IOMP sponsored program, was successfully held in Gyeongju, Korea during 26-28 September 2002. That meeting was hosted and organized by the Korean Society of Medical Physics (KSMP) in conjunction with the Japan Society of Medical Physics (JSMP) and was held jointly with the 3rd Korea-Japan Joint Meeting on Medical Physics. Korea did an excellent job in planning and organizing this international event out of a total of 170 participants attended the meeting, 90 of them were from overseas, including 7 AFOMP and 3 non-AFOMP countries (Mogolia, Nepal, and USA). The scientific program consisted of a Keynote Symposium with special lectures given by Dr. Kin Yin Cheung, President of AFOMP, Dr. Masahiro Endo, President of JSMP, and Dr. Wee-Saing Kang, President of KSMP; three Professional Symposiums, the Symposium on Radiation Accidents in Medicine, the Symposium on Quality Assurance in Medical Physics in Asia & Oceania, and the Symposium on Advanced Imaging Physics with presentations by 18 invited speakers; 10 scientific sessions on different aspects of medical physics including radiation therapy, heavy ion therapy, diagnostics radiology, synchrotron radiation, image processing & display, radiation measurements, MRI, QC & QA, and nuclear medicine with a total of 5 invited talks and 141 oral presentations, every one of which was of very high quality. 26 companies support this meeting by participating in the technical exhibition during the conference or advertising in the conference proceedings. This meeting provided a good opportunity for Asia-Oceania medical physicists to present their experiences and views and to interact with their colleagues from all over the world. The Professional Symposiums, in particular the ones on radiation accident and QA in medical physics in Asia & Oceania were most relevant in these aspects. AFOMP congratulated Dr. Wee-Saing Kang and the Organizing Committee for the success of the meeting. AFOMP also expressed its appreciation to the KSMP for its contributions in hosting the 2nd AOCMP and in facilitating AFOMP to hold its Annual Council Meeting and other business meetings during the conference.

Expanding Responsibilities for Medical Physicists in Asia-Oceania and Its Essential International Links: The Twin Role of AFOMP and IOMP

Kin-Yin Cheung, Prince of Wales Hospital, Hong Kong and Kwan-Hoong Ng Shatin, University of Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

THE ROLE AND FUNCTIONS OF AFOMP: The Asian-Oceania Federation of Organizations for Medical Physics (AFOMP) was established and became a regional chapter of IOMP in July 2000 during the Chicago World Congress. Its formation is a most challenging mission as Asia has a diverse cultural, social, educational and economical background. Some 60% (3.7 billion) of the world population is in Asia where hundreds of languages and dialects are spoken. Tradition is a way of life in Asia.

The formation of AFOMP aims to provide a solid platform for closer collaboration and mutual support among its member organizations, particularly in the promotion of standards of practice and professional status and training of the medical physicists in the regions. AFOMP also aims to facilitate and encourage cross-regional collaboration and interaction on every aspect of medical physics. We believe, by working together with our colleagues in other regions, that we can create a bigger impact in shaping the future of this important profession.

To achieve its goals and objectives, AFOMP has been and will continue to work closely with its member organizations, IOMP and other national and international organizations, on matters such as development of professional status and standard, medical physics service and service standard, education and training of physicists, and scientific meetings and exchanges. At its second AFOMP Annual Council Meeting held in November 2001 in Bangkok during the first Asia-Oceania Congress of Medical Physics (AOCMP), AFOMP has established three committees, namely the Professional Development Committee (PDC), the Education & Training Committee (ETC), and

(continued on page 7)

Expanding Responsibilities for Medical Physicists in Asia-Oceania and Its Essential International Links: The Twin Role of AFOMP and IOMP

(continued from page 5)

the Scientific Committee (SC) to work on these important tasks. Among their first tasks is the drafting of a set of common regional definitions and standards on the roles and responsibilities of a medical physicist, professional and quality standards, manning scale and manpower requirements, and the organization and support of training events and training development. The functions and activities of AFOMP in the past two years and its action plan for the coming year had been reviewed and discussed at its 2002 Annual Council Meeting and at the ETC and PDC Committee Meetings held in Gyeongju, Korea during the 3rd Korea-Japan Joint Meeting on Medical Physics (KJMP) & 2nd AOCMP. AFOMP will be taking a highly proactive role in promotion and participation in the forthcoming 2003 World Congress in Sydney, and will be collaborating with national and international organizations on the training of medical physicists and the development of professional and service standards.

THE TWIN ROLE OF AFOMP AND IOMP : The IOMP Secretary-General had pointed out that the physics to medicine transfer rate is increasing. Simultaneously, clinical physics is becoming more elevated and homogeneous around the world. There is need for international cooperation to assure medical physics support is adequate and sufficient for successful implementation in all countries.

