



# NEWSLETTER

@ Newsletter from The **E**uropean **S**ociety of **C**ontraception

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## Editorial

Dear ESC members,

The ESC Congress in Istanbul is in the last phase of organisation. The General Assembly of members in Istanbul will include new elections to the Board. In the past few years we adapted the Statutes and Rules of Procedure which include the duration of the terms of office and the required number of paid up members for representation on the Board.

2006 will be a year of drastic changes: many of the current Board members have had two subsequent terms and cannot be re-elected; new members will have to stand. On the website you will find the relevant information about the actual number of paid up members in your country (this number will be updated regularly over the following weeks), the rules regarding Board elections and a possibility of registering online. This allows you to check the position of your country and its Board members in advance.

An information package presenting the ESC has been sent to a long list of relevant European societies and organisations. By means of this mailing, we start to strengthen the communication with them and to collaborate.

A request was received from Serbia and Montenegro to review and certify the national guidelines for contraception. It was agreed by the Executive Committee that the revision and certification of national guidelines are a relevant activity for the ESC. We will ask the Internal Scientific Committee to study the guidelines.

The organisation of the 9th ESC Congress (Istanbul, 3 to 6 May 2006) is running smoothly and looks very promising. About 1100 participants registered already and we expect at least 500 more. More than 300 abstracts were submitted, which were all reviewed according to the ESC standard procedure (blinded, 2 reviewers, scored on different criteria). Please have a look to the last update of the scientific programme on our website ([www.contraception-esc.com](http://www.contraception-esc.com)).

We believe this meeting will provide the participants with a wonderful opportunity to exchange ideas, to learn about new research and to discuss all aspects of contraception and reproductive health. We look forward to meeting you in Istanbul and having a new get together on the occasion of the congress!

I hope to see all of you in Istanbul: listen, learn, discuss, debate, speak and party. Till then!

*Olga Loeber, Secretary General*

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## Seminar on Practice of Medical Abortion

Ljubljana, Slovenia, 20 January 2006

Alenka Pretnar-Darovec, Bojana Pinter

In the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology of the university Medical Centre in Ljubljana, we organized a seminar on the introduction of medical abortion in Slovenia. The seminar was held at the end of January 2006 and was financially supported by the generous grant offered by ESC last September. No registration fee was charged.

In Slovenia medical abortion has been available only at the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology thanks to the participation of our team in numerous WHO multicentre projects investigating the efficacy of mifepristone and misoprostol. Despite this, the drugs have not been registered in Slovenia yet. Therefore, the very objective of the seminar was to disseminate the knowledge acquired both from the literature and years of experience with the drugs, and to motivate the colleagues from other 13 gynecological units in Slovenia to start using medical abortion in their hospitals. The audience consisted of gynecologists, nurses and social workers involved in abortion service provision.

The morning sessions were dedicated to detailed presentation of the two drugs, and the import procedures as the drugs have not been registered and are not available in the Slovene market. After a coffee break, Professor Elizabeth Aubeny, our dear and distinguished guest from Paris, joined us. With her rich and valuable experience she was ready to give answers to numerous questions put by the audience. The main concerns of the participants were the variety of procedures, evaluation of efficiency, potential complications.



Each participant was given a copy of PowerPoint lectures. We should say that Professor Aubeny's visit proved to be extremely important and valuable for all the participants – we will consider her recommendations in our future work. In the afternoon

Professor Aubeny gave a most vivid and interesting talk to a wider audience, to the members of the Society of Obstetricians and Gynecologists of Slovenia, at their monthly meeting. Most of them work in outpatient clinics throughout the country; they are keen to introduce medical abortion to the primary care level, but our intention is, however, to initially make it a routine procedure in Slovenian hospitals.

