



**NEWSLETTER**

INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION  
OF FERTILITY SOCIETIES

SPRING 2011

## **IFFS World Congress**

**2010 – Munich**  
**2013 – Boston**  
**2016 – India**

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# Message from the President

**Prof David L Healy**  
President of IFFS



*It is a privilege to be elected as the President of the International Federation of Fertility Societies (IFFS) from 2010 until 2013.*

*The recent IFFS World Congress was in Munich, Germany in September 2010. The meeting of several regional groups in Munich was a triumph. These developments will be further progressed as we move towards the 2013 World Congress. This is a joint congress between IFFS and the American Society of Reproductive Medicine and will be held in Boston USA in October 2013. Recently, the IFFS executive received approval to host the 2016 World Congress in Hyderabad, India. It shall be the first time that an IFFS World Congress has been held in the world's most populous nation where the average age is only 26 years.*

*2010 represents an additional milestone in reproductive medicine. The announcement by the Nobel Assembly of the Karolinska Institute that the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine for 2010 had been awarded to Prof Robert Edwards for the development of in vitro fertilisation was a delight.*

*Bob Edwards was born in 1925 in England. He studied biology at the University of Wales and later at Edinburgh University Scotland. His PhD at Edinburgh University was awarded in 1955. His thesis title was: Embryonal Development in mice. He became a star scientist at the National Institute of Medical Research in London in 1958 where he initiated his research on human fertilisation. Working with his gynaecological colleague, Dr Patrick Steptoe, they achieved human in vitro fertilisation and on going pregnancy resulting in the birth of a healthy baby, Louise Brown, by Caesarean section at term gestation on the 25th July 1978. At least 4 million babies have subsequently been born by IVF and related procedures.*

*However, that is not the only Nobel Prize in this golden era for human reproduction. The 2009 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine was awarded to Professors Elizabeth Blackburn, Carol Greider and Jack Szostak for their discovery of how chromosomes are protected by telomeres and the enzyme telomerase. The vital role of telomeres in preserving chromosomal and genetic stability was thereby explained.*

*Moreover, the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine in 2007 was also awarded in our area for the discoveries of principles for introducing specific gene modifications in mice by the use of embryonic stem cells. Prof Sir Martin Evans discovered embryonic stem cells. Profs Capecchi, Evans and Smithies were able to develop targeted gene modifications which could eliminate individual genes from the mouse genome. This created 'knock out mice'. The function of individual genes was then possible to be investigated for the first time.*

*These contributions from several Nobel Laureates have been truly outstanding. In particular, the research achievements of Prof Robert Edwards had given hope to the hopeless, has transformed fertility into fertility and has graced the human spirit.*

*I can think of no better beginning to this triennium of the International Federation of Fertility Societies.*

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German Society Of Reproductive Medicine	Tina Buchholz	2004 -13
Indian Society Of Assisted Reproduction	Dhiraj Gada	2010 -19
Japan Society Of Reproductive Medicine	Minoru Irahara	2007 -16
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Member Societies and readers are invited to send all comments, reports or articles of 800 – 1200 words no later than 1st February for the Spring Issue and 1st July for the Autumn Issue.

The views expressed in articles in the IFFS Newsletter are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official viewpoint of IFFS.

# Munich 2010

Tom Parkhill

Communication advisor

**I**t is a truth universally acknowledged that the main things which affect the success of a congress are programme and venue. As scientists, we understand the need for a good programme. But how important is the venue? The practicalities need to work, but the great congress cities are also places where you'd be happy to spend a few days. The most popular congress cities are often regional capitals, places with a local sense of identity, often free of the traffic and "baggage" of a world metropolis. They have a sense of themselves, and how they differ from the rest of the world. Think Barcelona, San Francisco, Boston, and of course Munich.

The 20<sup>th</sup> IFFS World Congress of Fertility and Sterility took place in Munich from 12-16<sup>th</sup> September, 2010. Munich very much has a sense of being itself. The congress finished the day before the famous Oktoberfest began. The congress venue was the Gasteig, the city's main concert hall, easily walkable from the city centre. The venue was warm and intimate; the city was friendly, and bathed in September sunshine.

