

*Workshop report***Second Eastern European Workshop on Diabetes Education of the Diabetes Education Study Group**

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In the framework of its long series of approximately 25 4-day workshops on Diabetes Education held in Geneva, the Diabetes Education Study Group (DESG) of the European Association for the Study of Diabetes decided to hold a specific symposium for our Eastern European colleagues. The symposium was held in Bucharest, Rumania in 1982, with Professor I. Mincu and his team as the hosts and local organizers. This workshop, which brought together around 35 colleagues from six Eastern European countries, had been most successful in stimulating the initiative to set up centres of diabetes education in various countries, and to foster bi- and multi-lateral cooperative efforts concerning the improvement of clinical practice and research in diabetes care. As a result of the growing interest in diabetes education in Eastern Europe, and the cooperation between the participating centres of the 1982 conference, the Executive Council of the DESG decided quite early on to plan a Second Eastern European Workshop on Diabetes Education.

Like the first workshop in 1982, this symposium was organized for the DESG by Dres. M. Berger and V. Jörgens (Düsseldorf, FRG) with the most helpful support of WHO, Division of Non-Communicable Diseases. The workshop was held in Balatonfüred, Hungary from 6-9 October 1985, with Drs. J. Fövényi (Budapest) and K. Simon (Székesfehérvár) as the local hosts and organizers. Official delegations from seven Eastern European nations (Bulgaria, ČSSR, DDR, Hungary, Poland, Rumania and USSR), with a total of around 70 members, participated in the workshop. In addition, consultants from Austria, FRG and Switzerland, including the Past President of the DESG, Dr. J. P. Assal (Geneva), were also actively involved.

The programme consisted almost exclusively of group discussions and working parties, the subjects of which were chosen by the participants. Towards the end of the meeting, the results from the various group sessions were presented to and discussed by the plenary.

As a direct followup of the Bucharest conference, a cooperative study on the introduction and evaluation of a 5-day inpatient diabetes teaching and treatment programme (DTTP) was developed in Geneva and Düsseldorf (Mühlhauser et al., *Diabetologia* 25: 470-476, 1983), in which all modern materials for metabolic self-monitoring were provided to Bucharest (Bucharest-Düsseldorf study). This investigation was based upon a prospective evaluation of 100 consecutive Type 1 (insulin-dependent) diabetic patients following their participation at the DTTP compared with the a matched group of 100 control patients treated and educated according to the traditional system. Dr. I. Bruckner (Bucharest) presented the preliminary data on the first 6-month followup of the study on behalf of the Bucharest team (Professores I. Mincu and Dumitrescu, and Dres. Ionecu-Tirgoviste and Cheta, principal investigators). The data demonstrated a substantial improvement of metabolic control and an elimination of diabetic ketoacidosis in the DTTP (intervention) group when compared to the control patients. This study demonstrated the efficacy of an intensive DTTP based upon group teaching techniques and the availability of modern metabolic self-monitoring materials in improving the long-term quality of diabetes care; in addition, it showed that a DTTP reduces health care costs.

A main section of the workshop was devoted to surveying the actual availability of blood and urine glucose monitoring facilities for patients in the various countries. In fact, substantial differences regarding the availability of such materials between the various countries were documented. Possibilities for improvements and for exchanges were explored.

More to the point, however, were extensive discussions regarding the utilization of presently available materials for metabolic self-monitoring to their highest possible efficacy - such as the use of systematic group education methods and specific evaluation techniques. Furthermore, the necessary amendments to the traditional patient-physician relationship, along with the increasing autonomy and independence of the patient as a result of the diabetes education process, were addressed by several group sessions. Additional discussions centered on the subjects of modern educational methods, the formation of a health care *team* to deliver diabetes care and the specific role of the psychologist within this team, recent developments in (intensified) strategies of insulin treatment and the consequences of these advances with regard to topics and methods of patient education.

One important result of the group discussions was the consensus that the incidence of acute diabetic complications, such as diabetic ketoacidosis and severe hypoglycaemia, was thought to be a direct consequence of the intensity and standards of patient education rather than the availability of the latest models of sophisticated technology in insulin delivery or metabolic self-monitoring devices. In fact, systematic methods of patient education and the evaluation of their impact on the quality of diabetes care were felt to be gaining in importance and relevance as more modern technologies of bioengineering are becoming available for health care delivery in diabetes (and elsewhere in medicine).

As every one of the approximately 50 different diabetes centres represented at the conference displayed their specific methods and systems, and their strengths and problems of diabetes education and care in detail, the need for more intensive cooperation in the future became most apparent. To facilitate such contacts, the *Eastern European Group* of the DESG was founded, with Professor I. Mincu (Bucharest, Rumania) as Chairman, Dr. J. Fövényi (Budapest, Hungary) as Vice-Chairman and Professor J. Taton (Warsaw, Poland) as Secretary. It was decided that the next meeting, i.e. the III Eastern European Workshop on Diabetes Education, should be held in Poland in 1986.

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