



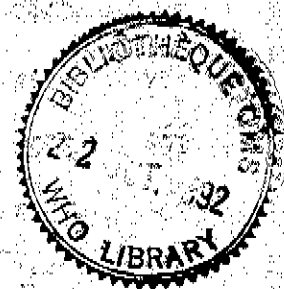
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SUMMARY REPORT

EAST MEETS WEST IN EUROPEAN FORUM OF MEDICAL ASSOCIATIONS AND WHO

Basle
30-31 January 1992



1992

EUR/HFA target 37

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ABSTRACT

The sixth joint meeting of the European Forum of Medical Associations and WHO took place in Basle in January 1992. It was attended by 90 delegates from 53 organizations in 33 European countries, and was the largest such meeting so far convened. The Forum adopted joint declarations on continuing medical education and tobacco, called for the settlement of hostilities in Europe by peaceful means, and launched a cooperative project on quality of care. The delegates also discussed the health care situation in the countries of central and eastern Europe, the European health policy update, and patients' rights.

TARGET 37

PARTNERS FOR HEALTH

By the year 2000, in all Member States a wide range of organizations and groups throughout the public, private and voluntary sectors should be actively contributing to the achievement of health of all.

Index:

ORGANIZATIONS
EDUCATION, MEDICAL, CONTINUING
SMOKING - prevent/control
QUALITY ASSURANCE, HEALTH CARE
HEALTH FOR ALL
PATIENT ADVICACY
CONGRESSES
EUROPE
CCEE

Ninety delegates from 53 organizations in 33 European countries assembled at the sixth joint meeting of the European Forum of Medical Associations and WHO, which took place in Basle on 30-31 January 1992. The Forum adopted joint declarations on continuing medical education and tobacco, called for the settlement of hostilities in Europe by peaceful means, and launched a cooperative project on quality of care. The delegates also discussed the health care situation in the countries of central and eastern Europe, the updating of the European health policy, and patients' rights.

This was the largest of six joint meetings held since 1984 and included more organizations and more individuals from the medical profession than ever before. The group was now clearly identified as a Pan-European Forum, engaged in important cooperative activities and already planning for its seventh meeting.

Continuing medical education (CME)

The Forum emphasized the moral and ethical duty of physicians to engage in CME, setting out six recommendations for the implementation of CME by doctors in Europe. There was agreement that the content, nature and conditions of CME were the responsibility of the medical profession, while other bodies could collaborate in its implementation.

The Forum recognized the need for each country to define the details of CME for itself, in accordance with national conditions, based on the principles set forth in the recommendation. Representatives of the medical profession from central and eastern Europe emphasized the urgency of implementing CME programmes in their countries.

Tobacco

In the declaration on tobacco, national medical associations (NMAs) in Europe were requested to: urge physicians to quit smoking, promote smoke-free environments and tobacco-free lifestyles, support a ban on advertising and act to develop a firm policy on tobacco issues.

Quality of care

In cooperation with other associations participating in the Forum, WHO established a project to develop a policy and mechanisms for quality of care (QC). The project included six proposed activities: development of a model for NMA policy, information tools, a QC teaching package, guidelines for handling the public relations aspects of QC issues, pilot projects in diabetes and hospital infection control, and an information leaflet for patients. WHO would invest US \$30 000 as seed money for these activities under the aegis of the NMAs.

Patients' rights

Presentations were made by the Dutch, British and Finnish delegations, setting forth recent developments in their countries in the field of patients' rights. These confirmed the Dutch doctor-patient contract; the British patient's charter, which aims to set out mechanisms to improve consumer choice, quality, value and accountability; and the Act of Parliament setting out the right to health care of every person residing in Finland, with responsibility for its provision placed on the authorities.

European health policy update

Among the measures taken by WHO to meet the challenges posed by a rapidly evolving Europe had been an updating of the targets set out in its health for all policy. Target 38, dealing with issues in health and ethics for doctors and patients, had been revised to include the need for education in ethics not only for health professionals but also for politicians and the public. One of the main points in this area included consideration of the ethical aspects of policies for making choices on the use of health resources.

The situation in central and eastern Europe

The most important session of the meeting was that on the critical health care situation in central and eastern Europe. A comparison between these countries and those of the European Community and the Nordic Region in numerous areas of health - life expectancy at birth, cardiovascular diseases, infant mortality, maternal mortality due to abortion, mortality from diseases of the circulatory system - showed the central and eastern European countries lagging well behind, even when compared with the less affluent western countries.

Some delegations enquired whether the true health situation in central and eastern Europe had been known before the recent social and political changes. As far back as 1983, WHO had presented statistics showing that these countries lagged far behind western Europe, but the extent of this had not been known. The situation was now critical, but it was pointed out that there was clearly a tremendous will in the central and eastern European countries to rebuild viable health care systems. The challenge was for those offering help to look at their own systems and select the best and most appropriate aspects to offer those countries.

Next meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Forum be held on 28-29 January 1993 in Utrecht. Among the items to be included on the agenda were indoor pollution, HIV-infected health personnel, the organization and administration of national medical associations, the financing and management of health services, training of doctors in management and leadership, and rationing of medical services.