

Newsletter ORAHS

November 2004



Introduction

Dear colleagues/friends! Please find here the autumn 2004 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

January 23-25, 2005

Fifteenth International Conference on Health Sciences Simulation, New Orleans, USA

Information: James G. Anderson, Purdue University, e-mail: AndersonJ@soc.purdue.edu

July 11-15, 2005

IFORS triennial, Honolulu, Hawaii

Information: www.informs.org/conf/IFORS2005

July 24 – August 5, 2005

EURO Summer Institute on “OR in Health”. University of Southampton, UK.

Information: Sally Brailsford, University of Southampton, e-mail: scb@soton.ac.uk

July 31 – August 5, 2005

Thirty first meeting of ORAHS

University of Southampton, United Kingdom

Information: Sally Brailsford, University of Southampton, e-mail: scb@soton.ac.uk

September 13-15, 2005

OR Society Conference (OR47)

University College, Chester.

Organisers Health Stream: Chris Sherlaw-Johnson (University College London - c.sherlaw-johnson@ucl.ac.uk) and Gillian Mould (Stirling University - g.i.mould@stir.ac.uk).

ORAHS 2004 Meeting in Stockholm *(report by Mårten Lagergren)*

The 30th meeting of the EURO Working Group “OR applied to Health Services” took place in Stockholm, Sweden, June 27 – July 2 at the Stockholm Gerontology Center. This time 37

members participated together with 7 accompanying persons from 13 different countries – including non-European Japan, Brazil, Canada and United States. The theme of the meeting had been chosen to be “Quantitative methods in aged care planning and operations”.

The programme followed the long-time honoured structure with informal get-together on Sunday afternoon, invited sessions on Monday morning, study visit and meeting with local decision-makers and planners on Wednesday and Group Affairs on Friday. During the paper sessions in total 29 papers were presented covering aged care (two sessions), hospital planning and operations, screening and early treatment of disease, disease treatment evaluation and two modelling sessions regarding applications and methodology. The scientific programme ended on Friday morning with a paper concerning priorities and ethics. Each paper was allotted 30 minutes, which allowed for questions and remarks often continuing into coffee-breaks and luncheon. Conference proceeding according to the set standard of the WG will appear in due course.

Also the social programme followed the traditional set-up: After the Sunday afternoon get-together there was a reception at the Ministry of Health and Welfare on Monday afternoon and on Wednesday an outing with boat-trip in the Stockholm archipelago ending with a traditional Swedish midsummer party at the Lagergren summerhouse on Vaddo island. Finally on Thursday night the conference dinner was held at restaurant Ulla Winblad in Djurgarden. The accompanying persons were offered visits to museums and a sight-seeing boat-trip in the waters of Stockholm.

The weather was not too bad being Sweden. By enormous fortune very heavy rain on Wednesday afternoon happened to coincide exactly with the time we spent eating the midsummer dinner in the party tent. After that there was all clear skies! Going back to Stockholm by bus the group lived up to the tradition of being a Singing as well as a Working Group.

For the organisers Marten Lagergren, Rose-Marie Hedberg, Lena Lundberg and Zoltan Pethö the week was the climax of preparations starting in September 2003 and we are most grateful for the very positive response we got from the participants! The WG has shown again that it is both serious and enjoyable!



ORAHs 2005 and the EURO Summer Institute on OR in Health *(report by Sally Brailsford)*

ORAHs 2005 will be held at the University of Southampton, UK, between 31 July - 5 August. In parallel with this, but starting a week earlier on July 24, we are also holding a EURO Summer Institute (ESI). The aim of the ESI is to enable "new researchers", i.e. people with less than 10 years' experience in OR, to make friends and research contacts at the start of their career which should endure and prove fruitful in later years. EURO pays the accommodation and registration costs for the participants. Each member country is allowed to send one participant, whose travel costs are paid for by the national OR Society of that country. If more than one person in any country applies, the candidates have to submit a paper to their national OR Society, which then selects the best. Typically, there are 15-20 participants. An ESI has a Scientific Committee (see below) which also prepares a special issue of EJOR devoted to the Institute. In our case, this will also include papers presented at ORAHs - so it could be quite a fat issue. A formal Call for Papers for the ESI will be going out shortly and should also appear in the national OR Society Newsletters. The website - for both conferences - will be up and running shortly, and after Christmas we will issue the Call for Papers for ORAHs, together with deadlines, registration fees etc.