The German Society of Reproductive Medicine (DGRM) organised the congress in cooperation with the IFFS. A distinguished group of academics, chaired by ex-IFFS President Bernard Hedon, took on programme development. Local Chair Hans-Rudolf Tinneberg and DGRM staff Gabriele Wickert worked tirelessly to ensure that the programme ran smoothly, and tackled the main areas of ART, as well as breaking work.

They can be especially proud of the results. *"We had a number of regional meetings within the IFFS Congress, which was especially important for me"* said Hans Tinneberg. *"It was so good to see scientists coming from for example Japan and the Middle East, and using the Congress to facilitate discussion, and to present their work to the world"*.

*"We were also pleased that genomics got the prominence it deserves"* he said. *"This is an area which will revolutionise ART, and we needed to make sure that these developments were presented to an international audience"*

Dr. Tinneberg also highlighted Lilo Mettler's major role in the scientific programme and in arranging the live endoscopic surgery, which was transmitted from a local clinic to the congress centre. IFFS incoming President David Healy also noted this, *"We really appreciate the effort which Hans, Lilo and all the German Local Organising Committee put into organising the surgery link-up, and the hospital visits. There were a number of innovations, real firsts for us, and after Munich the bar has now been set at a high level"*, said Professor Healy.

Another highlight was the publication of the 3-yearly Surveillance report, stewarded by Ian Cooke, IFFS Director of Education. The report, comparing ART laws throughout the world, showed that much local practice is conditioned by culture, religion, and funding, rather than any set of internationally-accepted standards. It also highlighted the rapid spread of ART; in 2007 there were 59 countries which replied to the questionnaire; in 2010 this figure had jumped to 105 countries (see: [http://www.iffs-reproduction.org/documents/IFFS\\_Surveillance\\_2010.pdf](http://www.iffs-reproduction.org/documents/IFFS_Surveillance_2010.pdf)).

The Surveillance report was launched to journalists at a London press conference, in which ESHRE also participated, leading to a joint IFFS/ESHRE statement on cross-border fertility care. This joint work is a new and valuable initiative for both organisations, and IFFS hopes to work with ESHRE, and other organisations, on similar initiatives in future.

The Munich Congress also saw more organised press activity, to publicise the work at the congress. We issued seven press releases on topics ranging from sperm vitrification to the cost-effectiveness of ART, and received good coverage. Press releases from several continents reflected the international mission of the IFFS (see <http://www.iffs-reproduction.org/press.htm> for press releases)

The Munich congress attracted 2215 delegates from 98 countries, with 314 posters and 168 free communications. By any standards, the congress was a great success, and the IFFS would like to thank the Scientific Committee, the DGRM, the Local Organising Committee, and es-



Surveillance report presentation, Peter Brinsden, Roger Kempers, Ian Cooke and Doug Saunders

pecially Hans Tinneberg, Lilo Mettler, Gabi Wickert, and the congress organisers.

And now, we move on. The 2013 IFFS World Congress goes to Boston, also an attractive city, for a joint meeting with the American Society for Reproductive Medicine. Plans are well underway, and we will keep you up to date with progress.

One of the most significant decisions taken in Munich was to award the 2016 IFFS World Congress to India. India of course boasts the world's second largest population, and

has a rapidly developing economy; it has a young population (median age 25.9 years), and a fertility rate which has fallen to 2.65 children born for every woman, close to the average world fertility figure of 2.56. India is tremendously important to the IFFS. There are over 500 fertility clinics in India, which reinforces the point that even in a country with above-replacement levels of fertility, the problems faced by infertile individuals can be heartbreaking.

The success of Munich has given us high expectations for an IFFS World Congress, but we're sure that Boston and India can meet the challenge.

