

This is the first Newsletter after our change of office from the old Exec to the new one. I take this opportunity to officially thank my colleagues from the old Exec, George Lewith, Suzanna Zick, and Mary Koithan, for all the work they did. Looking back at the last two years I was with this Exec as president-elect I think we have achieved a lot:

1. We have made ISCMR a major player on the international scene, combining and bringing together efforts of various research groups and individuals. This is visible in the fact that we now have a conference scheme going projecting into the future, where ISCMR is a co-sponsor of international conferences. The last one in Munich was a great success with roughly 400 people attending from all over the world. The Munich conference also saw the first ISCMR-sponsored poster awards which went to the following posters:

- Hök J. et al., Dept of Neurobiology, Care Sciences and Society, Division of Nursing, Center for Studies of Complementary Medicine, Huddinge, Sweden: Heterogeneity in the Use of Complementary and Alternative Therapies (CATs) in Sweden: Exploration of Committed CAT Use in People with Cancer.
- Klocke P. et al., Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL), Frick, Switzerland: Safety and Efficacy of Mistletoe extract (*Viscum album*) Iscador® P in the treatment of Equine Sarcoïd – a prospective, randomized, controlled, double-blind study.
- Hadipour-jahromy M. et al., Islamic Azad University, Teheran, Iran: Chronoprotective effects of pomegranate juice on iodoacetate-induced osteoarthritis on tibiofemoral joint of mice.

This conference also saw the first co-reviewing of abstracts by ISCMR members. Everyone thought this was a very successful exercise yielding high quality output of the conference.

The conference proceedings can be accessed at

<http://content.karger.com/ProdukteDB/produkte.asp?Aktion=Ausgabe&Ausgabe=233041&ProduktNr=224242>

2. ISCMR is also a co-sponsor of the upcoming conference in Australia, which will be held in Sydney from March 29th-31st. Again we managed to be a co-sponsor of this conference, co-organising the conference and helping with the review of abstracts. We will soon be sending out a call for reviewers again, and those of our members who wish to respond to this call should then contact the organisers in the specified format.

3. We succeeded to increase our membership to nearly twice the figure it was when we started, being now at roughly 200. This allows for a stable operation of the Society.

4. We got the benefit of liaising with the Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine, one of the big and well-reputed journals in the field, all included in the membership fee.

I think these achievements are substantial and will enable the Society to progress into the future. So let me again extend a warm thank you on behalf of all members to the parting members of the Exec.

The Munich conference also provided an opportunity for the membership to look ahead and plan for organizational growth in order to promote international collaboration in CAM research endeavours. Among topics discussed were:

(a) structural changes to encourage greater diversity in membership and greater access to the society and its activities by clinicians, researchers and students, particularly in non-western countries; (b) an ISCMR-sponsored research course and research training program for junior researchers and (c) the addition of two ex-officio members to the Board of Directors representing to assure communication and coordination of efforts for the annual research conference. ISCMR elections were held and three new members were elected and welcomed to the ISCMR Board of Directors. They are Marja Verhoef (Canada), Suzie Zick (USA) and Claudia Witt (Germany). In addition, a new executive board, consisting of myself as the president, Cheryl Ritenbaugh (University of Arizona, E-mail: ritenbau@email.arizona.edu) as the president-elect, Corina G uthlin (Freiburg University, Email: corina.guethlin@uniklinik-freiburg.de) as the secretary, and Laurie Lachance (University of Michigan, E-mail: lauriel@umich.edu) as the treasurer was installed. They will present themselves a little bit later in the Newsletter. The self-assigned task of this new Exec will be to further stabilise ISCMR as a Society, to extend its scope across national borders further towards the Americas but also across to the Pacific Rim. This extension to the Pacific Rim is visible in the already mentioned upcoming conference in Australia. This conference will have a specific focus on Asia and will very likely present high-quality work from Asian groups that would otherwise be more or less hidden from public perception. Hence we encourage you all to come to Sydney and be part of this exciting event.

This gives me the chance of actually mention the huge benefits of being an ISCMR member. The Australian organisers have agreed with ISCMR to give a substantial reduction to ISCMR members if they register early, which amounts to a saving of 100 Australian Dollars. If you take the reduction, together with the discounted price of the subscription to the Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine, you are actually earning money on being a member of ISCMR. Not everyone has actually understood this message, so please spread: **if you are member of ISCMR you are earning money through reduction in conference fees and JACM subscription.** We hope that this will allow a full range of ISCMR activities to continue, such as:

- o Prizes for posters and good presentations at future conferences
- o Sponsored participation for members from low income countries
- o Sponsored membership from other countries that cannot afford full membership
- o Student prices
- o Educational programmes for students

If you want to participate in the Australian conference, please bear the dates in mind, which you can also access online from the ISCMR page:

- o early bird registration deadline: 15th November 2007
- o deadline for oral abstract submissions: 15th October 2007
- o deadline for poster abstract submissions: 15th December 2007