Ed Kaplan from Yale has agreed to be the keynote speaker and will attend both weeks. The ESI organising committee is Sally Brailsford, Paul Harper, Chris Potts (all University of Southampton) and Martin Pitt (University of Exeter), with additional help from Chris Sherlaw-Johnson and Martin Utley (both CORU, University of London). The Programme Committee consists of the above people, plus Ruth Davies (University of Warwick, UK), Jan Vissers (Erasmus Medical Centre, Rotterdam and University of Eindhoven, The Netherlands), Marion Rauner (University of Vienna, Austria), Vanda de Angelis (University of Rome, Italy) and Michael Carter (University of Toronto, Canada). Thanks to Mike and John Blake, CORS (the Canadian OR Society) is sponsoring a Canadian student to attend the ESI, in the true ORAHs tradition of stretching the definition of Europe to a ludicrous extent!

The organising committee has met a few times already and made some provisional bookings, including the Conference Dinner which will be held at St Mary's Football Stadium. As the stadium is near the city centre, the young-at-heart can make a night of it and go clubbing afterwards, while the rest of us can head off to our beds! Incidentally, I hope that Southampton will still be in the Premiership by August 4th 2004, but the way things are going at the moment, I am not too optimistic. We have also planned a superb day out on the Wednesday which will include the obligatory boat trip (around Portsmouth Harbour) and a visit to the historic dockyard in Portsmouth - HMS Victory, the Mary Rose, and the Naval Museum. We will finish off with a meal (and disco!) in a Sussex pub and of course, singing in the coach on the way back. We have also been lucky in gaining sponsorship from Southampton City Council, who are allowing us to use the elegant Library in the centre of the city for the Monday evening reception, free of charge. We are planning to keep the "accompanying persons" programme rather low-key, with a selection of optional activities to allow people to pick and choose what they would like to do.

We are really looking forward to seeing you all there, together with a strong contingent of "new blood" provided by the ESI participants, so we hope you have put the dates in your 2005 diaries already.

EURO- info

EURO has an extensive website with information on EURO conferences and EURO Working Groups. The 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 become a regular attender of our meetings. For more information about EURO, see www.euro-online.org

A new version of the EURO 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 was updated last year with additional details about several previous meetings - thanks to my PhD student Korina Katsaliaki for doing this, and to everyone who sent us information. If you have any information about the remaining meetings, please contact me (scb@soton.ac.uk). You can find the website at the following address: <http://www.soton.ac.uk/~orahsweb>. The 2005 ESI and ORAHS conference website will shortly be up and running - this is a job for the Christmas vacation. We welcome ideas and suggestions for the main website.

Announcement - Mashnet (*report by Martin Pitt*)

The UK Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council, EPSRC, has recently announced that it will fund a Network in Healthcare Modelling and Simulation, called Mashnet. The funding is around £60,000 for the next three years, and Mashnet will start officially on Jan 3rd 2005. The aim of Mashnet is to improve the application of modelling and simulation techniques within healthcare decision making, and its main objectives are:-

- To establish a small steering group which communicates on an on-going basis to facilitate the activities of the network. Ideally to include members from differing backgrounds.
- To create a dedicated web site to disseminate information, sharing of ideas and best practice.
- To organise regular (eg twice yearly) seminars of the membership to share experiences and ideas in healthcare modelling and simulation.
- To foster links and dialogue with other key organisations and special interest groups
- To develop a dedicated e-journal (pdf format distributed via the internet) and to promote the publication of papers and articles in the field of healthcare modelling and simulation.
- To establish a directory of practitioners in healthcare modelling and simulation in the UK.
- To build a comprehensive bibliography of healthcare modelling and simulation publications (for inclusion within the web site above).
- To develop educational resources to encourage learning of healthcare modelling and simulation for those with an active interest who could benefit. (eg web based resources)
- To stimulate the use of modelling in healthcare decision making through active dialogue with professionals in healthcare.

