

**Report of the 7th Spring Scientific Meeting of the EASD
Psychosocial Aspects of Diabetes (PSAD) Study Group
April 5th – 7th 2002, Bled, Slovenia.**



Dr. Frans Pouwer, member of the PSAD Executive Committee

The 7th Spring Scientific Meeting of the Psychosocial Aspects of Diabetes (PSAD) Study Group of the European Association for the Study of Diabetes took place in Bled, Slovenia from 5-7 April 2002. This meeting was kindly hosted by Dr. Karin Kanc and Dr. Maja Ravnik Oblak. Delegates attended from Croatia, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Norway, Slovenia, The Netherlands, UK and USA.

After the registration, the meeting was opened with a warm welcome from PSAD President Dr. Frank Snoek (The Netherlands) and Dr. Karin Kanc (Slovenia). Dr. Jon Haug (Norway) then delivered the Anita Carlson Keynote Lecture entitled: "An important intervention in Type 1 diabetes is to create a psychological need for insulin in order to prevent omission of insulin injections. How do we do it?" This invited lecture was a fascinating insight into Jon Haug's theory that through the founding of a 'personal owned regulatory system' for insulin injection, which is rooted in self-determined evaluations and actions, we can increase the likelihood of forming positive feelings towards insulin in patients with diabetes. That evening we were treated to a delicious dinner at the hotel, located near the beautiful emerald-green lake of Bled.

Day two opened with group work, discussing the theoretical and clinical implications of Haug's presentation, followed by a plenary discussion. Next, in his own energetic and enthusiastic way, Sören Skovlund (Denmark) presented thought-provoking and novel data from the DAWN study, a global study of psychosocial issues in diabetes, initiated by Novo Nordisk. After a coffee break, the meeting continued with an excellent presentation by Marcel Adriaanse (The Netherlands), who reported on preliminary results from a large population-based study on the short term psychological impact of diagnosis of Type 2 diabetes. After differences in corresponding baseline scores had been adjusted for, significantly lower levels of Energy (WBQ-12) were found for screening detected subjects, compared to those with a negative test-result, who were otherwise comparable. As the differences found were significant but small, Marcel concluded that the short-term psychological impact of the diagnosis Type 2 diabetes seems limited. Dr. Frans Pouwer (The Netherlands) then presented data from a population-based Dutch study on the prevalence of co-morbid depression in the elderly with Type 2 diabetes. It was concluded that Type 2 diabetes was associated with an increased risk of depression and that the presence of diabetes-related complications probably plays an important role in the aetiology of depression in Type 2 diabetes.

After lunch, Dr. Chas Skinner (UK) presented data from a fascinating and innovative pilot study on the development and evaluation of a psycho-educational workshop for patients with newly diagnosed Type 2 diabetes, that recently won the Bayer Diagnostic Diabetes UK 2001 Education Award. It was concluded that participants reported their illness to be more serious after the workshop than before, and they initiated appropriate behaviour changes. Next, the interesting and highly relevant question "How can we sustain behaviour change?" was discussed.

The final, and perhaps most provocative, presentation of the day was by Alison Woodcock (UK), who described data on the use of the Diabetes Tablet Treatment Questionnaire (DTTQ), that is designed to identify patients who might benefit from a switch to sulphonylurea treatment once-a-day. That Saturday evening we were treated to a delightful Slovenian dinner with traditional Slovenian music. On Sunday, the final session of the study group meeting was opened by Dr. Mirjana Pibernic-Okanovic (Croatia), who presented novel data on a controlled clinical trial that studied the effects of an 'empowerment'-based psychosocial intervention, building on the work of Dr. R.M. Anderson from the USA. Dr. Pibernic-Okanovic described that the intervention group reported improvements in both quality of life and glycaemic control at 3 and 6 months follow up. However, further improvements in glycaemic control were still desirable, and it appeared that patients with higher education benefited the most from the intervention.

Jane Speight (UK) then gave an excellent presentation on the results of the DAFNE study. It is well known that dietary restriction is a major burden to people with Type 1 diabetes. The aim of the DAFNE (Dose Adjustment For Normal Eating) Trial was to evaluate 'The Duesseldorf' approach to managing diabetes that offers insulin adjustment skills training, enabling people to have the freedom to eat as they wish while maintaining or even improving glycaemic control. Jane Speight shared very interesting preliminary data of the DAFNE Study with the participants of the PSAD Spring meeting and described that the increased flexibility offered by this approach led to major and lasting improvements in treatment satisfaction, psychological well-being and quality of life.

Dr. Laura Ruggiero (USA) is an expert on the Trans Theoretical Model (TTM) and explained her model to the participants of the meeting. She described the different stages of behaviour change and its relevance to diabetes: pre-contemplation, contemplation, preparation, action and maintenance and its clinical utility. She also described her current research, that is focused on large scale clinical trials examining the impact of stage-matched and individualised intervention approaches targeting multiple health behaviours in people with diabetes.

With her Italian charm, Palma Bregani (Italy) presented data on a complex program of psychological interventions in young adolescents (aged 11-14) with diabetes. The program was designed to help these adolescents to improve their body image, stimulate their sense of autonomy and to improve their social skills.

The meeting was closed by Dr. Frank Snoek, with expressions of gratitude to Dr. Karin Kanc, Dr. Maja Ravnik Oblak and Nico Arneric, for organising the meeting and showing the participants (some of) the beauty of this small country. The overall impression was of another exciting and thought-provoking meeting that enhanced the profile of the PSAD Study Group as an excellent forum for experienced and more junior researchers alike to present data, with the focus placed firmly on lively debate and constructive comment.