

Report of the SSRMP President to the Annual General Meeting for the year 2002/2003

Dear Colleagues,

this is going to be my last report as President of our society. It gives me the chance to review not only the last year, but all four years I have been serving you in this position - and to thank all colleagues who have helped me during this time.

The Annual Scientific Meeting 2002 was held in Gmunden (Austria) in September as a combined meeting with our Austrian and German colleagues. I would like to thank our host, Dr. Herwig Mandl (Salzburg), and also Dr. Hans Gfirtner (Passau) for their excellent organisation of this large meeting. This was also the occasion to welcome our new Honorary Member, Prof. Bernhard Rassow (Hamburg), to the society: in order to give more SSRMP members a chance to see him, however, he was giving his Conference Lecture earlier today during our 2003 Seminar here in Geneva.

The Annual General Meeting 2002 was held a little later in Villigen at PSI, in combination with a Seminar on Radiation Biology and Biomedical Applications of the Swiss Synchrotron Light Source (SLS). Hans Blattmann and his colleagues had organised a very interesting programme of lectures plus a guided visit to the fairly new SLS facility on the premises. I would like to thank all of them for their work.

There were no regular board elections due on this occasion, but as our Vice-President, Nigel Crompton, had left Switzerland to take a chair in the USA, a substitute needed to be found. Léon André was willing to step in, was elected into the board and also agreed to act as Vice-President - thank you, Léon.

On this occasion also the possibly most important development of the status of medical physics in Switzerland took place: the founding of the "Professional Association of Swiss Medical Physicists". Peter Pemler was elected as President - and he will also report on the association's activities during their first year, especially on our certification scheme and steps to get our profession recognised as a medical profession.

The SSRMP Board met four times, in addition to regular e-mail and telephone contacts. The major topics of discussion will be described in more detail now in the context of our Working Groups, and other activities.

The WG with the longest tradition is "Applied Medical Physics" (chaired by Jean-François Valley): the spring meeting had to be postponed and consequently this year there were only 2 meetings later in the year - but two very important meetings. The first meeting dealt with our comments on the new Accelerator Ordinance: after a very lively, sometimes even emotional discussion on the major issues, comments were agreed upon and submitted to BAG within the deadline. This has been acknowledged by BAG as a valuable contribution - but now we have

to wait and see whether our reasoning was convincing, and our main propositions will be incorporated.

One of our main propositions was not to include detailed frequencies and tolerances of the quality assurance measures in an appendix, but just refer to the SSRMP recommendation on "Quality Assurance for External Beam X-Ray and Electron Beams in Radiation Therapy", which the planned appendix was based upon anyway. This recommendation had been prepared by a WG chaired by Nicoletta Lomax and Uwe Schneider. The draft of this recommendation was the main topic of the second AMP meeting, resulting in only minor modifications. With these modifications integrated, it will be one of the first activities of the new board to decide on the recommendation: in order to make it possible to be referred to in the Accelerator Ordinance, the recommendation will have to be officially accepted before the end of 2003.

The sub-group "Intravascular Brachytherapy" (chaired by Hans-Peter Hafner) has met three times and has almost finished the draft of a recommendation on the application of beta emitters for intravascular brachytherapy, with the emphasis on cardiovascular therapy.

The WG "Radio-Onkologie-Klinik-Informationen-Systeme" (ROKIS, chaired by Peter Pemler) is a joint effort together with a large number of other organisations in Switzerland, Austria and Germany. An advanced draft is being discussed at the moment - at least the draft was distributed via the mailing list, and comments were invited. Details will be explained to a larger audience during the planned seminar on the topic, to be held in June 2004 at Stadtspital Triemli in Zürich.

Following a suggestion from Jean-François Valley and Dr. Werner Zeller (BAG) it was decided to hold regular (six-monthly) meetings between the Head of the Dept. of Radiation Protection at the Federal Health Office and the President of SSRMP to exchange ideas, and start discussing points of mutual interest at the earliest stage possible. A preliminary meeting took already place in June, and the first working meeting is scheduled for November 2003.

Following the 1998 survey on exposures of patients undergoing diagnostic radiology procedures, BAG in collaboration with Kantonsspital Basel has started a similar survey for nuclear medicine procedures. A "Consulting Group" is to support this effort; Jean-François Valley is representing SSRMP in this group.

There are further activities being performed on behalf of SSRMP, which are not really Working Groups - but still very important.

Roman Menz and Werner Roser will have been producing the Bulletin for four years with the upcoming issue: an important information channel for our members. They have introduced a new layout, and also have started to publish the entire issue online - both, for members not wanting to wait for the printed issue, and also showing our activities to the "outside world". They deserve a great "thank you" - now that they are hoping to lay this thriving activity into other hands.

Hans Schiefer is right now organising our national dosimetry intercomparison for the third time. The first institutions have already returned the irradiated TLDs, but no overall results can be reported yet. I would also like to thank Hans Schiefer for his contribution to SSRMP.