**T**hree more Workshops have been held since the publication of the Autumn Newsletter.

The first was from 12-14 June, 2010 in Surabaya, Java, the most populous Muslim nation in the world. The meeting was composed of two separate Workshops, the first for one day on "Affordable Assisted Reproductive Technology" and the second for two days on "Infertility Management in Low Resource Settings". WHO helped with the programme and brought Dr. Gordon Baker, a semenologist from Melbourne, and Dr. Sheryl van der Poel, a staff member of WHO, who spoke about WHO data and about ethics. IFFS supported Dr. TC Pun, a reproductive surgeon from Hong Kong and myself, speaking about the role and surgery and Low Cost investigations and ART respectively. There were additional smaller sessions on semen analysis by Dr. Baker and on ultrasound and the local academic staff conducted reviews of case histories. There were up to 90 participants from all over Indonesia, including Kalimantan (Borneo) and Sulawesi (Celebes). At the conclusion of the meeting, the senior academic, Professor Soehartono, of the Medical Faculty of Airlangga University, Surabaya, obtained agreement to form a network to develop low cost ART.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> International Congress on Reproductive Endocrinology and Genetics was held in Hangzhou, south-west China, from 18-20 June. The Chinese Society of Reproductive Medicine had been formed by the Chinese Medical Association three years ago. Professor Zi-Jiang Chen, Vice President, Shandong Provincial Hospital and Vice Dean of the School of Medicine, Shandong University, Jinan, organised the current meeting, jointly run by Zhejiang University with the Zhejiang Medical Association, IFFS and the Chinese Medical Association. All topics had been requested by our Chinese hosts.

## Education Committee

Ian Cooke MD  
Emeritus Professor  
University of Sheffield

This joint Congress with IFFS was preceded by a Postgraduate Workshop with about 100 MD, PhD students from all over China presenting their work to a group of Chinese supervisors and the four invited speakers, Joe Leigh Simpson, Alan DeCherney, Alex Rajkovic and myself. Each presentation was for 10 minutes and the external speakers were invited to ask questions, deliver comments on each presentation and score each of them, prizes being awarded at the subsequent Banquet.

The main Congress was attended by about 400 delegates. This was not really a Workshop in the usual sense, as the Chinese wish to be more involved with the global scientific community. The Congress was opened by a Ministry official in an elaborate opening ceremony. There were two other invited speakers who contributed, apart from the four IFFS invitees. There was double projection as all invited speakers' slides had been submitted earlier and translated into Chinese by various students. Both English and the Chinese translations were projected and the preliminary English speeches were translated into Chinese. The main presentations were not translated from the English. Copies of all slides of the main speakers and abstracts in Chinese for the remaining speakers were available to all participants. The meeting was well supported locally, principally by Merck Serono but also other smaller local



Opening ceremony in China

branches of the pharmaceutical companies. IFFS had been supported by unrestricted educational grants from Serono, Schering Plough and Casmed.

A Bioethics Symposium was held in Santiago, Chile from 11-13 November. It was supported by the Chilean Society of Reproductive Medicine, The Chilean Society of Obstetrics and Gynecology, the Chilean Institute of Reproductive Medicine, the Red Latinamerican Society of Assisted Reproduction, the Pan American Health Organisation, WHO and IFFS and attended by up to 160 delegates. The reason for holding the Symposium was that there has been considerable pressure from faith-based organisations to restrict ART services. This followed the example of Costa Rica, which has been the only country in the world to ban all ART.



*Delegates at the Santiago meeting*

The meeting began with a “candlelight” lecture by Prof Ruth Macklin, a philosopher from New York, on “Assisted Reproduction in a pluralistic democracy; ethical and political considerations”. Dr. Florencia Luna, a bioethicist from Buenos Aires, spoke about “The rights to modern, safe and efficient methods for fertility treatments

and inequality in access to ART : the role of society and the medical profession.” A legal perspective was presented by Carlos Peña, Professor of Civil Law at the University of Chile, entitled “The state, sexuality and reproduction”. I presented evidence on “How to involve society, the scientific community and legislators in decision-making in modern reproductive technologies : the British experience with The Human Fertilization and Embryology Authority (HFEA)” and Dr. Sheryl VanderPoel spoke about “Dealing with ethical dilemmas in a multicultural world : the experience of the Special Program for Research and Research Training in Human Reproduction, World Health Organization (WHO/HRP)”. Prof. Thomas d’Hooghe described “How Reproductive Medicine has evolved in the Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium, over the past 20 years.”