## Pregnancy rates and contraceptive use among adolescents in Slovenia

Bojana Pinter

In Slovenia adolescent pregnancy rates have decreased in the last two decades from 61/1000 adolescents aged 15-19 years in 1981 (delivery rate was 37/1000 and abortion rate 24/1000) to 15/1000 in 2003 (delivery rate was 6/1000 and abortion rate 9/1000). Abortion is permitted on demand since 1977, with no mandatory parental notification.

According to the two representative studies on sexual behaviour in secondary-school students in Slovenia, which were run by Dept. of Ob/Gyn at the University Medical Centre in Ljubljana in 1996 and 2004, the median age at first intercourse has decreased from 18.5 years in 1996 to 17 years in 2004. The studies also revealed that the rates of sexual active 15 years old students increased to 24% in boys and 21% in girls, which has put Slovenia in the first third of European countries regarding early sexual debut (according to the data from Health Behaviour of School-aged Children (HBSC) 2001/2002 study). In spite of this evident earlier and increased sexual activity, at the same time, delivery rates among adolescents have decreased from 12/1000 to 6/1000 and abortion rates from 10/1000 to 9/1000. Successful prevention in pregnancy rates among adolescents may be due to increase in effective contraceptive use, especially pill use which among 17 year old secondary-school students more than doubled - from 14% in 1996 to 32% in 2004. Happily, the rate of adolescents using no contraception decreased from 19% to 7%. Unfortunately, condom use decreased from 60% to 50%, and "double method" is used by only 4%. Therefore in the future, in addition to pill use, promotion of condom use should be continued and the use of "double method" should be strongly encouraged among Slovenian adolescents.

## **Report of the joined conference of Fiapac and the Russian Society of Ob/Gyn Moscow, October 27 - 28, 2005**

*C. Fila (Austria), FIAPAC President  
"Abortion, Contraception and Women's Health"*

The conference took place at the Women's Hospital in Moscow, which has well equipped conference facilities and an experienced staff.

The conference was organised in co-operation of FIAPAC and the Women's Hospital in Moscow. The topics for the presentations were discussed and decided in accordance with the local organizing committee, headed by Dr. Irina Savelieva in order to best meet the local needs. There were about 500 attendants from all over Russia, doctors, professors and students and 20 participants from Western Europe, US, Canada and even New Zealand. There was a simultaneous translation from English to Russian and vice versa.

The high number of participants demonstrated the need for a conference on abortion. And the health professionals received the exchange of experience together with an update on latest developments very well.

Overall the presentations were of a very good standard – every subject was presented by a western and a Russian speaker.

The topics of major interest were details of medical abortion, which is not currently widespread in Eastern European countries. Also details of surgical abortion, like the (unnecessary) use of sharp curettage or the need for infection screening and antibiotic therapy were received with great interest.

An important part of the conference was dedicated to different aspects of postabortion contraception like technical innovations as well as improvements of access. The common goal has been to make abortion safe, further reduce abortion rates and improve contraceptive use after the experience of an unwanted pregnancy.

The discussions after the interventions were not as lively as we are used to in conferences in Western countries, probably reflecting differences in tradition of discussing things in public.

Clearly there is an urgent need for professional exchanges like this one. And health professionals in Russia and other Eastern European countries were very happy with this initiative.

### **ESC website**

*Rob Beerthuisen, ESC Webmaster and Board member  
(The Netherlands)*

[www.contraception-esc.com](http://www.contraception-esc.com)

The website is an important platform for the Society and the outside world and is growing in popularity. It contains a lot of information. This includes over 600 abstracts of free communications, lectures and posters presented at our Congresses and Seminars from the seminar at Coimbra in 2001 onwards. Items are available on nearly all topics of Contraception and Reproductive Health Care. The easiest way to find items in the website is by using the search button.

There are also over 30 powerpoint presentations on several topics. We are happy for some slides to be used for educational purposes.

Links to all major institutions in the field of Contraception and Reproductive Health Care are available on the page: see links to sites.

