



Minutes of the Joint Meeting of ICOH SCs and Board

February 11, 2020
Rome, Italy

Time: Tuesday, 11 February 2020, 9.00 -17.30

Venue: INAIL Headquarters, Via IV Novembre 144, Rome

Participants:

Dr. Jukka Takala (Finland) - ICOH President
Prof. Seong-Kyu Kang (Rep. of Korea) - ICOH Vice President
Ms. Claudina Nogueira (South Africa) - ICOH Vice President
Prof. Sergio Iavicoli (Italy) - ICOH Secretary-General
Dr. Kazutaka Kogi (Japan) - ICOH Past President
Prof. Jorma Rantanen (Finland) - ICOH Past President
Prof. Maureen Dollard (Australia) - ICOH Board Member
Prof. Frida Marina Fischer (Brazil) - ICOH Board Member
Prof. Mats Hagberg (Sweden) - ICOH Board Member
Dr. Martin Hogan (Ireland) - ICOH Board Member
Prof. Seichi Horie (Japan) - ICOH Board Member (also representing SC on Thermal Factors)
Prof. Sunil Kumar Joshi (Nepal) - ICOH Board Member
Prof. Stavroula Leka (United Kingdom/Ireland) - ICOH Board Member
Dr. Olivier Lo (Singapore) - ICOH Board Member
Dr. Rosa Maria Orriols Ramos (Spain) - ICOH Board Member
Prof. Christophe Paris (France) - ICOH Board Member
Dr. Shyam Pingle (India) - ICOH Board Member
Prof. Kari Reijula (Finland) - ICOH Board Member
Dr. Paul Schulte (USA) - ICOH Board Member
Prof. Francesco Violante (Italy) - ICOH Board Member
Dr. Tessa Bailey (Australia) - SC on Work Organisation and Psychosocial Factors
Prof. Igor Bello (Venezuela) - SC on Women, Health and Work
Prof. Paul Blanc (USA) - SC on History of Prevention of Occupational and Environmental Diseases
Prof. Roberta Bonfiglioli (Italy) - SC on Musculoskeletal Disorders
Prof. Alicja Bortkiewicz (Poland) - SC on Cardiology in OH
Dr. Gwen Brachman (USA) - SC on OH for Health Workers
Dr. Sashikala Chandrasekar (India) - SC on Rural Health: Agriculture, Pesticides and Organic Dusts
Dr. Adriaan Combrinck (South Africa) - SC on OH in the Chemical Industry
Dr. Stefania Curti (Italy) - SC on Effectiveness in Occupational Health Services
Ms. Kim Davies (South Africa) - SC on OH in Nursing
Dr. Rafael E. De La Hoz (USA) - SC on Respiratory Disorders
Prof. Alexis Descatha (France) - SC on Emergency Preparedness and Response in Occupational Health
Prof. Silvia Fustinoni (Italy) - SC on Occupational Toxicology
Dr. Diana Gagliardi (Italy) - SC on OH and Development
Prof. Ivo Iavicoli (Italy) - SC on Nanomaterial Workers' Health
Dr. Erik Jørs (Denmark) - SC on Mining Occupational Safety and Health



Prof. Damien McElvenny (United Kingdom) - SC on Epidemiology in OH
Dr. Natalia Pawlas (Poland) - SC on Toxicology of Metals
Dr. Stephen Popkin (USA) - SC on Shiftwork and Working Time
Dr. Minha Rajput-Ray (United Kingdom) - SC on Unemployment, Job Insecurity and Health
Dr. Krishna Nirmalya Sen (India) - SC on OH in the Construction Industry
Mr. Mahinda Seneviratne (Australia) - SC on Small-Scale Enterprises and the Informal Sector
Dr. Su Wang (United Kingdom) - SC on Accident Prevention
Dr. Peder Wolkoff (Denmark) - SC on Indoor Air Quality and Health

Invited participants on specific items:

Prof. Malcolm Sim – President of the ICOH2021 Congress Organising Committee

ICOH Secretariat Staff

Ms. Valeria Boccuni (Italy)
Mr. Pierluca Dionisi (Italy)
Ms. Erika Cannone (Italy)

