

From Jonathan Silverman, the President

A very happy New Year to all our members! I'm delighted to say that by the end of 2015, our membership had grown to 494 researchers, teachers and practitioners from all over the world. While excited by this rise, I wonder if I could start the New Year by imploring you to help double the number of members for 2016!

As you know, we feel that EACH should be the natural home and pressure group for all people working in the health communication field and yet we know that 494 members only scratches the surface of those people who could become members. So in your own units, it would be great if you could encourage others to join our association. But also could you think more widely please? We are underrepresented in some health professions including dentistry, pharmacy, physiotherapy and veterinary medicine and in a number of countries in Europe and around the world where there are researchers and teachers who would be very keen to receive our support. And of course the more members, the more finances we have so that we can put in plans to support and help our colleagues.



If each current member recruits 2 new people to our association, we will be well over 1000 by the end of 2016. So please make this your New Year's resolution and unlike most New Year's resolutions, please please put it into action! Not just the thought of a gym membership, or even purchasing the membership, but actually going to the gym regularly!

Go on, you know it makes sense!

In this newsletter, I want to tell you about 2 very important developments, firstly the presentation of a special distinction award for exceptional contribution to EACH to Jozien Bensing and secondly, the appointment of EACH to be an Organization in Collaborative Relations (OCR) with WONCA, The World Organization of Family Doctors.

Special distinction award for exceptional contribution to EACH to Jozien Bensing

At the last EACH steering committee meeting in August, it was decided to create a special distinction award for exceptional contribution to EACH. This award would confer honorary lifetime membership and the waiver of registration fees for all EACH conferences. It was envisaged that this would be a rare award and certainly not something which would be ritually given to all officers within the organization.

The steering committee is honoured that Jozien Bensing has agreed to be the first recipient of this prestigious distinction in recognition of all that she has done to both create and further our association. We cannot imagine that there will be in the future anybody as worthy as Jozien to receive this award and we are delighted to be able to provide this award on behalf of all EACH members who have benefited from her tremendous ability, drive and enthusiasm over many years.





It's very difficult to sum up everything that Jozien has done for EACH in just a few lines but suffice it to say that EACH would not exist if it was not for her. As one of the founders of the organisation and the first President we owe her enormous debt, not only for what she has done for our association but what she has done for the whole world of health communication research and teaching. Many of you will know her name from the Jozien Bensing award for talented early-career researchers awarded biennially at the international conference. The award was first given in 2008 after a very generous donation provided by Jozien. Here is a photograph of the 2010 recipient, Mary Catherine Beach, being given the award by Jozien and Arnstein Finset, the chair of judges.

Others may know her for being a Spinoza Laureate in 2006. The Spinoza prize is the highest Dutch award in science and the recipient is awarded €2.5 million for scientific research. So for a researcher in our field of health communication to be awarded this prize is an astonishing recognition. Here I'm going to quote the citation by the Spinoza committee in 2006:

Jozien Bensing (1950) is Director of NIVEL (Netherlands Institute for Health Services Research) and professor of Clinical Psychology and Health Psychology, Utrecht University. Professor Bensing received the Spinoza Prize for her multidisciplinary research into the communication between doctors and patients, and her internationally used research method for quantifying non-verbal communication.

Jozien Bensing (12 March 1950, Tilburg) worked - after obtaining her degree in clinical psychology from Utrecht University - as a researcher, head of department and later as director of the Dutch Institute for General Practice. In 1991 she gained her doctorate from the Erasmus University Rotterdam. Two years later she was appointed as professor of Clinical and Health Psychology at Utrecht University, where she served as the first female dean (1996 - 1998). She has been the director of NIVEL since 1985.

Jozien Bensing is the most authoritative leading researcher in the Netherlands in the area of medical communication. And internationally she is one of the leading figures in this area. As a psychologist she has demonstrated that relationships between doctors and their patients can be investigated on a sound empirical basis. She developed practical scientific protocols, not only for verbal communication, but also for non-verbal contact. Her computer-guided, non-verbal coding formed a major breakthrough and is now used by researchers in various countries. Moreover Jozien Bensing has built up a rich database that contains more than 15,000 conversations recorded on video. This database is by far the largest in the world. At her initiative it is now also used internationally for large-scale research into the consequences of doctor-patient communication on the quality and outcome of the care, including the future health of the patient.

In October 2003 Jozien Bensing became the first non-American to receive the international George Engel Award for her outstanding research. In 2004 she was conferred the title Officer of the Order of Orange Nassau for her work in translating scientific knowledge into public and clinical applications. Bensing has more than 200 highly-cited publications to her name. She also gives many lectures and presentations about subjects at the boundary of general and mental health care, such as tiredness and pain. Besides her scientific interests, Bensing is also highly active in various scientific boards: in addition to the various posts she holds in organisations such as the Health Council of the Netherlands, the Social Sciences Council of the Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW) and the Advisory Council on Health Research (RGO), she is co-founder and first president of the European Association for Communication in Healthcare (EACH).

Jozien Bensing is a dynamic, stimulating and groundbreaking researcher with an energetic personality who attracts and inspires both colleagues and young researchers. Jozien Bensing ensures a strong empirical innovation in her work, is active in the formation of scientific communities in the Netherlands and further afield, and knows how to bridge the gap between research, everyday practice and policy. The jury is convinced that with the NWO Spinoza Prize, Jozien Bensing will strengthen and extend the lines she has set out in terms of both structure and content.

