

Newsletter ORAHS

April 2003



Introduction

Dear colleagues/friends! Please find here the spring 2003 edition of our ORAHS Working Group Newsletter. With this newsletter we intend to give information on activities of the Working Group to its members and others who are interested in the Working Group.

If you have any relevant information, or if you want to write a short contribution for the next newsletter you can send it to Sally Brailsford (scb@soton.ac.uk).

Agenda of coming meetings

July 6th - 10th 2003

EURO/INFORMS Istanbul, Turkey.

Information on health care cluster: Yasar Ozcan

Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond USA

tel: 1-804-828-5224 fax: 1-804-828-1894 or e-mail: ozcan@vcu.edu

July 28th – 1st August 2003

ORAHS29 Prague, Czech Republic.

Theme: Modeling Efficiency and Quality in Health Care.

Information: Martin Dlouhy, e-mail: dlouhy@vse.cz

<http://nb.vse.cz/csov/orahs/>

September 3rd - 5th 2003

Fourth IMA Conference on Quantitative Modelling in the Management of Health Care
Salford, U.K.

Information: Sally Brailsford, University of Southampton, tel: 00 44(0) 23 8059 3567

fax: 00 44(0) 23 8059 3844 or e-mail: scb@soton.ac.uk

ORAHS 2003 Meeting in Prague *(report by Martin Dlouhy)*

The ORAHS Working Group meets every year for one week in a different host country. In 2003, the 29th annual meeting of the Working Group will take place in Prague, Czech Republic, from July 28th to August 1st, at the Faculty of Informatics and Statistics, University of Economics Prague. Martin Dlouhy (dlouhy@vse.cz) is the main organiser of meeting. *“The theme of this meeting is 'Modeling Efficiency and Quality in Health Care'. The registration is open from March 10th, 2003. Please, register early to help the organisers with their work. All researchers interested in the field of health care modeling are welcomed. Prague is a nice city to visit, with a wonderful Old Town, although it is, sometimes, under the*

water. After the hard work during the meeting sessions, you will surely appreciate the good local beer in the evening". More information on this meeting can be found via the website: <http://nb.vse.cz/csov/orahs/>.

At present, researchers from the Czech Republic, Italy, Japan, Portugal and Slovakia are registered. Do not hesitate to meet people with common interest, the deadline for early registration is May 31. Take accompanying person with you, the cultural programme comprising the visits of several historical places is prepared. A few photos of Prague will give you already an impression.

Old Town Square, Prague, Live from street camera.



Prague Castle

Golden Street, Prague



EURO- info

EURO has an extensive website with information on EURO conferences and EURO Working Groups. The new EURO vice-president 2 in charge of the Working Groups is Professor Chris Potts, Faculty of Mathematical Studies, University of Southampton, who is not only *ex officio* a member of our working group, but has already attended one of our meetings (the 2001 meeting in Vienna) and is planning to come to Prague, since he is married to Sally Brailsford! For more information about EURO, see www.euro-online.org

A new version of the website has become available since December 2001. Working Groups can now update their own information, and annual reports of Working Groups can be printed from the site directly.

Web-site news (report by Sally Brailsford)

The ORAHS website contains information about many of the previous meetings of the group, going back as far as 1975 when the first ever meeting was held (in Exeter, UK under the chairmanship of Duncan Boldy). It has been updated this year with additional details about several previous meetings - thanks to everyone who sent us information. If you have any information about the remaining meetings, please contact Sally Brailsford (scb@soton.ac.uk). You can find the website at the following address: <http://www.soton.ac.uk/~orahsweb>. An option for downloading and printing a list of working group participants is currently under construction. However, anyone wishing to obtain such a list, or to email the entire working group, can do so by contacting Sally. We welcome ideas and suggestions for the website.