Apologies:

Ms. Lena Andersson (Sweden) - SC on Industrial Hygiene
Dr. Johannes Anema (The Netherlands) - SC on Work Disability Prevention and Integration
Prof. Marija Bubas (Croatia) - SC on Education and Training in OH
Prof. Timothy Driscoll (Australia) - SC on Occupational Medicine
Prof. Swen Malte John (Germany) - SC on Occupational and Environmental Dermatoses
Dr. Eun-A Kim (Rep. of Korea) - ICOH Board Member
Dr. Jason Kai Wei Lee (Singapore) - SC on Thermal Factors
Dr. Agueda Munoz Del Carpio Toia (Peru) - SC on Work and Vision
Dr. Jodi Oakman (Australia) - SC on Ageing and Work
Prof. Takemi Otsuki (Japan) - SC on Allergy and Immunotoxicology
Dr. Markku Sainio (Finland) - SC on Neurotoxicology and Psychophysiology
Dr. Renata Sisto (Italy) - SC on Vibration and Noise
Ms. Maria Luisa Tupia Gonzales (Peru) - ICOH Board Member
Dr. Marc Wittlich (Germany) - SC on Radiation and Work
Dr. Hsiao-Yu Yang (Taiwan, China) - SC on Reproductive Hazards in the Workplace

1. Opening

The President of ICOH, Dr. Jukka Takala, opened the joint meeting by welcoming all the participants. Then, the ICOH Secretary-General Prof. Sergio Iavicoli invited the participants to introduce themselves.

2. President's Report

Dr. Takala presented his midterm report including information on the work done on occupational cancer, also with the involvement of the dedicated Working Group of the ICOH Board. According to the triennial work plan, the agreed strategies include Evidence, Ethics and Engagement. In this view, Dr. Takala highlighted the key points of ICOH priorities: Global Burden at Work and the measures for solving today's problems at work. In his presentation, Dr. Takala reported some figures on death, disability and disease, with some figures about communicable diseases caused by working conditions, such as musculoskeletal and cardiovascular disorders. Dr. Takala also recalled the collaboration with WHO and ILO, and the dialogue with institutions including NGOs, Sustaining, and Affiliate members.

3. Report on Scientific Committees

Ms. Claudina Nogueira, ICOH Vice-President in charge of Scientific Committees (SCs), took the floor to present her midterm report, including the reports submitted by the SCs. She reported on

the number of appointments, which have all been completed except for one SC (Accident Prevention) that has no Secretary. Ms. Nogueira presented data on the number of reports submitted (35 out of 37), on the SCs whose description is available on the ICOH website (16 out of 37) and those having their own website (16 out of 37). She remarked the importance for each SC of using the webpages to give an overview on their activities, also to attract new members. In this view, she invited all SC Officers to avail themselves of the tools in the Virtual Office, available in the Private Area of ICOH website, including member lists, guidelines, forms, and other resources. Among the highlights, she mentioned the conferences organised by the SCs and their publications, including the most significant outcomes of the work done by the SCs. She also requested that SC leadership review Addendum 3 in the composite Midterm Report on SCs – a ‘Refresher Course’ for SC leadership, and to use the checklist of requirements to identify where there may be gaps or where assistance may be required for their management of the SC.

Then, Ms. Nogueira gave some instructions for the three breakout sessions scheduled for the afternoon of the same day. She also recalled the involvement of the SCs in the preparation of the scientific programme of the ICOH2021 Congress.

Interventions from the audience came to indicate that the process of joining SCs is sometimes not clear to new members, and probably perceived as being too cumbersome. However, the standard joining process allows the ICOH Secretariat to first check membership status of the applicants and then to update their records. It was also remarked that it is not possible to be a member of a SC without being a member of ICOH. Without this checking process, there would be discrepancies between the files held by the Secretariat and the lists kept by the SC Officers, which is precisely something that ICOH wants to avoid, in view of facilitating communication.