The meeting was enlivened by a debate on “The use of third party gametes in establishing families : long-term consequences of anonymity”, between Prof. d’Hooghe and myself, when the audience was invited to vote on maintaining or rejecting anonymity in the use of donated gametes. Interestingly, there was overwhelming support for rejecting anonymity. The final session was a plenary with questions and answers and maintained a lively Saturday morning audience. The Symposium demonstrated that rational thought provided a modern ethical basis for the practice of assisted conception and empowered the audience to press for comprehensive services.

This meeting completed the programme for 2010. For 2011 negotiations are continuing, but programmes are planned for Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia ; Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; Guangzhou, China, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and a centre in Latvia to be decided. Significant support has been obtained from Ferring, IBSA and CasMed for the 2011 programme. In handing over to my successor, Prof. Paul Devroey, I would like to thank all those with whom I have had the pleasure to work, for their major efforts in preparing and undertaking these Workshops. I am sure that the programme will continue to flourish.

## Report of General Assemblies

### Officers’ Reports to the General Assemblies

The officers of the International Federation of Fertility Societies (IFFS) presented their reports on the activities of the Federation. President Basil Tarlatzis outlined the key developments: growth of the program of education workshops in developing countries around the world, production of the 2010 Surveillance, writing practice standards, continuing cooperation with ASRM, ESHRE, FIGO and WHO, self-organization of triennial Congress, a new plan for annual regional meetings and contracting a public relations consultant who was engaged to improve public awareness. Treasurer Joe Leigh Simpson and Audit

Chair Steven Ory reported that the finances of the Federation are stable.

### Constitution and By-laws Amended

The proposal to update the Constitution and By-laws was passed. The purpose of the revisions was to bring these documents in line with current best practices and to reflect the current organization. The IFFS Constitution and By-laws are posted on the IFFS website: [www.iffs-reproduction.org](http://www.iffs-reproduction.org).

## New Member Society

The membership of the Fertility and Sterility Society of Bangladesh was ratified as recommended by the IFFS Board of Directors. Other member applications are currently under consideration.

## Elections

The First General Assembly elected the following societies to membership on the Nominating Committee led by President-Elect David Healy: American Society for Reproductive Medicine, Finnish Gynecological Association, German Society of Reproductive Medicine, and the Japan Society of Reproductive Medicine. The committee presented their recommendations for open officer and committee membership positions to the Second General Assembly where candidates were also accepted from the floor. Election results can be found inside the front cover of this Newsletter. Following the closing ceremony of the Congress, the new officers and committees assumed their roles.

## Future IFFS World Congresses

Secretary General, Richard Kennedy, presented to the First General Assembly the recommendation of the Executive Committee that the 2016 IFFS World Congress be held in India. He described both the process by which the four bids were evaluated, and the site visits to two of the bidding locations, noting that 2016 will be the first congress fully self-organized by IFFS. A vote of the General Assembly ratified the selection of India for the 2016 World Congress.

The planning work for the 2013 IFFS World Congress has begun with the election of the 2013 Scientific Committee chaired by Basil Tarlatzis, Past President following the conclusion of the 2010 World Congress. The 2013 congress will be held conjointly with the American Society for Reproductive Medicine in Boston, USA.

IFFS will also begin to organize smaller regional meetings in those years when there is no IFFS World Congress. The purpose is to offer programs focused on topics of local interest and to maintain the momentum generated by the World Congress. More information will be available on the IFFS website.



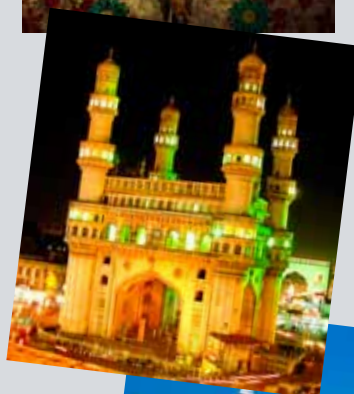
## India wins the bid to host IFFS 2016

The Local Organizing Committee of IFFS 2016 under the leadership of Dr Dhiraj Gada, along with all the members of Indian Society of Assisted Reproduction and Indian Fertility Society are extremely grateful to the General Assembly of IFFS for allotting the 2016 IFFS Congress to India. It was a difficult path with strong contention from Australia, Singapore and Japan, but in the end, the General Assembly awarded the Congress to India converting the dreams of the entire bidding team and the nation into reality. The fact that the Congress had never been held in South Asia and the world renowned Indian hospitality played an extremely important role in the final decision making process as declared by the Secretary General Prof Richard Kennedy in the IFFS General Assembly held recently in Munich.