Generally, the development of medical physics in the region is not in proportion with the rapid advances in the field of radiology and radiation oncology. The lack of resources and expertise is the most common problem we are facing. The challenges facing medical physicists from developing countries within Asia differ greatly from those encountered by their counterparts in advanced countries, because the access to technology, socioeconomic landscape, and other factors vary. Issues confronting most of us, such as education and training, professional role, salary, funding, and recognition, have always been keenly discussed at meetings. It is important that AFOMP works with its member organizations and other national and international organizations to improve or resolve these problems. For instance, AFOMP and its member countries should consider drafting and agreeing on a long-term plan on meetings in the region with the aim to avoid clashes and encourage maximum participation. AFOMP organizations should also consider having more joint meetings and less costly small local meetings with the aim to improve participation and regional collaboration. Greater utilization of the Internet in conducting virtual meetings, research collaboration, and online educational programs should be spearheaded. Though digital divide presents an obstacle to scientific progress in some countries, we must learn to share ideas and work closely with one another. It is important that all AFOMP medical physicists, especially the leaders, take a more active role in promoting regional collaboration and mutual support.

Although they share the same goals and objectives, the existing working relationship between IOMP and AFOMP should be strengthened in order to be more effective in promoting medical physics and the professional status of the medical physicists in the region. One possibility is for IOMP and AFOMP to work together (e.g. by forming a working group) to devise a long term development plan to look at issues such as training, professional development, certification, financial resources, scientific meeting, publications, etc. Another possibility is to have AFOMP members taking a more active and important role in IOMP by serving in its various committees as well as preparing members for possible leadership roles in IOMP at the upper levels.

Asian-Oceania medical physicists have been active in the international scene. Our Japanese colleagues had successfully hosted the 1991 World Congress held in Kyoto. We will soon visit the Land Down Under for the 2003 World Congress in Sydney. The international community will once again turn their attention to Asia when they convene in Seoul for the 2006 World Congress.

Status of AAPM/IOMP Libraries - September 2002

Marilyn Stovall, Ph.D., IOMP Curator of Libraries

We currently have 57 active libraries in 39 countries. We ask that we hear from each library a minimum of once every two years in order to maintain active status. Most libraries have returned the 2002 update questionnaire sent April 15, 2002. A follow-up to the non-responding libraries was mailed July 15, 2002.

We receive an average of 1-2 inquiries about the program each month; approximately one-third of these result in donations. There have been 9 donations coordinated so far in 2002. A large donation from the United Kingdom is currently being coordinated.

IOPP continues to donate five books to new libraries. The latest new library was established in Tbilisi, Georgia this July. AAPM coordinates the donations of Medical Physics Journal subscriptions; currently, 32 members donated their 2002 subscriptions to the library program. Each quarter, the Society for Radiological Protection mails their quarterly publication, The Journal of Radiological Protection, to all active libraries.

While supplies last, each new library will receive an immediate donation of 5 CDs (3 from ASTRO, 1 from Chicago 2000, and 1 Medical Physics-text & abstracts). The library in Cyprus donated 50 CDs from the Medicon '98 regional meetings, and these will be mailed to the first 50 Libraries that responded to the 2002 Information Update.

Anyone wishing to donate materials or establish a library is asked to contact the curator.

International Organization for Medical Physics Corporate Affiliates, 2002

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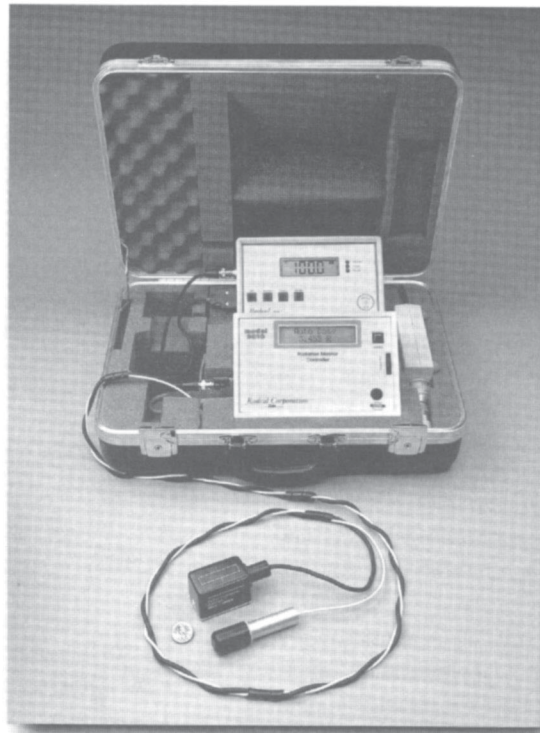
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International Medical Physics College at ICTP

Slavik Tabakov, Ph.D., ETC Chair, and
Perry Sprawls, Ph.D., Univ of Rochester, USA

This year the regular College on Medical Physics at the Abdus Salam International Centre for Medical Physics (ICTP), Trieste, Italy, was held in the period 2 - 27 September. The College included an intensive program on Medical Imaging (6 hours per day), including practicals and computer simulation sessions. Some 80 participants from 43 countries were registered for the College. The participants were selected from more than 230 applications - perhaps the highest number in the 15 year history of this College, showing the increased popularity of the Medical Physics profession.

