

President's Annual Report 2000

Dear Colleagues,

My predecessor, Jean-François Germond, began his last report with a statement, that his four years as President of SGSMP had been both, too short and too long. I can report today only about my first year: it certainly would not be understood if I claimed this to be too long already; it was too short, however, to finish all the tasks one could think of - so let me concentrate on the tasks which were actually done, and summarise them for you.

The board, which was newly elected during the last AGM, has met four times since then, and has discussed many items via e-mail between these meetings.

A major item on the agenda for the first meeting was the constitution of the board, with only the President being elected directly by the AGM. Jean-François Germond as Past President accepted to also act as Vice President. Roberto Mini took on the challenge as secretary - with the support of Silvia Kleiner, who had helped previous secretaries located at Inselspital before. Regina Seiler took over the treasurer's account, which Pascal Schweizer had looked after so successfully for many years. No new Bulletin Editor was found amongst the board members, but Roman Menz and Werner Roser as a team offered to spend time on producing this important tool for communication within our society, and have already produced two issues.

Most of the forecast y2k-bugs did not actually surface on the first of January. This was still an important and positive date for our society, however - the start of our new registration scheme, which now requires continued education. The Commission President, Jean-François Valley has in the meantime informed all involved colleagues about the procedures to put this into practice. My thanks go to Nicoletta Lomax and several other colleagues for producing an English translation of our rules, which have recently been forwarded to EFOMP (to be discussed at their next meeting in December 2000). Four candidates passed the exams in November 1999 and were consequently granted "Fachanerkennung". This was the last time, Christoph Glanzmann represented the Radiation Oncologists in the Commission: I would like to take the opportunity to thank him for his many years of support of our registration scheme. He will be succeeded by Christian von Briel in this position.

Somewhat related is the question who may call her/himself a "Medical Physicist". Regina Seiler had discussed this with several institutions. Following her report the board came to the conclusion that a state protection of this title was not feasible with reasonable effort. To avoid confusion: this does not apply, of course, to the "SGSMP Certified Medical Physicist"!

Another step to enhance our standing in the public was the application to host the World Congress on Medical Physics and Biomedical Engineering 2006 in Switzerland. After lengthy discussions with the corresponding societies in Germany and UK a combined bid to hold this meeting in Lausanne was submitted; the vote during the recent World Congress in Chicago was in favour of Lausanne; Korea protested, however, on formal grounds - whilst we do not have to accept their reasoning, we had to note the outcome: IUPESM decided to hold another (virtual) vote. Consequently it is too early now to report on the final outcome. In the meantime you are invited to visit the congress web page <http://www.wc2006.ch/> (no longer available).

This effort was at the same time an example of closer co-operation between SGSMP and the Swiss Society for Biomedical Engineering (SGBT). The two Presidents had met after the combined annual meeting in Zürich last year, to discuss improved co-operation in the future. To

begin with, several steps to improve communication between the societies have been decided. Also further combined annual meetings are envisaged at regular intervals.

Whilst the work of the board for the functioning of a society is obvious, equally important (and equally obvious, at least to me) are the contributions by all members of the society: without your contribution, the society will not reach our goals ! There are different ways in which members contribute - let me start with the Working Groups:

The WG with the longest tradition is "Medical Radiation Physics" (chaired by Jean-François Valley): the group has had three meetings - in the present format always consisting of a main subject of educational nature, plus some additional time for general discussions; the main subjects were Treatment Planning Systems, Electron Dosimetry (combined with a visit of EAM in Wabern), and a report of the subgroup on Competencies.

The subgroup "Competencies and Responsibilities of the Medical Physicist" (Jean-François Valley) had met once to discuss not only competencies and responsibilities, but also possibilities to enhance the standing of our profession - like, whether a recommendation on these issues should be published by our society. Based on this preparatory work, the Main Working Group discussed all aspects in detail, and concluded that a Full Working Group to draft such a recommendation should be set up; some participants of the subgroup will continue - but new group members for this expanded task are needed.

