

Society for Social Medicine

MINUTES OF THE 54TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE SOCIETY FOR SOCIAL MEDICINE, HELD AT THE QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST ON MONDAY 6TH SEPTEMBER 2010 AT 17.15

Forty people attended the meeting, which was chaired by Martin McKee. He started by welcoming members to this year's AGM and welcoming Professor Walter Ricciardi, President of EUPHA, present as a guest of the Society.

1. *Minutes of the 53rd AGM held in Newcastle*

The minutes were agreed as a correct record.

2. *Any matters arising in the minutes not specified below*

No matters were raised.

3. *Honorary Secretary's Report*

Jennifer Mindell presented her report. As of 31st August 2010 the Society had a total active membership of 1,075, up by 80 from last August, when it was 995. We continue to check and update members' details and to chase those who have failed to pay their fees. This year, 98 new members have been elected, and 3 lapsed members have rejoined. Sadly, a number of prominent and early members of the society died in the past 12 months, including Donald Acheson, Wilfred Harding, Jerry Morris, John Pemberton and Mildred Blaxter. A seminar on Research Governance was held with the Health Services Research Network on October 30th 2009. Noriko Cable and Catherine Heffernan were thanked for volunteering to take over the newsletter, and Julia Goodwin for her work as Membership Secretary.

4. *Honorary Treasurer's Report*

The Society's finances were presented by Aileen Clarke (see attached). The Society has been making a loss of around £6-7,000 pa for the past three years, mostly due to the ASM and to a lesser extent, the one-day meetings. The Newcastle ASM made a loss of £1,800 in 2009. The Treasurer will be considering the number of free student places and the amounts that can be claimed: these may be reduced to 15 in future (currently 20-25). The committee had agreed that sufficient reserves need to be maintained in the bank to cover the costs of one year's disastrous conference. It is important to recruit new members and to encourage colleagues to attend the ASM.

The Committee will be bringing proposals to next year's AGM to change the constitution, to allow the subscription to be raised. It has been static for a number of years and will probably double. It was agreed that it is reasonable to move from standing orders to direct debits, and to change the constitution to allow changes in subscription rates to occur more easily. Julia Goodwin was thanked for her work supporting the Treasurer and as Membership secretary.

5. *Early Career Researchers*

Anna Pearce reported that as a result of the members' survey conducted in 2009, the Society invited nominations for an early career researcher (ECR) representative on the SSM Committee. There were so many good nominees that a sub-committee was set up

comprising the five nominees with the most votes. More than 70 delegates at the ASM described themselves as ECRs. See attached report for details of current and planned activities.

6. *Electronic communication*

See report from the Honorary secretary on the SSM website. Valid email addresses are held for 92% of members, i.e. all but 85. It was agreed that all communications would be sent only by email, except for formal notices that are constitutionally required to be sent, which were posted in 2010 and will be posted in 2011 to those without email addresses. Changes to the constitution will be proposed at the 2011 AGM.

7. *Report on EUPHA*

Alastair Leyland reported that all SSM members are entitled to access the European Journal of Public Health and can do so via the EUPHA online database, through which they can also request receipt of the monthly newsletter. EUPHA members can belong to up to two Sections. Existing Section members were contacted to have their details and section membership updated. Members can register for a Section online. The 2011 EUPHA conference will be held in Amsterdam 11-13th November. A record number of abstracts had been received: 812 single abstracts and 85 workshop proposals. There is a 50 Euro reduction for members (including all SSM members) and a further 50 Euro reduction for early registration. The meeting expressed their gratitude to Alastair Leyland for his ongoing work on SSM's behalf.

Walter Ricciardi (President Elect of EUPHA) was invited to address the meeting. In the past 20 years, EUPHA has increased to cover 40 countries and 55 national organizations with 12,000 individual members (of whom 8,000 currently receive the newsletter). In the past three years, EUPHA has been reorganized to change the governance arrangements. The 2011 EUPHA conference will be in Copenhagen with the theme of sustainability. The impact factor for Eur J Public Health has trebled in 10 years. The four pillars of EUPHA's new policy are: research; policy; practice; and training and education. Each national organisation is being asked to provide a link person for each of these four areas. EUPHA is undertaking a mapping exercise, to understand better the needs of the national societies. The first members' day will be held on 10th November 2010, before the EUPHA conference.

8. *Report on IEA European Federation of Epidemiological Societies*

David Batty reported that Nick Mays wrote last year to the IEA-EF chair (Neil Pearce) on behalf of SSM expressing concerns about the lack of activity from the chair, Susana Sans. As a result, Susana Sans stepped down and Robert West, who had been second in the ballot, took over from November 2009. with Finland a late withdrawal as hosts of the IEA Europe conference 2010, this will now take place in Florence, Italy (November 2010), the local organising committee agreeing to run the conference alongside their own. The 2011 IEA Congress will be in Edinburgh, August 2011. David Batty was thanked.

9. *Election of Chair-Elect, two Ordinary Committee Members and Honorary Members of the Society*

Martin White was agreed as Chair-elect. Mark Gilthorpe was elected as honorary Treasurer. Dermott O'Reilly and Bernd Rechel were elected on to the committee. Valerie Beral, Angela Coulter, Sir Liam Donaldson, and Margaret Whitehead were elected as honorary members. Leaving the committee this year are Ivan Perry and Steve Cummins (ordinary members) and Nick Mays (past chair). Many thanks go to these three for their

hard work over the past three years. In addition, Gita Mishra has resigned from the committee. The Committee will be co-opting an additional ECR to fill her place for the remainder of her term (until December 2012).

10. Future scientific meetings

The venues for future ASMs are as follows:

- ASM 2011 - Warwick (14th-16th September)
- ASM 2012 – London (12th-14th September)
- ASM 2013 – Brighton (dates to be decided)

11. Any other business

Ivan Perry and Aileen Clarke were thanked for their contributions to the Society.