The objective of the College on Medical Physics was to contribute to the development of competent medical physicists who can make direct contributions to the improvement of health care in their countries through better imaging diagnosis and who can lead in the proper and safe application of radiation for diagnostic imaging purposes. Course Directors and Faculty included: Prof. L Bertocchi, Dr. A. Benini, Prof. P Sprawls, Dr. S. Tabakov and Prof. F. Milano, Dr. C. Lewis, Prof. D. Fry, Dr. M. DeDenaro. Most of the participants of the College were lecturers and officers of the Medical Physics Societies in their countries, who can further disseminate the knowledge.

ICTP (www.ictp.trieste.it) operates under the aegis of UNESCO and IAEA with generous support from the Italian Government. In addition to the excellent conditions and facilities which ICTP provided for the College on Medical Physics, grants for travel and daily allowances were given to many colleagues. All participants in the College prepared a special Declaration stating:

"We all participants at the ICTP College on Medical Physics underline the very important role of this profession for the healthcare in our countries.

Education and training in Medical Physics is vital for the abovementioned development, and we highly appreciate the activities of UNESCO, IAEA, IOMP and other international and national institutions in this direction. We especially would like to thank the Abdus Salam International Centre for Medical Physics (ICTP) for supporting and hosting this unique International Medical Physics College at Trieste.

We would very much appreciate it if such an activity would be further developed in more frequent periods and for longer periods of time in order to cover in detail the theory of medical physics and to help more colleagues to benefit from the expertise of the organisers. We also declare our readiness to take part in other joint activities, including distance learning, aiming to develop the Medical Physics profession in our countries and regions"

This Declaration was signed during the special session for international collaboration organized on 11 September 2002. At this session and several other sessions, the participants presented papers about the Medical Physics activities in their countries. All materials from these sessions will be edited and further published.

The next International Medical Physics College at ICTP Trieste is planned for the second half of 2004.

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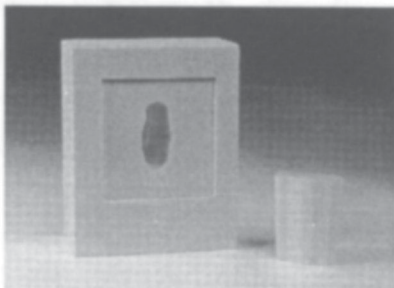
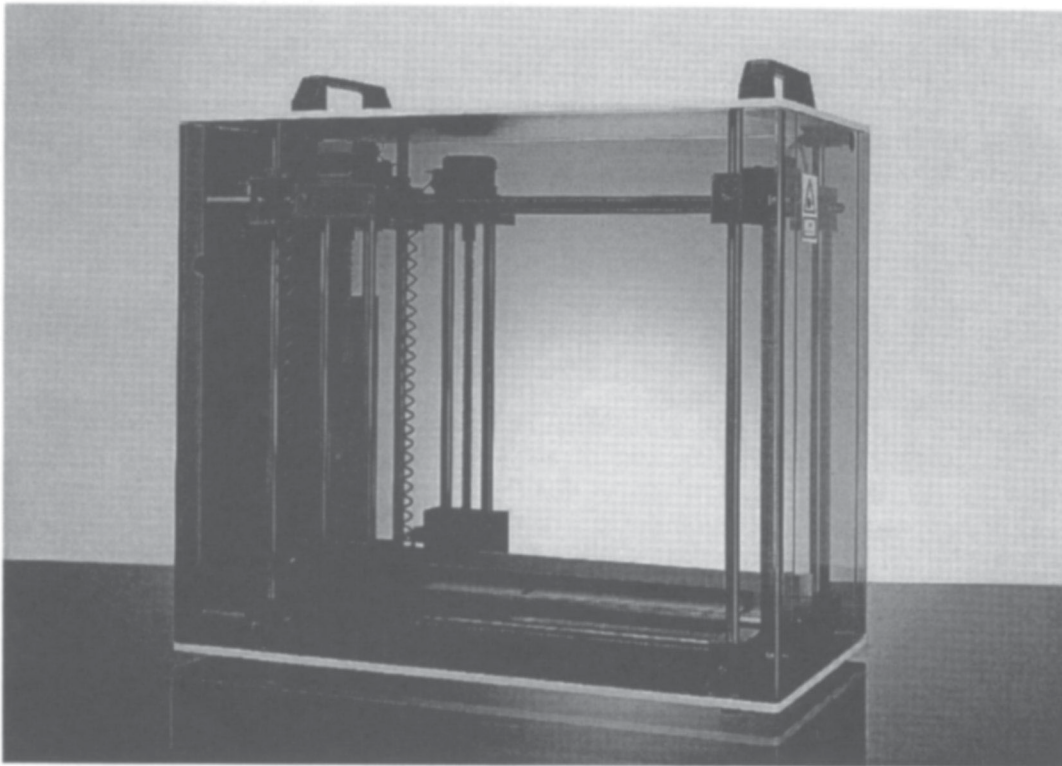


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Report on the International Conference on Medical Physics Held in Havana, Cuba; April 8 - 10, 2002

Azam Niroomand-Rad, Ph.D.; IOMP Vice President

Roberto Fraxedas, MS; Vice President, Cuban Physical Society, Havana Cuba

Victor Fajer, PhD; President, Cuban Physical Society, Havana, Cuba

Irving Lerch, PhD; Director of International Affairs, The American Physical Society, USA