This brings me to meetings - the highlights in any society's year.

Our Annual Scientific Meeting 2003 took place in Geneva in April, for the first time as combined meeting with SASRO. The lively discussions with our medical colleagues engaged in radiotherapy made this a very successful meeting - an exercise which should be repeated occasionally. I would like to thank Philippe Nouet, Bert Pastoors and colleagues for organising this event.

In order to hold our Membership Assembly in autumn, as usual, it had been decided to combine it with an educational event. For this we are in Geneva again right now, with Habib Zaidi organising a "Symposium on New Developments in Molecular Imaging and Radiation Therapy" with many distinguished speakers from both sides of the Atlantic, including our new Honorary Member, Bernhard Rassow, giving a Conference Lecture. Thank you, Habib Zaidi.

Already in June our second symposium of the year had been organised in Neuchâtel on DICOM-RT, again with distinguished international speakers. The author of this report, and I am sure many other participants of the symposium have greatly profited, and in the name of all I thank Jean-François Germond for organising this event. As a novelty, all presentations (in PowerPoint) may be viewed on the society's web page.

SSRMP was also co-sponsor with DGMP, ÖGMP, Fachverband Strahlenschutz and others of the meeting on "Radiation Protection for Medical Applications" held in Dortmund in October, with Jakob Roth acting as chairman of the programme committee, and representing our society.

The last meeting I want to mention here brings us back to Geneva: the Bi-Annual ESTRO Medical Physics meeting was organised by Philippe Nouet, Bert Pastoors and colleagues again, inviting the European radiotherapy physics community to Switzerland for the first time, with also many overseas colleagues attending.

Another expression of the scientific activities of our members are the applications for the Varian Prize, which has been a tradition since 1991: there were only two applications in 2003, and you will see the presentation later on today's agenda.

Jakob Roth had also represented SSRMP on the Editorial Board as Vice-Editor of Zeitschrift für Medizinische Physik, the official organ of SSRMP, DGMP and ÖGMP for many years, and has contributed to its success. I would like to thank Jakob Roth very much on the occasion of his retirement from this time consuming position. Uwe Schneider has accepted to take over the representation of SSRMP on the Editorial Board. Furthermore there are Hans Blattmann, Ernst Born and Jean-François Valley helping on the Consulting Editorial Board. The publisher is now considering also an online publication: this service should be available for testing early in 2004.

My thanks go to all involved in the above mentioned pursuits, spending time on SSRMP matters, usually in addition to their normal working hours. I would also like to thank Charlotte Lichtsteiner at Inselspital, working somewhat in the background - but without her involve-

ment the members might not see the Bulletin in their hands, and the President wouldn't have meeting minutes to file.

From the board members I would like to give a special mention to two colleagues - Regina Seiler and Roberto Mini. Regina Seiler has been looking after our financial affairs for the last five years very successfully, and Roberto Mini has helped me in his function as Secretary during my four years as President. Neither will be available for re-election - so this is the time to express our appreciation: we are looking forward to staying in touch with you for many more years to come. And there is Jean-François Germond - not leaving the board, but deserving our gratitude for representing the French speaking colleagues on the board for the last decade.

Talking of the past: have we reached our goals during the last four years? I guess, if the answer would be "yes", we had set our goals too low! We didn't ☺. Closer co-operation with our colleagues at SGBT, the Bio-Medical Engineers, had been anticipated, with the possibility of a merger as long term goal: well - we haven't made too much progress, and I'll have to hand this issue over to my successor. Especially if we want to be heard by the society at large, a louder voice from a larger group would be an advantage. We had one great combined effort - to invite the world to Switzerland to the World Congress 2006 - a proposal also supported by our British and German colleagues: after winning the vote during the Chicago Congress in 2000 what might be called "international politics" has deprived us of the honour to organise this event.

Positive assessments are the majority, however. Interesting scientific annual meetings as well as successful educational events have been organised. Reports and recommendations, e.g. dosimetry protocols, are the evidence of active working groups. Annual dosimetry intercomparisons have provided a useful service to colleagues working in radiotherapy. Bulletin and web pages have provided members and other interested people with information. The society has submitted comments on new legislation, and was also heard as advisor on other issues. Altogether sufficient proof that the society is thriving.

The biggest developments, however, took place in the professional field. This began in 2000 with the implementation of our new certification scheme, including compulsory continued education. This new scheme was as a consequence given "full approval" from EFOMP within their registry of national certification schemes. The discussion on professional issues continued, and finally resulted in 2002 in the formation of the Professional Association of Swiss Medical Physicists, as sub-society of SSRMP: this young organisation has already engaged in several activities during their first year - but this is not for me to report.

I would like to close by again thanking all colleagues who have helped me during the last four years - and wish our society a successful future.

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