

Borderless Exchange

A newsletter for Medical Physicists Without Borders

September 2015

Medical Physicists Without Borders

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One of the major considerations for Medical Physicists Without Borders (MPWB) is open communication...

First Newsletter

Welcome to our first newsletter, which we have called "*Borderless Exchange*". One of the major considerations for Medical Physicists Without Borders (MPWB) is open communication, keeping in touch and keeping informed. We hope that *Borderless Exchange* will provide an appropriate forum for such communications. Additional modes of interaction will include the MPWB website as well as social media. More will be forthcoming on that as we evolve.

Update on Our Organizational Status

Steering Committee

While the concept of MPWB has been percolating for a number of years, the actual activities regarding its formation were initiated with the development of a Steering Committee in December 2014. Members of the Steering Committee included Robert Jeraj (Madison, WI), Ben Mijnheer (Amsterdam), Yakov Pipman (New York), Jacob Van Dyk, Chair (London, Canada), Gerald White (Colorado Springs) and David Wilkins (Ottawa, Canada). The Steering Committee met via web-meetings almost every two weeks since the beginning of 2015.

Organizational Accomplishments

What are the accomplishments to date? So far these relate primarily to organizational structure.

We have developed clear statements on Vision, Mission, Objectives and Values. These can all be found on our website which went live in June 2015 at www.MPW.org.

We are formally incorporated in Canada as of the beginning of June 2015.

We had two open informational meetings. The first was held at the World Congress of Medical Physics and Biomedical Engineering in Toronto on 11 June 2015. There were about 85 people present in spite of the conflicting multiple simultaneous meetings, some of which had free corporate lunches.

Update on Our Status ... continued

There was clearly a lot of enthusiasm for the concept of MPWB.

The second information session was held at the American Association of Physicists in Medicine (AAPM) Annual Scientific Meeting in Anaheim, California on 14 July 2015. There were about 60 people present, also at a time with multiple parallel meetings. At both meetings, there was clearly a lot of enthusiasm for the concept of MPWB and a significant number of questions were addressed. Many people want to know how they can get involved.

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As of July 2015, the Steering Committee evolved into a formal Board of Directors consisting of Jacob Van Dyk, President; Yakov Pipman, Vice-president; Gerald White, Chairman of the Board; David Wilkins, Secretary/Treasurer; Parminder Basran, Director of Communications; and Robert Jeraj, Director of Fund Raising. The Board continues to hold web-based meetings about every two weeks.

Linkages to Other Organizations

There are multiple organizations that are in one way or another involved in activities in low-to-middle income countries. Most of these organizations have other priorities as well and their work in lower income settings is often secondary, in contrast to MPWB where we see it as our primary function. To ensure that there is neither overlap nor competition of our activities with those of other organizations, we have placed an emphasis on trying to be closely affiliated with relevant organizations so that we have a direct communication link. Our first communication was with *Physicien Médical Sans Frontières* (i.e., French for *Medical Physicist Without Borders*). They were enthusiastically supportive of us setting up a somewhat similar English speaking version of a medical physics support organization. We agreed that we could work as sister organizations and that we would be in close communication regarding any activities that may have a potential overlap.

As a result of our communication with the International Organization of Medical Physics (IOMP), they have modified their constitution at the World Congress in Toronto to develop a new membership category called *Affiliate International Organization*. We have forwarded a request to the IOMP to become an Affiliate International Organization.

Linkages to Other Organizations ... continued

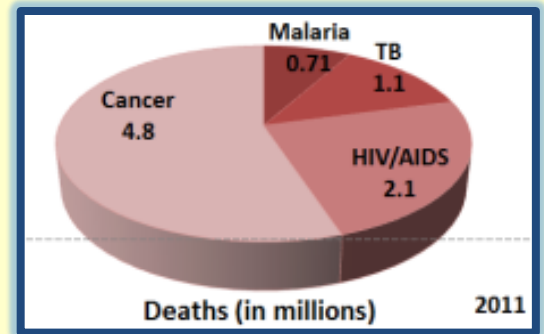
Since the majority of individuals who have expressed an interest in MPWB are members of the AAPM, we formally applied to become an AAPM Chapter. However, the AAPM Board of Directors felt that Chapter status was not an appropriate fit for MPWB and some members of the Board have recommended that we develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) describing the relationship between MPWB and the AAPM. We have drafted such an MOU and it is now in the hands of the Executive Committee (ExCom) of the AAPM for their response.

