

Minutes of the SSIEM Council Meeting

Held on 12th November 2004 at 11 a.m. at 7 Queen Square, London

Council Members Present:

Guy Besley	Cornelis Jakobs (chairman)
Nenad Blau	Philip Lee
Ubaldo Caruso	Jean-Marie Saudubray
Mike Champion	Isabel Tavares de Almeida
Mick Henderson (secretary)	

Cornelis opened the meeting by welcoming the new members, Nenad Blau, Mike Champion and Isabel Tavares de Almeida.

In Attendance:

James Leonard

2004. 23. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Eli-Anne Kvittingen and Graham Shortland (treasurer).

2004. 24. Minutes of previous meeting held on 28th May 2004, London

The minutes were agreed to be a true record, and were endorsed as such by Cornelis Jakobs.

2004. 25. Matters arising from previous meeting

There were several matters arising but all related to current agenda items.

2004. 26. Web Site

No website report has been received.

It was noted that Council had not been sent any suggestions for new designs for the website as agreed in May (min 2004.15). Neither have we received an estimate for the costs of maintaining the website in the coming year.

There has been some feedback from the membership expressing disappointment with the website. It has a rather tired look now. There has been no significant change for several years. Several items are out of date. Mick will communicate these comments to Kim and Neil.

It was agreed that we would renew the contract for website maintenance for another year, after which an evaluation of the improvement will take place, and subject to acceptable cost. Nenad Blau, who is acknowledged to manage two very good sites, was nominated to collaborate with Kim and Neil in producing the changes that Council would like to see. In order to establish exactly what this entails Nenad will circulate a questionnaire about the site to Council and Corresponding members.

2004. 27. Future meetings

(a) The Netherlands 2004

Cornelis presented preliminary data from the Final Report. There were 989 registered delegates and 1059 attendees in total. Although the financial budget was not yet closed it was clear that there would be a surplus of income.

Cornelis was concerned at the poor attendance at the AGM. It was proposed that this be held earlier in the day at future meetings to avoid clashing with lunch. Clearer announcements could be made in the preceding session.

There was discussion about the organisation of the dieticians meeting. Since this is now an integral part of the programme the content must be considered a joint responsibility for the local organisers of the main meeting and the dieticians group. It was felt that a leading dietician from the host country should be co-opted onto the local organising committee for this purpose and would be called to attend Council for at least one meeting to discuss the programme. The interactive part in the Amsterdam meeting was highly appreciated, and should be continued as much as possible.

(b) France 2005

1 Jean-Marie presented an update of the preparations to date. The local organisers had been successful at attracting sponsorship at higher levels than previous years. This was now sufficient to cover the total costs of the social programme for delegates. The organisers had also been very firm in their instructions to commercial sponsors not to hold competitive social functions on any evening other than Monday or Tuesday after the Welcome Buffet. There would be no specifically commercial sponsored sessions within the scientific programme.

2 Registration costs are likely to be similar to those at Amsterdam. €490 for members, €590 for non members; €600 and €900 for late registrants.

Council agreed that the budget as presented was reasonable. A copy of this budget, as it stands, will be sent to the Treasurer, Graham Shortland for approval.

3 Council re-iterated the need for ERNDIM to pay the costs of the rooms that it will need for its meetings (min 2004.15). Mick will write to Jim Bonham, ERNDIM treasurer, pointing out also that the Paris organisers must be informed well in advance the details of the ERNDIM requirements i.e. how many rooms, how big and for how long. It was also note that any attendees for the ERNDIM meeting must be registered with the main SSIEM meeting if only for the day.

4 The PCO has expressed a willingness to process the abstracts. This could be done at a cost of €18 each. After considering the potential advantages this would bring to simplifying lines of communication and enhancing the database of contributors Council decided to support this proposition. Mick will inform Kim and Neil of this change.