4. Report on activities of National Secretaries

Prof. Seong-Kyu Kang, ICOH Vice-President in charge of National Secretaries (NSs) took the floor to present his midterm report. A total number of 69 National Secretaries have been appointed for the current triennium, showing an increase with respect to the previous term (56 NSs at the end of the triennium). He remarked that in some countries, such as Philippines, Turkey, and Russian Federation, the NS is the representative of the local OSH association. Furthermore, the level of participation and activity of the NSs has improved, also thanks to the new target for membership recruitment.

Prof. Kang also recalled that membership tools are available in the Virtual Office and NSs are encouraged to use them. One important medium of communication is the NS Newsletter, which is helpful in keeping local members informed and engaged in the activities delivered in their countries. Some countries in particular have achieved very good results, both in ICOH promotion and in organisation of conferences. Prof. Kang encouraged the organisation of regional NS meetings during the events organised by the SCs, following the successful experiences from the current triennium.

After the report, some participants intervened to ask for clarification with regard to the application process and the need for three endorsements from ICOH members in good standing (GS). Prof. Iavicoli explained that this is a mandatory requirement that helps to protect ICOH from external interferences (e.g. asbestos industry).

5. Report from the Secretary-General

Prof. Iavicoli opened his report presenting the data on membership and highlighted the excellent results achieved in the first half of the triennium, with 91% of ICOH members (1,561 members in GS) having already renewed their membership as of 27 January 2020. The Secretary-General also showed the best results per country, with India, Japan and USA in the top three places, and presented three case studies. The first one was India, where the NS has been very active in supporting the ICOH Secretariat in the membership renewal campaign and also in the recruitment of new members. Another important achievement is the successful organisation of the International Conclave on Occupational Health, organised by eight SCs and the Indian Association of Occupational Health (IAOH) in Mumbai in January/February 2020.

The second case study was the Russian Federation, where the NS was very active in the ICOH promotion in his country, where local member numbers increased from 8 to 37; membership also grew in nearby countries.

The third case study was Venezuela. Due to the crisis in their country and subsequent massive emigration, the ICOH community was reduced to a minimum. The Noro Fund was then conceded to support the ICOH members who remained in the country.

Then, the Secretary-General presented some of the data gathered through the ICOH survey. One of the most significant data collected is that, while many members are committed and actively participating in the activities of the SCs, there are many others who are still unaware of the existence of the SCs.

He then turned to the presentation of the ICOH Heritage Repository, launched just before the meeting. The repository collects all the contributions presented at the ICOH Congresses since 1906. It is publicly available and will also be used for housing new materials and sections at a later stage.

The Secretary-General also reported on ICOH representation at meetings, included the High-Level Meeting on Universal Health Coverage, held in New York in September 2019. Then, he recalled the ongoing work being done by the Secretariat for the congresses, particularly for ICOH2021 and ICOH2024, also with the drawing up of a new and improved version of the 'Guidelines on Congress Organisation'.

Turning to SCs, he presented the budget available to SCs. So far, 47% of the allocated sum has been spent, so the Secretary-General invited those SCs who have not yet benefit from financial support to submit their requests timeously and in line with ICOH rules.

6. Report from breakout sessions

A. How to increase collaboration among SCs

Prof. Stavroula Leka presented the outcomes of the discussion held by Group A, clustered under four broad challenges: structural, functional, substantive, and resources.

Structural challenges refer to organisation and management, including the possibility of restructuring the existing SCs. In particular, Prof. Leka highlighted the need to make the SC offerings more attractive to engage new members.

Functional challenges have to do with communication and collaboration. It was proposed to have 'Guidelines on how to develop SC websites'. Another suggestion was to use social media to promote SC activities. As for symposia, one proposal was to have the list of future symposia circulated among SCs so that other SCs could co-sponsor events organised by SCs and help them in the promotion. The group also proposed the possibility of exploring institutional collaboration with national OSH institutes, e.g. for SC events and outputs.

Substantive challenges concern multidisciplinary perspectives. In this view, one effective strategy may be to promote the organisation of joint events. Successful collaboration among SCs could be rewarded with a recognition of merit. ICOH should look into invest in video-conferencing systems which would widen participation, raise awareness, and promote knowledge sharing.