I'm sure that you will agree with the steering committee that Jozien has richly deserved the special distinction award for exceptional contribution to EACH and join me in congratulating her.

The appointment of EACH to be an Organization in Collaborative Relations (OCR) with WONCA

I am also delighted to announce that EACH has become an organization in collaborative relations with WONCA. Garth Manning, the chief executive officer of WONCA has kindly written this introduction for our members:

WONCA is an acronym comprising the first five initials of the World Organization of National Colleges, Academies and Academic Associations of General Practitioners / Family Physicians, but is rather better known now by its shorter name of 'World Organization of Family Doctors'.

WONCA is a not-for-profit organization, established in 1972 by an initial 18 country member organizations. It now boasts over 130 member organizations in 140 countries and territories, and represents over 500,000 family doctors globally. As well as Member Organizations, WONCA also has a number of Academic Members (academic departments of family medicine), numerous individual Direct Members and a number of like-minded Organizations in Collaborative Relationship (OCR) - and EACH is one of these OCRs.

WONCA has a small Secretariat, based in Bangkok (where it transferred from Singapore in late 2012) run by a CEO.

WONCA's Governing Body is its World Council, with representatives from each Member Organization. This meets only every two years, and in between Councils the regular work of the organization is carried out by an Executive. The WONCA Executive is comprised of our President (currently Professor Michael Kidd of Australia), President-elect (currently Professor Amanda Howe of UK) the seven regional presidents, three Members at Large and a Young Doctor representative.

WONCA has seven regions, each of which has its own regional Council, and each region leads on activities in that region, including regular regional conferences. The seven regions very approximately correspond to the six regions of WHO, with WONCA splitting the Americas into North America and Iberoamericana. The other WONCA regions are Africa, Asia Pacific, Eastern Mediterranean, Europe, and South Asia.

One of the major developments in recent years has been the establishment of a Young Doctor Movement in each of the seven WONCA regions. We believe that supporting the young doctors is vital as they are the future of our specialty, and it's fantastic to see and experience their vast energy and enthusiasm.

WONCA also has an increasing number of other groups - Working Parties and Special Interest Groups - that work between world council meetings to progress specific areas of interest to WONCA and its members around the globe. Over the years they have carried out significant studies and research and have produced a variety of important publications. These include:

- *'The contribution of family medicine to improving health systems' with inputs from WHO*
- *'Integrating mental health into primary care: a global perspective' in collaboration with WHO*
- *'WONCA Standards for Postgraduate Family Medicine Education'*
- *'Rural Medical Education Guidebook'*
- *'Family doctors in the field: environmental stories from around the globe'*
- *A forthcoming publication on research in primary care*

WONCA holds conferences in most regions on an annual basis, and a major world conference every two years. The next world conference will be in Rio de Janeiro in November this year, with the 2018 conference scheduled for Seoul, Korea. The WONCA Working Party on Rural Practice also hosts a rural health conference in the years between world events. The next rural conference will be in Cairns, Australia, in 2017.

All of WONCA's conferences and events are listed on the WONCA website - www.globalfamilydoctor.com - which also has further details of the organization, including a full list of Working Parties and Special Interest Groups. Alternatively please feel free to write to the CEO, [Dr Garth Manning](#) or the Chief Admin Officer, [Dr](#)

[Nongluck Suwisith](#) for any further information.

In the meantime WONCA looks forward to ever increasing collaboration with EACH on areas of mutual interest, and we hope to welcome your members to future WONCA meetings and conferences.

International Conference on Communication in Healthcare, Heidelberg 2016



This of course is our major event for 2016 and we are so looking forward to seeing you there. Again, please let people know about the conference.

We are delighted that the following distinguished speakers have accepted to be our plenary speakers during the conference and you can find more details about them on the [conference website](#):

- Sandra van Dulmen, NIVEL / Radboud University, NL
- Iona Heath, immediate past-president of the Royal College of GPs, UK
- Gerd Gigerenzer, MPI-Berlin, DE
- Marcy Rosenbaum, University of Iowa, USA

And just in case you don't know, the deadline for submission of abstracts for the conference of 18th of January 2016 is rapidly approaching. We hope as many of you as possible will submit abstracts. The website for the conference and for submissions is www.each2016.de

Re-invigorating rEACH and establishment of pEACH

In the last newsletter, we told you about the forthcoming open rEACH meeting in December. Again I'm delighted to say that 37 participants attended this meeting from 12 countries and started the very exciting reinvigoration of rEACH which will change the whole structure of the committee and the way that it can support an increasing number of healthcare researchers throughout Europe and beyond.

Gerry Humphris and Myriam Deveugele are really excited to be leading this development and will be writing a more comprehensive piece in a newsletter in the near future to keep you in touch with what is happening and to encourage further participation.

pEACH, the new policy committee of EACH is also developing fast under the careful stewardship of Sara Rubinelli and again Sara will be writing in a future newsletter to explain all that is happening here.

Best wishes,

Please feel free to send us your news items which we can share with our members through this newsletter. Thank you all once again for your support of our association.

Very best wishes,

Jonathan.

EACH

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