The first Cuba-USA medical physics collaboration was an International Conference on Medical Physics that was held successfully in Habana, Cuba, April 8-10, 2002. This conference was organized by the Cuban Physical Society (SCF), the American Association for Physicists in Medicine (AAPM), and the American Physical Society (APS) with the support of the US Liaison Committee to IUPAP (USLC). The meeting was endorsed by the Cuban Academy of Sciences (ACC), Ministry of Public Health (MINSAP), International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), International Organization for Medical Physics (IOMP), International Union for Physical and Engineering Sciences in Medicine (IUPESM), Latin American Center for Physics (CLAF) and the Latin American Association for Medical Physicists (ALFIM). Partial financial support for participants was provided by the APS, USLC and CLAF. The co-organizers of this meeting were Victor Fajer, President of the Cuban Physical Society, and Azam Niroomand-Rad, Vice-president of IOMP and Chair of AAPM International Affairs Committee. The APS was represented by Irving Lerch, Director of International Affairs and member of the Executive Committee for the US Liaison Committee to IUPAP. The secretary of the conference was Roberto Fraxedas, head of the Medical Physics and Biophysics Section of the Cuban Physical Society.

The objectives of this workshop was to discuss the "Technology and Medical Physics in Patient Diagnosis and Therapy". The main topics covered were: HDR Brach therapy: update and perspectives, Recent Advances in Radiation Therapy with LINAC's, DMLC, IMRT, QA and QC in Medical Physics Procedures, Image fusion in Diagnostic Imaging, Digital Image Applications in Medical Imaging, Signal processing and analysis in Biomedicine, and Laser techniques in Medicine.

A joint faculty of 24 members of AAPM and APS, 3 from ALFIM, 2 from the Swedish Society of Medical Physicists and 3 from SCF made 42 oral presentations in two refresher courses, 5 therapy sessions, 4 diagnostic sessions, 4 nuclear medicine ses-

sions, 2 radiological protection sessions and 2 biophysics and laser physics sessions. Also, 41 posters were presented in two Poster Sessions followed by discussion sessions. There were a total of 103 participants (29 from foreign countries, 74 from Cuba). The conference was held at Havana's International Press Center with two conference rooms and a poster exhibit hall.

The program began with welcoming remarks addressed by Dr. Fajer, Dr. Lerch, and Dr. Niroomand-Rad. The closing ceremony was conducted by Dr. Yamila de Armas, Vice Minister of Health Care of the Cuba Ministry of Health, and Dr. Azam Niroomand-Rad. Dr. Yamila de Armas made warm remarks regarding the significance of this conference for the Cuban medical physicists. Best hopes and wishes for future USA-Cuba collaboration were exchanged.

An evening visit was paid to the new facilities of the National Institute of Oncology (INOR), where Dr. Alberto Céspedes (Director of INOR) and Dr. Rolando Camacho (head of the National Group of Oncology) received the visitors. Dr. Rodolfo Alfonso, head of the Radiation Physics Section, showed the Radiotherapy installations and the works performed by the medical physicists.

As in any scientific meeting, not everything was work. The visitors were also able to hear Cuban music and taste local foods and beverages, visit Old Havana, and enjoy local hospitality in their free time. This conference left among the participants not only knowledge but also the warm feeling of brotherhood and friendship.

Last but not least, we would like to express our appreciation to all AAPM faculty and Local Organizing Committee for their extraordinary efforts in organizing this program. The success of this program was due to the hard work and commitment of AAPM faculty as well as local organizers. We had a memorable experience and made new friendships. Wonderful memories of this experience will certainly be lasting.

Report on the AAPM/IOMP International Scientific Exchange Program: Radiation Therapy Physics Course & Workshop Held on March 09-13, 2002 in Saudi Arabia, Riyadh

Muthana Al-Ghazi, Ph.D.; Orange, CA, USA and

Azam Niroomand-Rad, Ph.D.; Vice President IOMP

The 12th AAPM/IOMP one-week Course/Workshop on Radiation Therapy Physics was held successfully at the King Faisal Specialist Hospital and Research Centre (KFSHRC) in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, March 09-13, 2002. The Course/Workshop was sponsored by the AAPM International Scientific Exchange Programs (ISEP) and Endorsed by the International Organization for Medical Physics (IOMP) Education and Training Committee. Local sponsorship was provided by the Department of Biomedical Physics, KFSHRC. This program was also accredited by CAPMEP.

The objectives of this workshop were to discuss the fundamentals of the physics of radiation therapy, to present the current status of treatment of cancer patients using state of the art treatment technology to medical physicists, radiation oncologists, medical dosimetrists, radiation therapists and allied professionals, to intercompare calibration of photon and electron beams using the

IAEA and the AAPM TG-51 protocols and to exchange information relating to the medical physics profession in Saudi Arabia and neighboring countries. Another major objective of this program was to promote the professional profile of the field of medical physics in Saudi Arabia and assist our Saudi colleagues in establishing a Saudi Association of Medical Physics (SAMP).