Future conferences are being planned at the time of writing. There will be either a larger conference in America or another European conference. We will update you as soon as we have more information.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

At the annual general meeting we agreed to progress ISCMR into further differentiation through the incorporation of chapters and special interest groups. We already have several special interest groups, for instance on whole systems research and on qualitative research, and I encourage the special interest groups to become active in their own way and show this activity, for instance, through workshops in or around the next conference. Another way we can develop ISCMR with already existing structures is to form new regional chapters as special interest groups. For instance, those of you who are located in the US could form a North American chapter, or we could have a European chapter for all European ISCMR members, or a Pacific and Asian chapter for all those ISCMR members who are located in Asia. This could be done without any further changes, and whoever wants to be active in this area should just notify the Execs so we can distribute the information to everyone. The regional chapters could then form and have their own meetings or conferences and be represented within ISCMR through their elected leaders, being members of the Board of Directors. Thus we can at the same time grow and remain a Society that is close to its members. In a second step we will produce the option for already existing groups to join as a group, such that ISCMR can also become the house for already existing societies. This is being developed and has to be presented to the next annual general meeting as it will entail a change in bylaws. Everybody else who sees a scope for further special interest group developments is welcome to start such a group and develop it within ISCMR and within the already existing framework.

TEACHING AND TRAINING

It was also agreed at the last annual general meeting that ISCMR should put forward efforts to train researchers. This is at the moment being done under the auspices of Claudia Witt, Klaus Linde, and Vinjar Fønnebo, who collaborate to produce courses in the format of a summer school to train researchers in CAM research methodology. It may well be that this could develop further into an ISCMR sponsored programme, or we could start some mentoring of PhD students who want to start work in CAM research.

NEW MEMBERS

Apart from these it will be our goal to increase our membership in order to sustain ISCMR as a society and to network with as many researchers around the world as possible. Please

spread the word and alert researchers who are not aware of ISCMR to the fact that they actually not only get their membership fees back in reduction and reduced subscriptions, but can actually earn money by becoming ISCMR members.

At the moment our website is under construction because we are integrating the new information and want to make membership subscription easier. So if you experience any trouble please notify us at andreas.sommer@northampton.ac.uk, or give us feedback on improvements.

THE NEW EXEC

President: Harald Walach

Harald is looking back on a long career of the study, research and teaching of research methods in (CAM), clinical psychology, the history and philosophy of science, and transpersonal psychology. He is a research professor in psychology at the University of Northampton, where he has developed a postgraduate training programme for Transpersonal Psychology/Consciousness Studies. Current research interests: research into health effects of mindfulness and spirituality and a theoretical model for non-local effects. He is the head of the European Office of the Samuelli Institute™ (SIIB, www.siib.org), and editor-in-chief of *Forschende Komplementärmedizin* (www.karger.com/fok) and *Spirituality and Health International* (<http://eu.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-SHI.html>).

President-elect: Cheryl Ritenbaugh

Cheryl is Professor of Family and Community, Nutritional Sciences, and Anthropology at the University of Arizona in Tucson, AZ, USA. She has a long history of clinical research in nutrition and disease prevention, and more recently in CAM. She has been involved in studies of mind-body interventions for weight loss maintenance, and studies of naturopathic medicine, traditional Chinese medicine, and energy healing for various types of pain. She convened, with Marja Verhoef, the first workshop to begin to define whole systems research, and she continues to be active in that area. She is currently leading a project to develop a valid and reliable measure of whole person outcomes related to personal transformation that can be used in studies of CAM and other interventions. She is the co-director of the new post-doctoral fellowship program training researchers in the evaluation of whole systems of medicine, including complementary and alternative systems, integrative medicine, and indigenous medical systems.

Secretary: Corina GÜthlin

Dr. GÜthlin is currently a research fellow at the University Hospital, in Freiburg, Germany. She trained as a psychotherapist, then wrote her doctoral dissertation on methodological problems in quality-of-life measurement. A special area of interest is the evaluation of various types of complementary and alternative medicine. She has completed more than 20 projects in the fields of evaluation methodology and CAM in the past decade.

Treasurer: Laurie LaChance

Laurie Lachance is an Assistant Research Scientist in the Department of Health Behavior and Health Education. She is also the Director of Evaluation for the Allies Against Asthma project, an initiative that provides support to community-based coalitions to develop, implement and sustain comprehensive asthma management programs. Her research interest is in the prevention and management of chronic disease. Current research interests: Laurie's research is focused in two areas within chronic disease management: (1) Patient-centered measures, including the individual's perception of health status, the role of diet and nutrition in health, use of complementary and alternative therapies, and the therapeutic relationship; (2) Evaluation research related to community-based interventions to improve health outcomes.

Max Pittler and Mac Ramos, previously members of the Board of Directors, have reached their term of office and we thank them very much for their commitment and work they did ISCMR.