

EDITORIAL

Foundation for European Education in Anaesthesiology Fondation Européenne d'Enseignement en Anesthésiologie (FEEA)

This was an original initiative of the Universities of Leiden, Amsterdam (V.U.), Antwerp, Gent and Lille, directed towards continuing medical education (CME) in Anaesthesiology. Created in 1984, under the leadership of Professor Johan Spierdijk, this informal group was converted officially to a foundation in 1986 and established at Leiden. Having been initially supported by a grant from the European Community (EC), the FEEA rapidly expanded, creating regional centres in most of the member countries – France, The Netherlands, Belgium, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Greece and Germany. In 1993 a course was established outside the EC in Slovenia, followed in 1995 by courses in Bulgaria, The Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, Poland and Slovakia. A teaching co-operation was initiated between west and east, through the creation of twin centres and support from the European Academy of Anaesthesiology (EAA), co-ordinated by a liaison officer, Professor Dietrich Kettler. In 1997 a course was introduced in Israel, and in 1999 in England and Latvia. At the initiative of Spanish colleagues from Alicante, an associated organization has been set up in South and Middle America, in agreement with the Confederation of Latin American Societies of Anaesthesiology (CLASA). The first course took place in Argentina in 1995, soon followed by six other centres in Argentina, Costa Rica and Mexico. To date there are about 50 active regional centres world-wide. This strong and rapid development has met the needs for structured continuing medical education and complements existing symposia, meetings and congresses.

The integrated teaching programme covers all aspects of the speciality of anaesthesia, intensive care, emergency medicine and pain therapy in such a way that a participant, completing the full cycle of six

courses, will have received an update on the full range. The maximum number of attendees is 50, so that there are plenty of opportunities for fruitful discussions between lecturers and participants.

The texts of the lectures are provided for the attendees, before the course, and an evaluation of both the participants by the lecturers and the lecturers by the participants is undertaken at the end of the three days. CME recognition is obtained from the corresponding national colleges. Some regional centres also provide workshops and practical skills courses on a variety of topics, such as difficult intubation, epidural analgesia, etc. National co-ordination in France and Spain has generated books that are considered as a prerequisite for course attendance. All courses are given in the national language, except for some lectures given by guest foreign speakers in English or French. Speakers are selected by a local scientific committee, although a regional centre may put together teachers coming from several universities across local and national borders.

The FEEA is an informal, charitable organization with neither membership nor bureaucracy. The Board of Directors and the permanent central office in Leiden are very simply structured with a very small budget. Each regional centre is independent both scientifically and economically. The only obligations are to respect the aims and goals of the FEEA and the common structure and organization of courses. After each course, a report is transmitted by the regional coordinator to the central office to ensure follow-up.

The main goals of the FEEA are to harmonize CME in Europe and to improve the quality of care. Contact between anaesthesiologists in the various types of practice, e.g. public hospital or private practice, and

who come from different countries, are valuable. Exchange of teachers, between regions or countries, provides better understanding and improved academic co-operation.

The FEEA is extremely grateful to the European Academy of Anaesthesiology for offering participation in the *European Journal of Anaesthesiology* (EJA). The EJA has become the official journal of the FEEA. There will be a CME review in regular issues of the journal and these will be selected from the various regional centres on the basis of the best lectures given to the courses. We are proud to add our logo to those

logos of EAA, ESA, CENSA and UEMS on the cover of the common European journal of our discipline. Our collaboration here is an important step toward the unity of the speciality in Europe. Through the medium of friendly relationships with all the European bodies of the speciality and the co-operation of national scientific societies, FEEA will strive to promote the desirable unification of anaesthesiology in Europe.

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