The subgroup "Quality Control in External Beam Radiotherapy" (Luca Cozzi) has met 4 times and has already partially finished a first draft of recommendations. The importance of the work of this group has been enhanced greatly by the plans of BAG not to include details about the necessary quality control in the new ordinances on treatment machines, but just require QC in principle; details would then be described in a BAG directive - which could consist of declaring the SGSMP recommendation as state of the art. In view of this it was decided to "upgrade" the subgroup to a full Working Group, and officially invite a representative of BAG to join the group.

This also applies to the subgroup "Quality Control in Brachytherapy" (Beat Leemann): this group has not met yet, but due to the time schedule (Ordinance on closed radioactive sources, acceptance scheduled for summer 2001) it needs to be activated immediately. This requires some additional Working Group members to be found.

The subgroup "Stereotactic Convergent Beam Irradiation" (Stefan Scheib) has also been active with 2 meetings; a recommendation is planned for next year; I would like to especially congratulate the group for their regular reports published in the bulletin and on the web page.

Less active was the subgroup "Quality Control at the Simulator" (Peter Cossmann). The existence of this subgroup should now be re-considered in view of the fact that DGMP has recently published a recommendation "Konstanzprüfungen an Therapiesimulatoren". Whilst this could render a separate Swiss recommendation unnecessary, the DGMP recommendation should certainly be studied carefully, before recommending to use it in Switzerland as well: this would not necessarily have to be done by a group - an enthusiastic individual, reporting to the main Working Group, might be the more efficient solution.

The subgroup "Quality Management in Radiotherapy" (Roberto Mini) never came into life either. Actually, the chairman has asked to be replaced, as he just didn't find the time to pursue this with the necessary involvement.

The last subgroup "Dosimetry Intercomparisons" (Bernard Davis, now Wolf Seelentag) never really was a working group, but rather a team effort of a single institution (University Hospital Zürich) - and will continue to be just that. Preparations to transfer this activity to Kantonsspital St.Gallen were hampered by technical problems (the vendor didn't manage to get the TLD reader working), which seem to be solved now. A first simple intercomparison (reference point only) is now planned for the first half of 2001. Preparations are under way, and financing has been largely secured already by sponsorship of participating institutions (some contributions are still outstanding, however).

The Working Group "Dosimetry Protocols (X-Ray Therapy)" (Horst Nemeč) has more or less completed the Recommendation on Low and Medium Energy X-Ray Beam Dosimetry. The Working Group members had voted not to continue the Working Group without a clearly defined goal; instead new Working Groups should be set up in case a new recommendation needed to be produced. It was felt desirable, however, that an enthusiastic individual would watch future developments (e.g. in the literature) and report to the "Medical Radiation Physics" WG about any such developments.

The "SGSMP/EAM Contact Group" (Walter Münch) had taken on a Working Group task, to draft a Recommendation on High Energy Photon Beam Dosimetry. This recommendation is now almost ready for printing (in English, French and German). Whilst the Contact Group will continue to exist with the original goal, the function of a SGSMP Working Group will cease with this publication.

A new Working Group "High Energy Electron Beam Dosimetry" (Jean-François Valley) has been set up in the meantime, and has already met twice. This group again works in close co-operation with EAM, in order to support the implementation of the new electron dosimetry services to be offered by EAM.

The Working Group "Synchrotron Light Source" (Jean-François Valley) has met twice, and is discussing a project at PSI with Prof. Laissue Bern.

The Working Group "Quality Control in Diagnostic Radiology" (Ernst Elmer) had produced the Recommendation Nr.5 already in 1995. Then it had been decided to keep the group to watch for further developments. As there has not been any need for further activities since then, it was now decided to officially close the Working Group. I would like to thank the chairman and group members for their effort.

Another Working Group without need for further activities has been the one on "Total Body Counting" (Roberto Mini). Again, this group has now been closed, and I would like to thank the chairman and group members for their efforts.