Short communications

The Journal of the Operational Research Society is planning a special issue on 'Meeting Health Challenges with OR'. The guest editors are Ruth Davies, Senior Lecturer from the School of Management at the University of Southampton and David Bensley, Operational Research Programme Manager at the Department of Health, Economics and Operational Research Division. They have proposed papers from a spectrum of topics from international to UK based and from strategic policy issues to more tactical problems. They are including papers concerned with:

- appropriate OR methodologies for practical health challenges,
- modelling and analysis of policies for the provision of health care,
- case studies which show the added value of using analytical techniques.

They are putting particular emphasis on the impact of research and on lessons learnt. The editors have looked at a number of outline papers and have provided feedback to authors. Ruth and David are prepared to look at further proposals and will next meet to discuss them on 20th July. Completed papers should be submitted to the JORS Editorial Office, Seymour House, 12 Edward Street, Birmingham B1 2RX, for peer review in the usual way by 31 August, 2003, marked as "Special Issue on 'Meeting Health Challenges with OR'".

Dr Ruth Davies, E-mail: rmd@soton.ac.uk

David Bensley, E-mail: David.Bensley@doh.gsi.gov.uk

The proceedings of the ORAHS 2001 meeting are published by Peter Lang. The book presents a selection of 18 of the 30 papers presented at the sessions and highlights the breadth of problems and quantitative approaches facing health care providers throughout Europe and

beyond. The first paper of Jan Vissers entitled "The nature and content of health operational research" gives a good overview on the past and present research of this working group aimed at supporting health decision-makers to better plan for scarce resources by means of quantitative approaches. The book contains furthermore a survey study on prioritising, and sections on hospital services planning, hospital planning models, decision support systems, and prevention and health promotion. This illustrates the wide range of topics dealt with by operational research applied to health service. The reference details are: Rauner, M.S., Heidenberger, K. (eds.), 2003, Quantitative Approaches in Health Care Management: Proceedings of the 27th Meeting of the European Working Group on Operational Research Applied to Health Services (ORAHs), Vienna, Austria, July 30 – August 4, 2001, Peter Lang, Frankfurt am Main, Germany. ISBN-Number : 3-631-39009-2 US-ISBN:0-8204-5470-2. For more information, contact Marion Rauner (marion.rauner@univie.ac.at).

The Feature Issue of the European Journal of Operational Research entitled "OR applied to health services: Planning for the future with scarce resources" (edited by Rauner, M.S. and Vissers, J.M.H.) is currently in print but is now available as a corrected proof via Elsevier's science direct. The first part of this special issue contains review studies and methodological contributions. The second part contains case studies that apply a specific technique or methodology to a specific problem in the reality of health services. The diversity of the papers of this feature issue illustrates that health care represents a vast area for potential OR applications, and that the emphasis in our work is more and more on supporting and influencing health care policy makers in the decision making process.

Karl Doerner and Marc Reimann, University of Vienna, are editing a Focused Issue on "Logistics of Health Care Management" for Computers & Operations Research. The aim of this focused issue is to collect papers dealing with topics relevant for the logistics of health care management. Applications in this area are characterised by the importance of customer service considerations, which include timeliness and quality of the service. From a broader perspective cost efficiency is necessary to ensure ongoing service in the long run, particularly as many service providers are non profit organisations. Topics of interest include but are not limited to:

- Logistics of perishable goods (e.g., transportation and storage of blood)
- Logistics of emergency services (e.g., ambulance relocation)
- Logistics of mobile home care units (e.g., assignment and scheduling for nurses and volunteers)
- Hospital location and planning models (e.g., personnel planning for weekend- and nightshifts)
- Logistics of vaccination programs (e.g., hepatitis vaccination in third world/developing countries)

The methodological focus of the special issue is on optimisation models and algorithms dealing with aspects of the problems discussed above. In particular papers at the interface of Operations Research and Computer Science are solicited. The deadline for submission is November 30, 2003. Manuscripts must be written in English and should be submitted in ps or pdf format to karl.doerner@univie.ac.at or marc.reimann@univie.ac.at. Formatting instructions for the submissions are available at <http://authors.elsevier.com/>.