As for resources, limited funds are available but the SCs are of course encouraged to use them in compliance with the ICOH rules.

In the discussion that followed the presentation, Prof. Jorma Rantanen remarked that the SCs have a big potential that is not totally utilised; one challenge would be to make better use of this potential.

B. How to increase the visibility of SC work: transfer of SC outputs to the ICOH Repository

Prof. Maureen Dollard presented the points of discussions raised by Group B. The objective is to make ICOH and the ICOH Repository the go-to place for people looking for information and evi-

dence about occupational health. Visibility should be enhanced in the scientific community, in academia, and in practice.

One suggestion was about the possibility of funded research for developing guidelines, which will also help in raising ICOH visibility in the scientific community.

Furthermore, the participants suggested that ICOH could have a scientific curator to whom members can send papers. This would facilitate the production of consensus papers. The Chairs of the SCs could be the curators and provide inputs into processes, which would need to be organised with flow charts. Furthermore, it would be helpful to have a template for position statements. Collaboration with high impact journals and special issues should be strengthened so as to facilitate the translation of research carried out by the ICOH SCs into practical applications. Linking junior and senior members via a mentoring programme should be fostered (also with the purpose of assisting young professionals with publishing research in accredited journals); mentoring could also be a valuable vehicle for succession planning within ICOH structures.

From the audience, Prof. Rafael De La Hoz intervened recalling the existence of SC outputs like Guidelines and position papers, such as the TB Statement produced in 2018. Aligned with Prof. Iavicoli remarks, there is a defined process for the production of Guidelines and position papers. This process is very strict because position papers and guidelines express the view of ICOH as an association; it is understood that this is a very sensitive issue that need to be addressed with stringent rules.

Mr. Mahinda Seneviratne remarked the importance of communication, especially of the use of social media to enhance visibility of SC events.

C. Optimisation of management for SCs

Prof. Alexis Descatha reported on the discussion of Group C. One issue was interaction, and the way to improve marketing, communication and visibility. 'Management' also refers to availability of resources (funds, people, and time) to manage websites. In this sense, the use of social media is strongly encouraged, as also discussed by the other groups. The use of social media is linked to the idea of being contemporary and attractive, and should also be in line with social and age changes; active participation on social media platforms is a way of attracting young OHS professionals.

The group also proposed some answers to these questions. To facilitate the transition of SC leadership from one Chair to another and to ensure continuity, a handbook could be developed. As for communication, one idea could be to reinforce the use of social media (e.g. Facebook, LinkedIn...) and engage younger members to participate in website development and maintenance. Guidelines, e-learning, blogs, and newsletters should also be used more to reach practitioners and researchers more effectively. Relationships with National Societies should also be fostered, with the support of the NSs.

7. General discussion and way forward for SCs

The participants started a general discussion emanating from the ideas that emerged at the breakout sessions.

Dr. Stephen Popkin remarked on the importance of understanding the different needs in terms of research and practice. The SCs should condense this information into hot topics to generate dialogue and discussion not only for the Repository.

Dr. Kazutaka Kogi welcomed the suggestions on how to promote occupational health services, especially in the informal sector, for migrant workers, etc. Webpages can be used for good practice examples reported to SCs. Collaboration among SCs is encouraged.

In terms of publications, Prof. Iavicoli clarified that it is not possible to use the name of ICOH for personal publications and that there are clear rules on sponsorships, also for external partners of events, for example, ICOH must have no link with tobacco or asbestos industries. Prof. Rantanen

agreed that this prudent approach is important for ICOH's reputation, also in the light of past experiences.

Turning to the current organisation of the SCs, Dr. Mats Hagberg emphasised that some SCs are dormant and do not even respond to communications from ICOH. Therefore, he agreed that it is necessary to implement a general re-organisation of the current SC system, including the possibility of merging SCs involved in similar work.