Dr. Abdulkarim Al-Beteri, Chairman of the Department of Biomedical Physics at KFSHRC, was the local Host Director and Chairman of the Local Arrangement Committee and Co-Director of this course. AAPM faculty were: Drs. Faiz M. Khan, Bhudatt R. Paliwal, LeRoy J. Humphries, Theodore Thorson, as well as the authors of this report. There were 70 participants: 63 from Saudi Arabia, 2 from Egypt, 2 from Sudan, 2 from Bahrain and one from Syria.

(continued on page 12)



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Report on the AAPM/IOMP International Scientific Exchange Program *(continued from page 10)*

The participants included medical physicists, health physicists, radiation oncologists, dosimetrists, and radiation therapists.

The program began with a welcoming address by Dr. Sultan Al-Sedairy, Executive Director of the Research Centre at KFSHRC, followed by opening remarks presented by Dr. Azam Niroomand-Rad and Dr. Abdelkarim Al-Beteri. This officially inaugurated the course. A total of 22 lectures were presented by the faculty on various aspects of radiation therapy physics. These included education and training of medical physicists, radiation dosimetry, dosimetry protocols, dosimetry instrumentation, facility design, equipment commissioning, brachytherapy, stereotactic radiosurgery and radiotherapy, TBI, TSEI, imaging in radiation therapy, recent and future advances in radiation therapy physics. The lectures were held at the Prince Salman Auditorium at KFSHRC. In addition, there were two workshops; one on intercomparison of the IAEA and TG-51 dosimetry protocols and one on chamber intercomparisons. Attendees from five countries brought chambers and electrometers for this purpose. One of the treatment machines (Varian 2100 C/D) at KFSHRC was used for these two workshops. It should be noted that KFSHRC is a large and modern tertiary care hospital. It acts as the referral centre for the entire Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. It is extremely well equipped. The range of technological devices and clinical programs available at KFSHRC is impressive and parallels that in any US university healthcare institution. The faculty also visited the Radiation Oncology Department of the Riyadh Military Hospital and were impressed by the extent of the medical physics activities in this hospital as presented by the Chief Physicist, Dr. Miola.

Certificates of Appreciation and Certificates of Participation were presented to the faculty and the participants. The certificates were signed by Drs. Robert Gould, AAPM President, Azam Niroomand-Rad, AAPM ISEP Chair, and Vice-President of IOMP, Oskar Chomicki, President of IOMP, and Abdelkarim Al-Beteri, Host Director. In addition, our local host, Dr. Al-Beteri, presented each of the faculty with a commemorative plaque in appreciation of their contribution. Evaluation forms were distributed to the participants and were collected upon completion of the program. Various aspects of the program including the quality and the quantity of the lectures presented by each faculty during the workshop were evaluated. The results of the evaluations were summarized and are

available for review. General comments were noted by some of the respondents at the end of the evaluation form.

Local expenses of the faculty were supported by the host institution. Faculty travel expenses were financed by funds provided by the AAPM, vendors, and the King Fahad University of Petroleum and Minerals. Corporate Sponsors (+\$1,000) were Elekta Oncology Systems and Best Industries. Supporters (\$500 - 999) were Siemens, Europe. Contributors (\$100-499) were Standard Imaging and CDRS. The Department of Biomedical Physics, KFSHRC supported the entire program locally. Vendors (Varian, BrainLab, PTW) supported attendees from outside Riyadh.

Following the conclusion of the course, a one day workshop was held at the King Fahad University of Petroleum and Minerals (KFUPM) in Dhahran. The title of the workshop was "Medical Physics: Its Importance and Its Future in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia". The workshop was organized by the Physics Department (Chairman, Dr. Muhammed Naqqadi) of KFUPM. The objective of the workshop was to discuss the current status and future of medical physics in Saudi Arabia. The occasion of holding this event is the inauguration of a M.Sc. graduate program in medical physics at KFUPM. The opening address of the workshop was given by the University Rector, Dr. Abdulaziz Al-Dukhail. Presentations were given by Dr. Khan and the authors of this report on the training of medical physicists, medical imaging and recent advances in radiation therapy physics. Local speakers were Drs. Al-Beteri and Mohammed Al-Shabanah. They covered the topics of cancer incidence in Saudi Arabia, radiation therapy services, and the need for medical physicists. A panel discussion concluded this workshop. The importance of establishing a Saudi Association of Medical Physicists was made very clear in this workshop. A tour of the Saudi Aramco and Aramco Hospital Radiation Oncology Department in Dhahran were arranged for visiting faculty.

Last but not least, we would like to express our appreciation to the AAPM faculty and Dr. Abdelkarim Al-Beteri and his staff for their extraordinary efforts in organizing this program. The success of this program is due to the hard work and commitment of local organizer as well as faculty. The warm welcome, affability, and generous hospitality accorded to us was indeed unsurpassed. We had a memorable experience and made new friendships. Wonderful memories of this experience will certainly be lasting.