The LOC for IFFS 2016 has resolved that the grant received from the revenue generated will be used toward the establishment of an educational institution. The objectives of this Institute will fulfill the core aims of both IFFS and the host society which will be:

- Post Graduate training in Reproductive Medicine and Embryology.
- To operate a state of art Genetic Laboratory for providing facilities of genetic testing and research with post graduate courses in genetics.
- To promote research in field of contraception, and reproductive medicine for providing better healthcare facilities for women.

It has been stated in the past that "It is sad fact of life in reproductive medicine that rewards of this high profile application of science has been largely confined to the developed world". Others have raised hopes by mentioning that "It is a difficult task but we have to start somewhere so this is what we are doing." This is very clearly understood by the LOC, as stated by Dr Dhiraj Gada, "We are committed to 'start from somewhere' and to do that 'something' for India and all other developing countries.





# History of the International Federation of Fertility Societies

**Roger D. Kempers, MD**

Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Emeritus  
Mayo Clinic School of Medicine

# #7

## Transition from IFA to IFFS

The VI World Congress of IFA was held May 20-27, 1968 in Tel Aviv, Israel. Two presidents lead the congress. Axel Ingelman-Sundberg, Stockholm, Sweden who was to be the last IFA President and H. De Watteville, Geneva, Switzerland who was elected as the first President of IFFS. The transition of IFA to IFFS went into effect during this congress. The federation thereafter was composed of the national fertility societies while the IFA remained as the largest member of IFFS made up of individual dues paying members who belonged to countries without national societies. Isaac Halbrecht was the host congress president. The congress was dedicated to the memory of Bernard Zonek who was to be honored but who had died before the congress.

The IFA flag which had been traditionally passed to the incoming president was burned during a colorful ceremony and H. De Watteville christened the newly formed IFFS. A new Presidential Medal was created. On one side was the logo of the IFFS and on the other were to be engraved the names of subsequent presidents. The IFA somehow continued to exist. As late as 1977, nine years later, at the IX World Congress of IFFS, Ingelman-Sundberg who then was still President of IFA and also Treasurer of IFFS was having animated discussions with De Watteville over the relationship of the two societies. There is little recorded of the IFA thereafter and it appears to have gradually become inactive as individual members stopped paying their dues.

The VII World Congress of IFFS chaired by the President H. DeWatteville, Geneva, Switzerland was held Oc-



tober 17-25, 1971. This was a two city event held in Tokyo and Osaka, Japan. Three professors were host co-presidents of the congress. Of these both T. Hasegawa and S. Sakamoto would a few years later be awarded Honorary Membership. Sakamoto later also went on to become president of IFFS. The Executive Committee meeting was very large with an archival photograph showing no less than 40 people seated around a large quadrangle table. The social events were lavish with Geisha girls in attendance. The highlight of the excellent scientific program was a highly acclaimed presentation "In Vitro Fertilization" by P. Streptoe and R.G. Edwards reporting on the world first IVF pregnancy.

### International Calendar

**27<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of ESHRE**  
July 3-6, 2011  
Stockholm, Sweden  
[www.eshre.com](http://www.eshre.com)

**67<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the ASRM**  
October 15-19, 2011  
Orlando, Florida, USA  
[www.asrm.org](http://www.asrm.org)

**28<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of ESHRE**  
July 1-4, 2012  
Istanbul, Turkey  
[www.eshre.eu](http://www.eshre.eu)

# Join us in Boston!

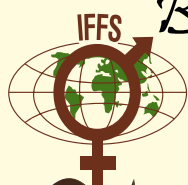
## October 12-17, 2013



# IFFS/ASRM

*A Conjoint Meeting of the  
International Federation of Fertility Societies and  
the American Society for Reproductive Medicine*

## *Boston, Massachusetts, USA, 2013*



*Photographs courtesy of the Greater Boston Convention & Visitors Bureau.*



### Contact Information for IFFS Secretariat



International Federation of Fertility Societies

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