

## EDITORIAL

### AN EC/EORTC EFFORT TO ACHIEVE COMMON EUROPEAN GUIDELINES FOR THE TEACHING OF ONCOLOGY

The European Action Program Against Cancer is based on estimates that every third person living in Europe in the year 2000 will suffer from cancer during his life, and that 50% of those will die from the disease. Furthermore a panel of experts have estimated that the anticipated mortality from cancer can be reduced by 10–15% through the use of knowledge that is already available. The optimal use of this knowledge throughout Europe requires programmes that concern not only progress in the treatment of cancer, but also both prevention and public information. Since these activities are essentially founded on the education that we provide for our students, a mutual curriculum in oncology for medical students in Europe has been given high priority.

Within the European Action Program Against Cancer, the EEC has decided to design a common curriculum in oncology for medical students in Europe. The Education Branch of the European Organization for Research and Treatment of Cancer (EORTC) was asked to organize a workshop on this issue. The goal is to reach a consensus regarding certain main guidelines and minimal requirements for undergraduate teaching in oncology in Europe. On approval of the result, the EC will propose the guidelines as recommendations to the Heads of States and Governments. The workshop took place in Bonn, on May 3–4, 1988.

One basis for this project is the result of an extensive evaluation of European undergraduate teaching in oncology prepared for the EC by M. Carneiro de Moura, Professor of Internal Medicine and Dean of the Medical Faculty in Lisbon. Professor de Moura found extensive and fundamental differences in Europe regarding such teaching. Furthermore, the universities were not satisfied with the situation, and expressed themselves in favour of an attempt to design mutual European recommendations for undergraduate teaching in oncology. This result was recently confirmed by the EORTC in an analysis of 165 questionnaires sent to deans of medical faculties in Europe. The latter survey is published in this issue of 'Reviews in Oncology'.

We aimed at 50 participants in the workshop in Bonn. In order to avoid unrealistic ambitions, half of the invited participants were non-oncologists. Half were oncologists, preferably involved in undergraduate teaching and/or interested in these problems. EC was the main financier of the project, but the majority of European countries were represented. Furthermore, the meeting was supported by a special grant from the EORTC, and very substantial financial support was provided by the federal and the provincial governments of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), the City of Bonn, and the German Cancer Society. Financial support was also given from the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm and from France.

The consensus workshop in Bonn was a full 2-day meeting. After an introductory morning session, the activities were organized in 4 working groups that reported to each other at regular intervals. The meeting was successful, and a consensus was reached on all main issues that were discussed. The substance of this meeting, and the conclusions reached, will be published in a subsequent issue of 'Reviews in Oncology'.

*The Editors*