Another organization that is evolving is *International Cancer Experts Corps, ICEC* (www.iceccancer.org). Its mission "is to reduce mortality and improve the quality of life for people with cancer in low- and middle income countries and regions worldwide. The ICEC addresses this mission through a mentoring network of cancer professionals who work with local and regional in-country groups to develop and sustain expertise for better cancer care." This organization is more broadly based in that it includes physicians and paramedical staff of various specialties, all involved in addressing the cancer problem. Two of our Board members (JVD, YP) have been asked to sit on the ICEC Advisory Board, thus again providing a close communications link with the ICEC activities. Furthermore, MPWB has been asked to be one of their specialty groups of experts.

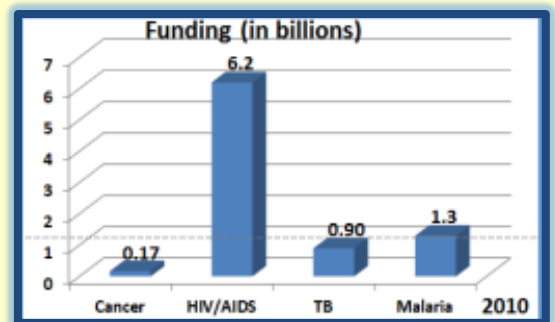
What About Our "Real" Work?

Our Mission is "to support activities which will yield effective and safe use of physics and technologies in medicine through advising, training, demonstrating and/or participating in medical physics-related activities, especially in low-to-middle income countries." So far, the emphasis of the activities of the Board of Directors has been on developing the organizational aspects of MPWB. Hence, we are incorporated in Canada and we are seeking the same in the US. Similarly we are applying for charitable status in both countries.

Some of our Board members have been in communication with the ICEC regarding a major development program in Ethiopia.



In low-to-middle income settings, cancer kills more than HIV/Aids, tuberculosis and malaria combined.



In low-to-middle income settings, funding for prevention and treatment of cancer is 2% of total for other diseases.

Above figures adapted from Moten A, et al. Improving Cancer Care in Developing Settings. J Global Health 4: 1; 2014.

Used by JVD in a talk at the World Congress of Medical Physics and Biomedical Engineering in Toronto entitled Initiatives of Expertise Mobilization.

What About Our “Real” Work? ... continued

Through the AAPM International Education Activities Committee (IEAC), we have also been in the loop of communication regarding a significant potential project in Rwanda.

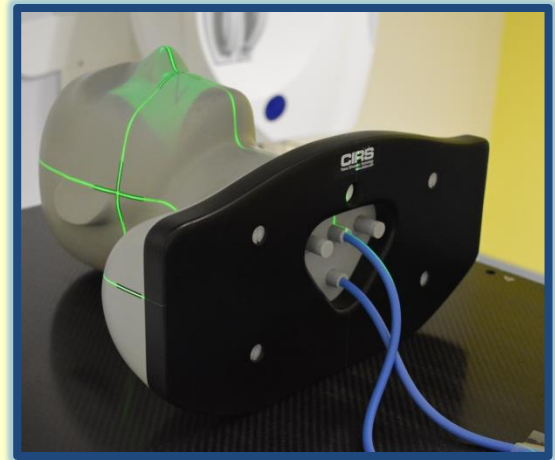
Questions have also come up about the possibility about providing on-site dosimetry audits in situations where the simple TLD-type audit falls outside of the range of acceptability.

Members of the Board continue to be involved as individuals in various teaching courses in various low-income settings although so far these activities have been organized outside of the activities of MPWB.

Until MPWB is formally incorporated and registered as a charitable not-for-profit organization, we have minimal resources. This will remain so until we have formally completed these activities. Our goal is to have this accomplished within six months.

Upcoming Activities

1. We will have a membership drive this fall, in spite of the fact that we are not yet registered as a charitable organization. Thus, the first round of memberships will not be able to receive a receipt for income tax purposes. The membership application process includes a detailed questionnaire about things like professional skills, language skills, time available, experience in low income settings and so forth.
2. We are communicating with ICEC about potential projects of mutual interest.
3. We will be performing a survey of potential partners to seek advice, support and raise awareness of our availability.



Developing an international audit for intensity-modulated radiation therapy at the IAEA, Vienna June 2015 (JVD).

Volunteers

Volunteers will be needed to participate in:

1. Communications Committee including a Newsletter Editor.
2. Fund Raising Committee.
3. Someone with graphic artist experience or contacts to “professionalize” our logo and branding symbols.

Keep an eye on the website for announcements for posting of these positions.

**Medical Physicists
Without Borders**

www.MPWB.org

Working together for effective patient care