5 The provisional scientific programme was discussed. It will be circulated by e-mail for comment. There has been close collaboration with dieticians in planning the programme. Nutritional management is recognised as a critical therapeutic modality. Ellian Dupont will be invited to attend the next meeting of Council to discuss the programme.

Guy made a request that the local organisers emphasise the need to provide a manuscript for The Journal when inviting plenary speakers. This has worked well for the Amsterdam meeting where the organisers have taken the responsibility to remind speakers of this obligation

following the meeting. Speakers appear to be more likely to respond to requests from the meeting organisers than from the Journal Editors.

6 Council decided to continue the practice of awarding prizes for the best oral presentation and the best poster. The feeling was that these contribute to the spirit of the meeting.

(c) International Meeting, Japan 2006

No further news about the meeting at this stage.

(d) Hamburg 2007

No further news about the meeting at this stage. A representative from the local organising committee will be co-opted to attend Council from next Autumn.

(e) Lisbon 2008

A site visit was conducted by Cornelis and John this September. They were shown two potential venues and felt that both had excellent facilities. Isabel indicated that the local organisers are likely to choose the Lisbon Conference Centre for practical reasons relating to the internal layout of the facility making it easier to move between rooms. Delegates will need to be provided with transport from some of the hotels to the venue because it is not on a metro route and city buses can be unreliable in the busy traffic.

Isabel will chair the LOC and is well supported by colleagues, so the future planning would not depend exclusively on her.

Council formally decided to support Lisbon as the venue for the 2008 meeting.

(f) International Meeting 2009

No further news about the meeting at this stage.

(g) Meeting 2010

There have already been several expressions of interest to host this meeting. As previously agreed the process to select the venue will be democratic and will start with an advert calling for bids in the Feb News sheet. These will be considered by Council at the May meeting and Council's preferred option be put to the AGM for ratification.

2004. 28. Training Programme

Prof James Leonard attended and discussed a report that had been circulated to Council members in advance.

ETAC will need a new chairman. James has now retired from his clinical post and feels that ETAC should be lead by someone with an active clinical responsibility. It was agreed that John Walter would take on this role from 1st July 2005. John will accompany James to meetings of the UEMS in preparation for this.

It was also decided that the internal structure of ETAC should be better defined. There will be a Board created with five members who have shown active support for ETAC in the past. They will be; Prof James Leonard, Dr John Walter, Prof Jean-Marie Saudubray, Prof Udo Wendel and Prof G. Andria.

In addition there will be a group of representatives from each of the countries participating in the initiative. National Societies will be asked to nominate a suitable practitioner to represent them. These have largely been self nominated in the past. They play a crucial role in the inspection process because training practices vary enormously between countries.

It was agreed that all reasonable expenses incurred by ETAC board members will be met by the Society except the costs of site visits which will be met in full by the host institution. It was also noted that an ETAC meeting should be regularly scheduled to be held during the SSIEM annual meeting.

There is still on-going discussion about the format and costs of inspection visits. The current recommendations of The Specialty Board of The UEMS result in visit costs in excess of €6,000. This is too much for many centres and could inhibit the process from happening at all. James has suggested a simpler, less costly, procedure and seek ratification at the next meeting of The Board.

There was concern that the inspection process has no official status at present. There is probably a need to have the process recognised by the individual National Societies or other National bodies.

There will be a need to ensure that the syllabus, posted on the SSIEM website, is kept up to date. Council suggested that this should be a responsibility of the new ETAC Board.

2004. 29. Treasurer's report

Graham Shortland sent a summary report. He highlighted the £6,000 overspend in the current year and pointed out that this was due to the £16,000 in scholarship awards granted for attendance at the Amsterdam meeting.

Total membership is stable at around 1,000.

Subscription fees for members will not need to be increased this year.

2004. 30. Publications report

Guy Besley presented a report.

Virtually all submissions for the Journal are now sent electronically.

Issue 6, the final one for 2004, is now available online.