Membership of Mashnet will be open to all those actively interested, concerned with or working in the area of modelling and simulation for healthcare. Mashnet will have a Steering Group comprising a small number of people (between 6 and 12) drawn from the three main constituencies of Mashnet – the health service, the academic research community, and the commercial sector.

Sally writes: - Congratulations to Martin for obtaining this funding. We look forward to some interesting events and fruitful meetings over the next three years, and of course, potential links and dialogues with ORAHS members (objective no. 4)

Short communications

Proceedings ORAHS2003 meeting in Prague (report by Martin Dlouhy)

The proceedings of the 29th meeting of the Group, which took place in Prague in 2003, were published in November 2004. On 243 pages you find 16 contributions from operational research applied to health care and three contributions with information on the health system of the Czech Republic, the host country of the meeting. The first paper, which is written by Penelope Mullen, deals with the problems related to the concept of efficiency in health care. Marten Lagergren and Martin Dlouhy, in their contributions, address the problem of ageing population in Sweden and in the Czech Republic. In following papers, authors optimize allocation of health resources in the platelet supply chain in Canada, in a virtual clinic setting in Brazil, in blood production in Canada, and in HIV prevention, study surgical wound infection in Brazil, liver transplant allocation in the United Kingdom, and evaluate efficiency of the new treatment centres in the United Kingdom. Atsuko Ikegami and a group of Czech researchers study the scheduling of doctors for night shifts. Steve Gallivan, Martin Utley, Alberto Franci, and Mario Corsi are interested in patient choice and patient satisfaction issues in the United Kingdom and Italy. Two papers from Brazil are devoted to information support systems.

The Proceedings were published by Nakladatelstvi Oeconomica, which is the university press of the University of Economics in Prague. All participants of the meeting will get the Proceedings by mail within a few weeks. I still have some spare copies and I will be happy to send them to other members of the Group who did not have an opportunity to participate at the Prague meeting. Please, contact me by e-mail: dlouhy@vse.cz.

Dlouhy, M. (Editor), <i>Modelling Efficiency and Quality in Health Care - Proceedings of the 29th meeting of the EURO Working Group on Operational Research Applied to Health Services 2003</i> , Prague, Nakladatelstvi Oeconomica 2004, 243 pages, ISBN 80-245-0775-7
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Nosokinetics, a bimonthly newsletter on OR in health (report Peter Millard)

Professor Peter Millard has started a bimonthly newsletter Nosokinetics. Nosokinetics stands for the mathematics of flow through health and social care systems. Nosokinetics News seeks to bridge the gap between academe and practice in health and social care. In the first issue the reason for launching the newsletter is illustrated with some contributions on a whole system's approach to health care planning problems. The second issue contained amongst others an impression of papers presented at the Fourth IMA conference on Quantitative Modelling in

the Management of Health Care, held at Salsford between 31st of March and 2nd of April 2004.

The newsletter is circulated bi-monthly, free of charge. To be added to the list, contact Peter Millard (phmillard@tiscali.co.uk).

IMPROVE IT – start of a new institute (report by Kevin Leonard)

Kevin Leonard reports: I have just started up a new Institute called IMPROVE-IT Institute wherein the mandate is to create a body of evidence supporting the Value Proposition of IT in healthcare. Many people believe there are benefits but no one has documented them well. Please see our website www.improve-it-institute.org for more info. We also just hosted our first conference Nov 11-12 which was a great success!

2005 OR Society Conference (report by Chris Sherlaw-Johnson)

The 2005 OR Society Conference (OR47) is going to be held from 13th to 15th September 2005 at University College, Chester. The Health Stream is being organised by Chris Sherlaw-Johnson (University College London - c.sherlaw-johnson@ucl.ac.uk) and Gillian Mould (Stirling University - g.i.mould@stir.ac.uk). If anyone would like to contribute a paper they should contact either of the organisers with a proposed title, preferably by the end of January.