Editorial

Over 50 people attended the first official business meeting of our Special Interest Group held during the IASP 12th World Congress on Pain® in Glasgow, Scotland.

A new executive team was announced, comprising David Lussier (Canada) as chair and secretary; Benny Katz (Australia) as vice chair and communications; Paul Christor (USA) and Giselle Pickering (France) share the clinical matters portfolio; Robert Yezierski (USA) has the portfolio on scientific matters; Patricia Schofield (UK) on education; Stephen Gibson (Australia) on meetings; and Judith Turner (USA) is responsible for IASP liaison.

The proposed bylaws that appeared in the June 2008 edition of this newsletter were discussed, and minor amendments to the bylaws were adopted.

David Lussier outlined the achievements of the SIG during the period of its formation, and his vision leading up to the next World Congress on Pain in Montréal, Canada. Our SIG now has a membership of 223 from 41 countries and 32 different disciplines. We are indeed a multidisciplinary and multinational group. In future there will be more emphasis on making pain in older persons a mainstream issue rather than a special interest. For example, to coincide with the theme of the next IASP Global Year, a team led by Lucy Gagliese has developed a fact sheet on Cancer Pain in Older People. Planning has commenced for our first satellite meeting in conjunction with the next World Congress. Stephen Gibson is the chair of the organizing committee for the satellite meeting. The newsletter will continue in its electronic current format and will also be available as a printed copy to those who do not have email access. Benny Katz continues in the role as editor of the newsletter.

The camaraderie and enthusiasm of the attendees at the business meeting was remarkable. There were so many ideas raised and so many suggestions as to what we could achieve. The executive team comprises only a small number of people who manage to find time for their roles in addition to their very busy professional lives. The success of our SIG, and how much we end up achieving, depends on all members making a contribution, whether by writing an article for the newsletter or through involvement in one of the subcommittees. You are encouraged to contact the relevant executive member to register your interest.

Left: David Lussier chairing our first official SIG business meeting at the 12th World Congress on Pain in Glasgow
During the Congress, we were exposed to a diverse range of scientific, clinical, and educational material. There was a greater emphasis on the impact that the aging of the population than at previous World Congresses. Three topical workshops were specifically dedicated to aspects of pain and aging covering experimental models, clinical aspects, and pain in dementia. In the past, there has only been one topical workshop on age-related matters at the Congress. Discussion of these workshops will appear in future editions of this newsletter.

**IASP made some important announcements:**
- In the future, the World Congress will take place **every two years** rather than every three years. The 13th World Congress on Pain will be held in Montréal, Canada, from 29 August to 3 September, 2010. David Lussier is a member of the local arrangements committee.
- Another new initiative of IASP has been the establishment of **online discussion forums** for each SIG.

**Getting to know your executive – David Lussier**

This is the first of a series of articles about the members of our SIG executive. We start with our chair, David Lussier.

**David, tell me about yourself:**
I am married (my wife is a pediatric oncologist) and have two children: Camille is three years old, and Thomas is 10 months. I live in Montréal, where the next IASP World Congress will be in 2010. Montréal is a very nice city, offering a mixture of French and English cultures.

I like to run (I have run a few half-marathons), travel, attend theatre plays and movies (although much more rarely since we’ve had the kids). I used to read a lot, but am now doing it much less because I already read so much for work. My favourite movie is Cinema Paradiso, which I have seen many times. My favourite music, which I always listen to when I run indoors (I prefer to listen to nature when I run outdoors), is Peter Gabriel. One of the most memorable evenings I have had was to attend his show at Madison Square Garden in New York a few years ago.

**Tell me about your professional life:**
I trained in Internal Medicine and Geriatric Medicine at University in Montréal and did a three-year fellowship at the Department of Pain Medicine and Palliative Care of Beth Israel Medical Center in New York (where I moved in July 2001, just in time to witness and be part of the 9/11 attacks), with Russell Portenoy. I had a great time in New York, both because of the city and the stimulating environment I was working in.

In 2004, I came back to Montréal and have since been working at the McGill University Health Center (MUHC), where I am working in geriatrics (inpatient rehabilitation/acute geriatrics ward, consultations) and have started the Geriatric Pain Clinic, which I now do three half-days a week. I will soon partly change my activities and divide my time between the MUHC and the Institut universitaire de gériatrie de Montréal (affiliated to University of Montréal), where we will start a Geriatric Pain Program that will likely be based on a Geriatric Day Hospital model.

What I like most about what I do now is being a liaison between people working in geriatrics and those working in pain, i.e., explaining geriatrics to pain experts and explaining pain to geriatrics experts.

Doing this keeps me busy since I am called upon by the two disciplines, and therefore spend a lot of time giving conferences and classes to several health care disciplines.

I am also currently doing a Masters in Pharmacology at the University of Montréal, working on pharmacology of opioids in older persons. With three co-editors, I am now involved in a Pharmacology of Pain book to be published by IASP Press in 2009.

**What is your portfolio in the SIG?**
I founded the SIG in 2005 because I could not believe that there were SIGs on topics of much less importance, but none on pain in older persons. By personally emailing
almost every single IASP member, I managed to get enough signatures to found the SIG. (IASP did not email this sort of query to the whole membership at that time.) Since then, I have been the Interim Chair and am now the Chair.

SIG members at the 12th World Congress on Pain

Presenters from the Topical Workshop on Pain in Older Persons held at the 12th World Congress on Pain in Glasgow. From left to right: Gisele Pickering (France), Lucy Gagliese (Canada), Keela Herr (USA) with Stephen Gibson (Australia).

Daniel Weissbrod (Argentina) standing by his poster at the 12th World Congress on Pain

The British Pain Society – National Guidelines for Assessment of Pain in Older Persons

The British Pain Society has published various clinical practice guidelines on their website: http://www.britishpainsociety.org/pub_professional.htm#pmp

One of these is the National Guidelines for Assessment of Pain in Older Persons (2007), a joint publication of the Royal College of Physicians, the British Geriatrics Society, and the British Pain Society. It can be downloaded freely.

Patricia Schofield who chairs the British Geriatrics Society SIG on Pain in Older Persons has asked for feedback regarding the appropriateness of these guidelines for your own practice and country.

Please email your comments to Pat Schofield: p.a.schofield@abdn.ac.uk

SIG Information

SIG on Pain in Older Persons statistics:
The SIG currently has 223 members representing 32 disciplines in 41 different countries.

Treasurer’s report:
As of September 30, 2008, the SIG account balance was $9,778

The Pain in Older Persons SIG objectives are:
- to increase awareness and promote education about pain in older persons
- to provide an international and interdisciplinary forum for people interested in clinical and research questions on pain in older persons
- to develop/endorse best-practice guidelines for assessment and management of pain in older persons
- to promote discussion and research on pain in older persons, including:
  - senescence of pain perception
  - multidimensional assessment of pain and its consequences
  - pharmacological and non-pharmacological management of pain
  - uniqueness of the pain experience in patients with cognitive impairment
- to facilitate the development of international collaborative research efforts on pain in older persons

The Newsletter: Members are encouraged to contribute to this newsletter. Please submit any suggestions, articles or ideas to Benny Katz at: elderpainsig@connexus.net.au