Our site seems to be a booming star in Google. Thanks to the efforts of several Board members to ask for links in their respective countries we are today already in 39th place using the keyword contraception alone (total number of references: 12.400.000). The number of daily visitors is rising gradually (December 169 visits daily).

### **ESC Session at other congresses**

#### **ESHRE Congress, Prague (18 to 21 June 2006)**

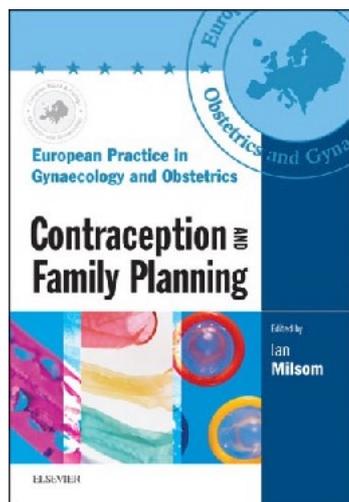
ESC session on Wednesday 21 June, 08:30 – 09:30  
Contributions from A Bigrigg, D. Lazaris and S. Ozalp.

#### **ESC session at the FIGO congress**

Kuala Lumpur – Malaysia (5 to 10 November 2006)  
Contributions from G. Creatsas, D. Lazaris, O.Loeber and D. Cibula.

## Book review - Contraception and Family Planning

by Olga Loeber, The Netherlands



This very practical book is one in a series in the collection European Practice in Gynaecology and Obstetrics. In 11 chapters different aspects of family planning and contraception, including sterilisation and abortion, are described by many well known authors. Each chapter covers a certain method of family planning: combined hormonal contraception, copper releasing intrauterine devices, medicated IUDs, spermicidal and barrier methods, progestagen-only methods, emergency contraception, sterilization and abortion. There is also attention paid to some special groups like adolescents and premenopausal women. A special chapter is dedicated to contraception and sexuality. Each chapter starts with an abstract and if applicable starts with the historic development of the method and gives mechanisms of action, effectiveness, side effects and other possible adverse consequences and how to deal with them.

Due to the organization of the chapters, written by different authors, some issues are covered several times (the non contraceptive benefits of oral contraception) some I could not find in any (at what age can a girl start oral contraception).

In the different chapters many issues are covered and many questions answered. For instance the issue of what checks should be done in oral contraceptive users. Our colleague from Slovenia who asked in the Newsletter vol. 2 nr. 2 can find the answers here and use these to her advantage.

The fact that many authors contributed makes for lively reading and interesting facts even for someone from the field itself. I learned a new word I liked (UPSI) that I started to use immediately.

In the book the guidelines from the WHO are sometimes followed, sometimes the national or even personal preferences are stated. It is interesting that national guidelines from different countries can still be very different to what one is used to. I think that in some countries professionals will be shocked, whereas the same statement can be too strict for other countries.

I can certainly recommend this book, but of course there is always something to wish for. For instance I do miss a special chapter devoted to counselling. Of course sexual education is mentioned, but in our consulting rooms with individual patients of all ages counselling is of paramount importance, as is obvious in all the studies on satisfaction and compliance with the use of contraceptive methods. Furthermore I wondered about the sense of a section on male hormonal contraception in the chapter of contraception in adolescents and yet there was nothing on the vaginal ring there. This ring is used more and more by adolescents in the Netherlands. The author of the chapter on medicated IUDs is so taken by the method he covered that I could not find one adverse or unpleasant side effect of this method in his text. I know for a fact that some women have not liked the method for one reason or another. Finally in the chapter on abortion (and I am very pleased this is included, because in many textbooks the topic is skipped over as if it did not exist) twice as much attention is devoted to medical abortion compared with surgical methods. Again here I would have liked some more attention to counselling.

However, all these remarks only highlight the fact that the book is concise and very useful to all professionals who provide or use contraception.

### Contraception and Family Planning

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All Newsletters are also to be found on the website of the Society:  
<http://www.contraception-esc.com> (go to 'News')