Issue 1 for 2005 is under preparation.

Issue 2 will probably be the review issue. 9 papers have been received and 6 are on the way out of a total of 25 presented at the annual meeting.

Guy announced that he is planning to step down next year. He will have completed 5 years as Editor -in-Chief and 15years on the Editorial Board. It was agreed that his successor should be appointed by Council. Comments will be sought from corresponding members in a letter to be written jointly by Cornelis and Guy.

2004. 31. Secretary's report

Two requests for support from the Exchange Grant Scheme, as advertised in the Newsheet and on the website, have been received. One from Dr Callum Wilson, consultant paediatrician, Auckland, New Zealand. He is planning to spend an 8-10 week sabbatical in the UK at Great Ormond Street Hospital next year. The second from Dr Kaustuv Bhattacharya a Clinical Research Fellow at UCL who is planning to spend 6 months to a year at Westmead, Sydney, Australia.

Both have some funding already and the plans for the exchanges appear to be at an advanced stage. Council agreed to support both applications by funding the cost of the return airfare for these investigators. They will be asked to produce a brief report of the benefits of their exchanges for the SSIEM Newsheet.

Council would like to encourage more applications from junior members of the Society for these grants. It would be helpful to have a more comprehensive application form that could be available from the website. Nenad agreed to prepare a draft. It was agreed that we need to be more clear about deadlines for receipt of applications.

2004. 32. Any other business

1. Corresponding members: Council needs to find new members to represent The Iberian peninsula, Austria/Switzerland and Canada. Nominations will be sought from the National Societies. Isabel suggested Antonia Ribes (supported by Cornelis) to represent the Iberian Peninsula, and Cornelis suggested Barbara Plecko to represent Austria/Switzerland

Council has received a letter from Kurt Ullrich. He expressed disappointment at the fact that Jutta Gartner had not been appointed to Council as his replacement as had been previously suggested. Unfortunately there was a misunderstanding because Council did not receive this nomination in writing and so the candidature was not considered at the AGM. Kurt also expressed the view that Germany should be represented at Council. Whilst there is nothing in the constitution to dictate the countries of origin of Council members it was agreed that having a German member would be useful. Suitable candidates will be considered for the next vacancies which will arise in 2005. In any case, a representative of the local organising committee for the Hamburg meeting will be co-opted to Council from Autumn 2005.

2. Council has received a letter from John Walter with reference to his attendance on our behalf at the International Organising Committee (IOC) of the ICIEM. This met during the annual SSIEM conference at Amsterdam this year. John had communicated the opinion of the council and corresponding members (min 2004.4.e) that the composition of the IOC should reflect the participation of the major international societies (SSIEM, JSIEM, SIMD, ASIEM and SLEIMPN and rely less on the input from 'past presidents'. However no decision was made. Council agreed that a formal proposal to constitute the IOC along the lines suggested by the Societies be drawn up and put to the AGM. If this is ratified then this decision should be put to the IOC as a condition of further collaboration with the SSIEM.

It was decided that Cornelis should replace Jim Bonham as one of the two SSIEM representatives on the IOC.

3. Clinical Guidelines; this topic has been brought back to Council for further discussion following strong expressions of interest at the AGM. However Council members are of the opinion that this is not an activity that the SSIEM can readily endorse. It does not

currently have an appropriate structure to do the necessary work and more than this, there is a strong feeling that these guidelines are country specific and best left to National groups.

4. Council agreed with the proposal that Prof James Leonard be made a lifelong honorary member of The Society. A certificate will be awarded at the annual meeting in Paris.

2004. 33. Date and time of next Council meetings

The next meeting will be Friday 25th February 2004, in the Old Board Room of The National Hospital for Neurology, Queen Square, London.

The remaining two meetings for next year will also be in the Old Board Room on June 10th and December 2nd.

Dr MJ Henderson
Honorary Secretary, SSIEM
Friday, 12th November 2004