A Plea to Medical Physicists

Azam Niroomand-Rad, Ph.D, Vice-President, IOMP

After having worked for more than three decades in the field of nuclear particles for cancer treatment, and as I have stated in my review paper "Particle Radiotherapy: Historical Developments and Current Status" in *Rad.Res.* 145,391-407(1996), I feel that unless individuals who are working to improve the quality of medicine start taking an active role in meeting the needs of people at large, the gulf between the quality of treatment received by the haves and have-nots will widen further.

With this in mind, I have taken voluntary retirement from the Los Alamos National Laboratory, and I have been spending most of my time in rural India since 1994. I am now developing a rural cancer center in a village, Pedamiram, near Bhimavaram Town, Andhra Pradesh, India with an emphasis on the prevention and the importance of early detection of cancer.

In India, most of the cancer centers are located in big cities, while more than 75% of the population live in villages. At present, more than 75% of patients are in advanced incurable stages by the time they go for treatment. I am trying to build a rural cancer center as a model to significantly increase the percentage of patients with early curable disease seeking help.

We have received approval from the Bhabha Atomic Research Center for building a radiotherapy facility with an area of about 10,000 square feet. This building has rooms for external beams of low and high energy, simulation, high dose and low dose rate brachytherapy, treatment planning, mould room etc. in addition to the patient waiting hall, examination rooms etc. I am getting this building built mostly with my personal resources so far. I am happy to inform you that the foundation work is completed and we expect to finish the construction before the end of this year.

Background information regarding our efforts can be viewed at the WebPages: <http://www.mgmtrust.org>. Please see the section on cancer control under The Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Medical Trust, which is a charitable organization. I am hoping that some of you will help me in offering your services and in procuring some of the radiation equipment required for cancer treatment. I am hoping that with the help of some of you, I will be able to develop a good model for a rural cancer center with an emphasis on prevention and the importance of early detection with a hope that this

(continued on page 14)

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A Plea to Medical Physicists (continued from page 12)

will be a good demonstration project by concerned scientists working in the forefront of cancer treatment joining together as 'scientists for social action'.

On behalf of: Dr. M.R. Raju, Fellow Bioscience Division, Los Alamos National Laboratory, Los Alamos, New Mexico-87545, USA.

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A Letter to the Editor: The Origins of 'Recognizable Specialties' in Medical Physics

W. Alan Jennings; Founder member of HPA, 1943 & President HPA, 1966-7; S. W. Smye; President IPEM, 2002; and Ian Isherwood, CBE, Chairman RHHCT, 1992-2002

In his paper entitled "International Medical Physics for the 21st Century" in the journal, *Med. Phys. World*, Vol. 17, No 1, June 2001, Gary Fullerton as Secretary General of IOMP writes:

"The history of medical physics is quite short relative to that of most recognized academic and professional specialties. The rapid growth of the specialty in the USA and other parts of the world in the latter half of the 20th Century was explosive. The American Association of Physicists in Medicine (AAPM) was formed in 1958 with less than 100 members, and now has more than 4600. The IOMP was formed in the late 1950's and early 1960's..."

As this statement is made in an international journal, and in the context of this paragraph, it implies that the AAPM was the first such national specialty to be formed. This is incorrect and calls for at least amplification or clarification. In view of the widespread circulation of 'Medical Physics World', the record needs to be set right lest it becomes a 'true' historical version by repetition.

In the United Kingdom, a 'Radiology History and Heritage Charitable Trust' (RHHCT) was set up in 1992 in the light of the remarkable early history of radiology in this country. For example, the present British Institute of Radiology has evolved from the Roentgen Society set up in 1897, only two years after the discovery of X-rays, and the British Committee on Radiation Units and measurements evolved from the Committee on Roentgen Measurement and Dosage set up in 1913 - both first in the world.

The present concern is the formation of the Hospital Physicists Association (HPA) in 1943, again the first medical/hospital physicists specialty in the world. Indeed, this was some 15 years before the formation of the AAPM.

The early histories of both the HPA and the AAPM have been fully documented, both Associations having produced "Fortieth Anniversary" publications:

- "The History of the Hospital Physicists' Association, 1943 - 1983", edited by J W Haggith, published for the HPA in 1983, now IPEM (see below).
- "History of the American Association of Physicists in Medicine, 1958 - 1998", by John S. Laughlin and Paul N. Goodwin, published for AAPM by the American Institute of Physics. (*Medical Physics*, Vol. 15, No 7, July 1998, Part 2).

The inaugural meeting of the HPA was held on 24 Sept. 1943 in London with about 30 physicists present and that of the AAPM on 17 Nov. 1958 in Chicago had about 50 physicists present. These bodies constituted the formation of national 'recognizable specialties', which are the subject of this communication. In both cases, they were preceded by the formation of 'local' groups. In the UK, a 'Northern Group' of hospital physicists had been set up in Leeds on 8 May 1943 around six months ahead of the national body, and in the USA, a group of medical physicists ("RAMPS") in New York began holding scheduled meetings in 1948 with a constitution in 1954; other chapters followed.

In the USA, the AAPM has retained its name over the years whereas in the UK, after some 50 years, the HPA became the "Institute of Physical Sciences in Medicine" (IPSM) and later the "Institute of Physics and Engineering in Medicine" (IPEM), which it is today, but its origins are clear.

