

Report 4th Congress of the EAPC - Barcelona, Spain, December 1995

The 4th Congress was held in Barcelona, Spain, in December 1995. This was the first Congress of the EAPC organised at the same time as the Congress of a national association (SECPAL). On behalf of the EAPC, the Chairman of the Scientific Committee conducted a survey on suggested topics. More than 200 international experts sent in their proposals, many of which were included in the programme.

The importance attached to this event was evident from the active participation of Jordi Pujol, the President of Catalonia, who chaired the closing ceremony, and the Minister of Health of Catalonia, Xavier Trias, who gave a plenary lecture during the Congress. The official languages were Spanish, English and French, for which simultaneous translation was available.

The programme included a total of 218 speakers from 23 countries and 13 different professions; they gave 14 keynote addresses and 285 different lectures combined in 110 sessions. Topics included special aspects of palliative care in oncology, geriatrics, AIDS and paediatrics. The total number of abstracts submitted was 539, of which 433 were accepted as posters and 49 included in the programme as oral presentations.

A new feature of this Congress was the concluding session. Immediately after every session, each chairperson had to select three main conclusions and recommendations, write them out and hand them to the organising committee's office. The reporters collected these papers and prepared about ten main points which were presented at the concluding sessions giving clear, concise synopses of the issues discussed. There were 1,663 participants from 45 different countries from all five continents.

The 'Barcelona Declaration' on the need to implement palliative care was distributed to all the Ministries of Health of the participating countries and to all members of the EAPC. The proceedings were published in mid-1997. This volume, which is about 700 pages in length, contains 150 papers of the presentations given during the Congress.

The Chairs of the Organising Committee were Dr Jordi Roca i Casas and Dr Xavier Gomez-Batiste from Spain. The Chair of the Scientific Committee was Dr Franco De Conno from Italy.

Support and contributions were given by the following official organisations and associations: the President of Catalonia, the Ministry of Health of Catalonia, Junta Provincial de Barcelona, Fundacion Melchor Colet, Iberia & Aviaco