Two other Working Groups have two things in common - both are related to biology, and their present status needs discussion: "Experimental Radiation Biology" (Pascal Schweizer) and "Radiotherapy-Radiobiology-Radiophysics" (Markus Notter, combined with SGMR). Both Working Groups had been very active and successful previously, but would need some fresh input to be re-vitalised. Discussions about the future of these two Working Groups, also considering what SASRO can contribute here, are presently still ongoing.

Another previously very active Working Group is the one on "Non-Ionising Radiation" (Christian Wernli). Christian Wernli had already indicated some time ago that he would not be able any longer to chair this group; at the same time several other group members indicated that

they had to reduce their commitment. A survey indicated, on the other hand, that the further existence of the Working Group was still considered useful. So again, some new input is needed - especially some new members, willing to discuss future goals of such a WG and getting engaged in corresponding activities.

Whilst several Working Groups have now officially been closed, two other groups are in the progress of creation - though "Working Group" might not be the correct term for them.

An "Advisory Group" will hopefully be able to help both, the Board and the "Fachanerkennungskommission". The latter has mainly been an "examination board" with important support by colleagues from other disciplines; consequently the hospital physicists are a minority. It was felt that a physicists' committee was also needed, e.g. to consider developments of our registration scheme. The Advisory Group will consist of all hospital physicists in Fachanerkennungskommission, two delegates of the SGSMP Board, and possibly additional distinguished colleagues. The Advisory Group will also be able to advise the Board on other important issues: whilst the Board is increasingly kept busy with day-to-day administrative work, the Advisory Group will be asked to consider specific problems and report their recommendations to the Board.

A "Board of Counsellors" ("Ehrenrat") would be available e.g. for difficult personal or ethical questions - which hopefully will never arise. On a less critical level, this Board would watch the long-term development of SGSMP; members will have had considerable experience on the SGSMP board, but will not be involved directly any longer.

Let me now move from inter-institution to intra-institution groups and individuals contributing to the success of SGSMP.

Jakob Roth and his team in Basel have not only organised the present Annual Meeting, but also a seminar in March on "Lage und Zukunft der Medizinischen Physik in der Schweiz". Several colleagues have contributed by evaluating the responses to a questionnaire; the "Proceedings" of this seminar are now ready for the printers.

SGSMP has also supported the Zuppinger Symposium organised by Richard Greiner and Roberto Mini in Bern, and a Training Course on "Planning Radiation Treatments" organised by Michael Goitein and the Team at PSI. Closer future co-operation between PSI activities and SGSMP seminars is presently being discussed.

Roberto Mini has co-organised another week on radiotherapy physics within the DGMP/ÖGMP/SGSMP Winter Schools in Pichl.

Jakob Roth has accepted to represent SGSMP for another three years on the Editorial Board of "Zeitschrift für Medizinische Physik". The contract between the three societies and the publishers had to be slightly modified to reflect some recent changes; also new standing orders for the Editorial Board have been accepted.

The [SGSMP web page](#) has grown to 78 pages by now, plus several pdf files: more involvement of the membership would be desirable, however; especially a start page in French is still missing.

Roberto Mini has collected comments on "Verordnung über den Umgang mit geschlossenen radioaktiven Strahlenquellen" and submitted them within the "Vernehmlassung" to BAG on behalf of SGSMP. Several other activities by several individuals could be mentioned here - but I want to come to an end now.

In conclusion, let me thank all board members, members of working groups, and individual members of SGSMP: only with your support a society like SGSMP can thrive - and with your support being the President of this society is an experience, which is not only time consuming but also very rewarding. Finally I would like to thank especially Silvia Kleiner: she has over the years supported several SGSMP secretaries, looked after the printing and distribution of circulars, compiled the latest membership directory, ... and is now taking a career brake to care for something even more important than SGSMP.

Wolf Seelentag