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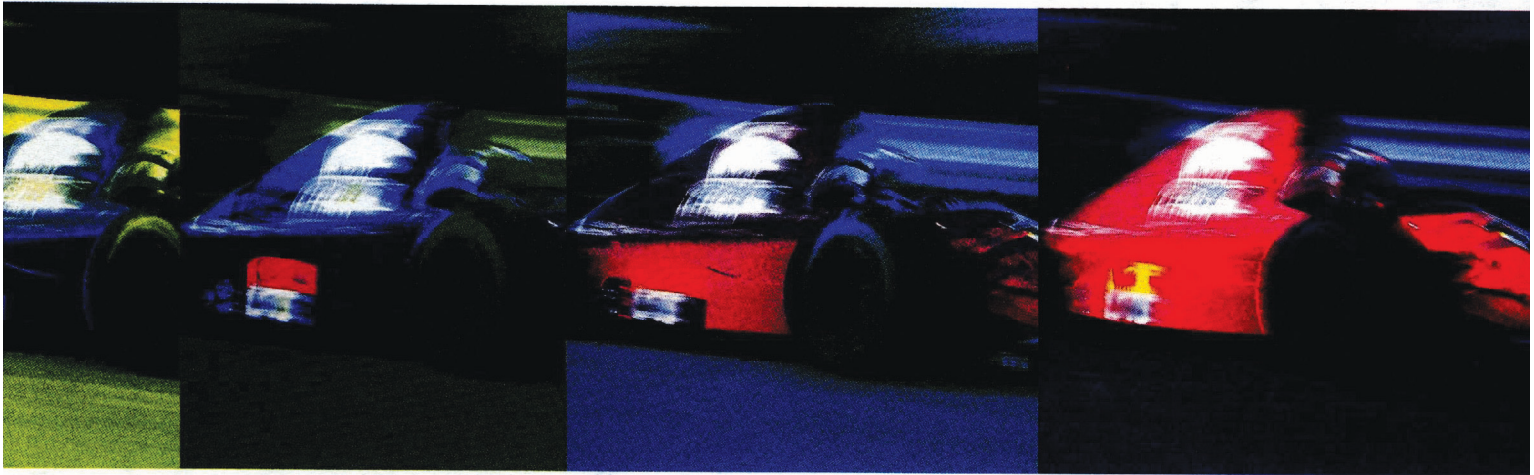
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Mohammad Zaidi, Ph.D., PRC, Donation of Used Equipment

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being shipped to INDIA - Christian Medical College, Hospital, Vellore, Chennai (Madras). The system was very kindly donated by Walter Tang, MS, Consultant Medical Physicist, Minneapolis, MN, USA.

RMI system with water tank, laptop, etc. includes no chambers going to EGYPT - Nile Badri Medical Center, Cairo. This system was very kindly donated by Jeff Limmer, DABR, MS Ed, MSc, Radiation Oncology Physicist, UW Cancer Center, Wausau Hospital, Department of Radiation Oncology, Wausau, WI, USA.

Atomic Products Corp. Radium Safe Model 042-406 with 13 Cesium needles being transferred to Grossmont Hospital, LaMesa, CA, USA. It was very kindly donated by Diane M. Elmer, MS, CHP, Medical Physics, St. John's Hospital, Springfield, IL, USA.

Equipment available:

I plan to update my list of equipment available and those who need used equipment donated to update the necessary information to IOMP Used Equipment Donation Program Manager.

If you need used equipment, you should be ready to pay or make shipping arrangements on very short notice.

Used equipment needed:

Automatic film processor, block cutter, film densitometer, radiation field analyzer, curietron projector cesium sources for LDR brachytherapy for gynecologic applications in cervix and endometrial cancers like curitrons AMRA from CISBIO international or equivalent, direct patient dose monitor, rectal monitor, cavity chamber, TLD readers, ultrasound system with doppler and surgical aspiration system, gastroscope, cardiocograph and micro-analyzer for blood, urine and biochemistry analysis.

Joint-venture proposal from India:

"We need support from IOMP to develop a Radiation oncology centre in India, even if there is any institution or individual who would be interested to donate equipment we can tie up with such institution/ individual and give them their name e.g. Indo-US joint venture." They need a used cobalt 60, mammography unit and a gamma camera.

The equipment donated to IOMP Used equipment Donation Program is generally in good working condition, but we do not guarantee its usefulness. The recipient has to pay for shipping and handling only. If you want to donate used equipment to IOMP or want some equipment donated to your organization, please contact Mohammed K. Zaidi at 208-526-2132, Fax 208-526-2548 or e.mail zaidimk@id.doe.gov

Calendar of Events

Carter Schroy, Ph.D., Associate Editor

The following events have been excerpted from the Medical Physics Calendar [<http://medphys.org/calendar/>]. Also see [<http://www.iomp.org/>]. Events for inclusion should be emailed to the Calendar Editor, Carter Schroy, at EventsEd@aol.com. MPW deadlines are April 1 and October 1 for issues that are mailed several weeks later.