In terms of communication, Prof. Kang clarified that the ICOH Newsletter is in place, but it is a challenge to receive contributions from members. More participation would be welcome. There was a concern about the high costs of the print publication of the Newsletter, compared with the costs of the electronic version. Prof. Kang explained that the budget allocated for the costs of the Newsletter has been donated to the ICOH Congress Organising Committees since 2012, for the fund to support members from developing countries. The actual costs for publication and postal delivery, which were usually higher than the allocated budget, have been covered by Korea Occupational Safety and Health Agency (KOSHA). If the budget were to be reduced, then the scholarship for members of developing countries would also be decreased. For the foreseeable future, it is not possible to keep only the electronic version, as many members still prefer to receive the print edition of the Newsletter.

8. ICOH2021 Congress

Prof. Malcolm Sim, President of the ICOH2021 Congress, took the floor to share updates on the organisation of the event, which will be hosted by Australian and New Zealand Society of Occupational Medicine (ANZSOM). He informed that the Second Announcement would be ready for dissemination soon after the Midterm meeting. It includes information on plenary speakers, fees, deadlines, etc. The scientific programme is being designed with the participation and suggestions of the SCs. Prof. Sim also announced that the planning of the Global Policy Forum is underway, following the two previous successful sessions, in Seoul and Dublin. The theme of the Global Policy Forum will be 'Mental Health'. Prof. Sim's presentation included a showcase of the Congress venue - Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre - and the organisation of the spaces within the venue, in line with ICOH requirements.

Dr. Takala thanked Prof. Sim for his work in the organisation of the Congress and asked if the bushfire season would be a problem for the delivery of the event. Prof. Sim replied that this should not affect participation.

Ms. Nogueira mentioned the involvement of SCs in preparing the proposals for the Special Sessions. Prof. Sim remarked that a good response had been received from SCs in this respect, with more than 70 proposals being received by the ICOH2021 Congress Organisers. SCs had also submitted suggestions for plenary and semi-plenary speakers, requests for Free Paper Abstract Sessions and were in the process of submitting requests for Business Meetings.

Prof. Iavicoli pointed out that one issue of concern could be accessibility, in terms of travel costs, while accommodation costs are anticipated to lower than in Dublin. He stressed the importance of motivating and promoting participation. For this purpose, he also launched the idea of having a short Powerpoint presentation, called "ICOH2021 in a nutshell", which NSs and SCs can use to promote the Congress among their networks and at their own events or meetings.

Prof. Leka asked if there were plans to have a 'Melbourne Declaration' on psychosocial risks, following what was done in Seoul and Dublin, and Prof. Sim confirmed.

Prof. Rantanen congratulated Prof. Sim for the excellent work done and suggested inviting national associations to join, thus ensuring their support. To this end, the Congress could host an event, called "ICOH Evening", especially for the national associations. For example, in Dublin the Finnish Association of Occupational Health Nurses sponsored the participation of some nurses from Ghana; this can be another idea to support participants from developing countries and to actively involve the national associations.

In consideration of the theme of the Congress, Dr. Paul Schulte suggested targeting occupational psychology programmes around the world. He also asked if there are plans for holding one-day pre-congress training courses, which could make attendance at the Congress more attractive. Prof. Sim informed that planning is underway for skills workshops to be held over the weekend, taking into account the younger OSH professionals as the target audience.



Dr. Rosa Orriols Ramos asked if there would be the opportunity for the scientific contributions to be published in an accredited scientific journal, as an additional incentive for participation. Prof. Sim replied that the abstracts from Special Sessions and Free Paper Sessions (both oral and poster presentations) will be published in an on-line supplement of the journal *Occupational and Environmental Medicine* (OEM).

Dr. Takala closed the meeting thanking Prof. Sim and all the participants.

These minutes reflect the general discussion and the decisions taken at the ICOH Midterm Meeting held in Rome on February 11-13, 2020. They will be approved electronically by the ICOH Officers and Board Members.

Due to the outbreak of COVID-19, which has spread in many countries and territories around the world since the beginning of the year and was declared a global pandemic by the WHO on March 11, 2020, the deadlines fixed in the minutes may be subject to adjustments, as required.