26-28 February 2003

International Workshop in IMRT;
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
sibatac@mail.ecu.edu

10-16 May 2003

11th Scientific Meeting and Exhibition of the International Society for Magnetic Resonance in Medicine (ISMRM); Toronto, Canada
info@smr.org / www.ismrm.org

20-23 May 2003

8th European Congress on Medical Physics and Engineering ; Eindhoven, The Netherlands
www.efomp2003.nl / m.c.groenendijk@tue.nl

1-4 June 2003

World Federation for Ultrasound in Medicine and Biology; Montreal, Canada
www.aium.org/events/annualcons/2003wfumb/general.asp / lelliott@aium.org

22-26 June 2003

AAPM Summer School: Intensity Modulated Radiation Therapy ; Colorado Springs, USA
aapm@aapm.org / <http://aapm.org>

25-28 June 2003

CARS 2003 - Computer Assisted Radiology and Surgery: 17th International Congress and Exhibition - ISCAS - 7th Annual Conference of the International Society for Computer Aided

Surgery - CAD - 5th International Workshop on Computer-Aided Diagnosis - CMI - 9th Computed Maxillofacial Imaging Congress - CVI - 2003 International Symposium on Cardiovascular Imaging - EuroPACS - 21st International EuroPACS Meeting ; London, UK
www.cars-int.de / fschweikert@cars-int.de

20-25 July 2003

IPMI 2003: 18th Int'l Conference on Information Processing in Medical Imaging Ambleside, UK
www.ipmi-conference.com/
noble@robots.ox.ac.uk

10-14 August 2003

AAPM 45th Annual Meeting; San Diego, USA
[aapm@aapm.org](http://aapm.org) / <http://aapm.org>

17-22 August 2003

12th Int'l Congress of Radiation Research (ICRR 2003) ; Brisbane, Australia
<http://www.icrr2003.org/> / icrr2003@icms.com.au

19-21 August 2003

Workshop on Recent Advances in Absorbed Dose Standards (ARPANSA); Melbourne, Australia
www.arpansa.gov.au/
robert.huntley@health.gov.au

24-29 August 2003

XXX; Sydney, Australia
www.wc2003.org/ / B.Allen@unsw.edu.au

28 Sep - 3 Oct 2003

9th Symposium on Neutron Dosimetry (NEUDOS9) and Advances in Nuclear Particle Dosimetry for Radiation Protection and Medicine; Delft, The Netherlands
www.iri.tudelft.nl/~neudos9/
Bos@iri.tudelft.nl

19-24 October 2003

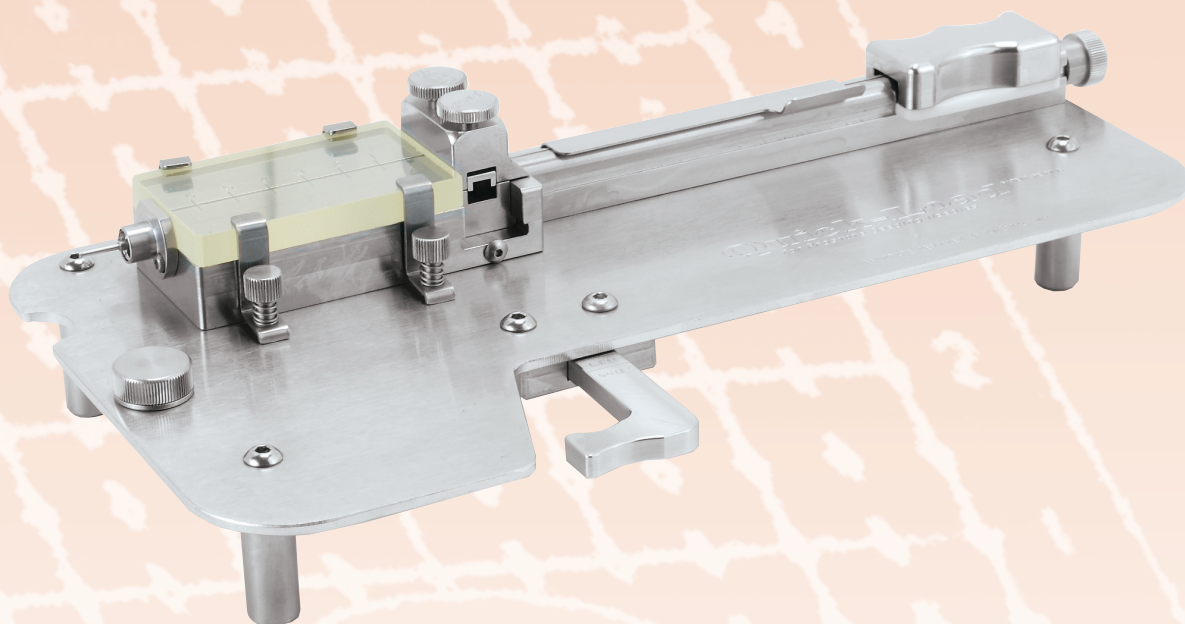
IEEE Nuclear Science Symposium and Medical Imaging Conference ; Portland, OR, USA
www.-mic.org / rjames@bnl.gov

30 Nov - 5 Dec 2003

Radiological Society of North America Annual Meeting, Chicago USA
www.rsna.org

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