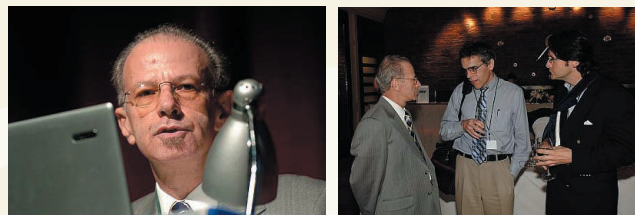




FROM THE PRESIDENT

Retirement of José Bertolote

March 31 marked the retirement of Dr. José Bertolote, a passionate friend and supporter of suicide prevention, after an impressive career of devoted work in the Mental Health Division of the World Health Organization.



Dr Bertolote lecturing and working at the XXIVth IASP Congress in Killarney, Ireland in September 2007

Although José is a very young age 60, WHO rules require retirement at that age. One of the first things José did on his retirement was apply for membership in IASP (this was not permitted when he worked at WHO). Below is an extract from the letter we sent for inclusion in the Livre d'Or that was presented to José upon his retirement:

The International Association for Suicide Prevention wishes to express all its gratitude for your majestic role in advancing suicide prevention worldwide. All IASP members are well aware that your contribution to the fight against suicide was not merely based on your WHO officer's responsibilities, but your personal dedication to support and help countries around the world develop their own suicide prevention agendas. It would be difficult to enumerate the numerous events, conferences and congresses around the globe that have been blessed by your openings. Those acts not only provided a tangible proof of WHO's interest, but also gave weight and credibility to the meetings through the added value of your competence and guidance.

Needless to say, your SUPRE (SUicide PREvention) campaign has been of paramount importance in representing the depth of the commitment of WHO to the field of suicide prevention. Of utmost significance was your role in making suicide prevention a top priority for WHO. Your SUPRE initiative was accompanied by a number of publications coordinated by you (via WHO) in a number of domains of great relevance in suicide prevention: from prevention in special environments such as schools and prisons to media guidelines and General Practitioners' involvement, and many more. But SUPRE also resulted in extensive scientific cooperation, the SUPRE-MISS study, which brought together scientists from five continents, including countries such as Iran and Viet Nam, where it was their first venture in collaborative suicide research and prevention.

Your influence is also perennially attached to a very meaningful and extremely successful enterprise, this time jointly realized by IASP and WHO: World Suicide Prevention Day. Since 2003, on the 10th September of every year, this event continues to attract an impressive number of countries (last year, more than 70 countries celebrated World Suicide Prevention Day). It is wonderful to see people from all over the world working together with the common goal of reducing suicide. More recently, under your leadership, WHO and IASP developed a collaboration in an innovative initiative to develop pilot programmes to prevent pesticide suicides. Throughout the years your devotion and involvement world-wide as a champion of suicide prevention has resulted in the development of local and national initiatives that have saved a great many lives. Many of the recent achievements in understanding and preventing suicide around the world could not have been possible without your support and inspiration.

On behalf of IASP, its member organizations around the world, and personally, dear José, THANK YOU so much!!! We are looking forward to your continued achievements in suicide prevention, but now as a member of IASP. We are all proud to be associated with you.

Brian L. Mishara, Ph.D.
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IASP NEWS

Changes to the IASP Board

New Chair of the Council of Organisational Representatives Dr Jerry Reed, Director of Span USA has been elected to the IASP Board as Chairperson of the Council of Organisational Representatives. Dr Reed plans to contact all organisations which belong to IASP to solicit information about what the representatives require from IASP, and in particular, to ask the representatives to advise what they would like at the IASP Congress in Montevideo in 2009. Dr Reed may be contacted at jreed330@comcast.net

Resignation

Professor Mark Williams has resigned from the IASP Board for personal reasons. Under the current IASP Constitution, when a Board member resigns in mid-term there is no provision for a replacement to be elected or appointed, unless there are at least three vacancies. The IASP Board will be proposing to the members possible changes to the constitution to provide for a replacement. The proposal will be sent to all members and placed on the agenda at the next Annual General Meeting in Montevideo in 2009

World Suicide Prevention Day 10th September 2008

The theme for World Suicide Prevention Day 2008 is "Think Globally. Plan Nationally. Act Locally". This phrase, first used by the movement to save the environment, can equally well be applied to suicide prevention:

- to develop global awareness of suicide as a major preventable cause of premature death,
- to describe the political leadership and policy frameworks for suicide prevention provided by national suicide prevention strategies,
- and to highlight the many practical prevention programmes that translate policy statements and research outcomes into activities at local, community levels.

A detailed information brochure for WSPD 2008 will be available in April on the IASP web site: www.iasp.info

New IASP website

A new, updated and expanded IASP web site will be appearing in the coming months, at the address: www.iasp.info

The site will first put online in English, to be followed by a French site, with Spanish to follow later.

Bridgend suicide cluster

In recent weeks discussion of suicide in the United Kingdom has been dominated by the Bridgend suicide cluster. On the 7th February 2008, Madeleine Moon MP secured a debate on suicide prevention strategies in the UK Parliament following the worrying increase in suicides in the Welsh town of Bridgend and wider county. Seventeen young people are thought to have ended their lives in the past year.

She highlighted that "the suicide rate for young males in Wales is nearly 35% higher than that compared to England, and there were 40 deaths in Bridgend since 2006 with open verdicts." These recent deaths have raised a number of issues, including the limited evidence for effective youth suicide prevention initiatives and the role of the media in the development of suicide clusters.

Indeed, the overwhelming local, national and international media coverage led to calls from those bereaved as well as from professionals for the media to exercise restraint (including a complaint to the Press Complaints Commission) and calls for the media to adhere to the published guidelines on the reporting of suicide.

A comprehensive local suicide prevention strategy for Bridgend has now been developed and the Welsh Assembly's Health Minister has accelerated the development of a national suicide prevention strategy (following Choose Life, Scotland's national strategy) which should be published in a matter of months.

Rory O'Connor
 IASP National Representative – United Kingdom
 "Rory O'Connor" roryciaranoconnor@stir.ac.uk





National suicide prevention activities: ITALY

In Italy I have organised a number of major events for suicide prevention in my role of IASP National representative. The first World Suicide Prevention Day was launched in Italy in 2005. This included a symposium held in Rome in September with the motto "Suicide prevention is everybody's business". This event was accompanied by interviews released to the media and publications and editorials in news-papers and national and international journals.

Other events were organized in central Italy. These activities included symposia to educate mental health professionals, social workers and crisis center personnel. An important breakthrough to develop a national strategy to study and prevent suicide was the establishment of a partnership with the Italian Health Institute which is the official institution for the supervision of health programs in Italy. Joint efforts were continued with an official national congress in Rome in May 2006 where a symposium was dedicated to suicide prevention (chaired by

Prof. Tatarelli). During the summer 2006 a number of events were organized to provide information to psychologists, physicians, residents and mental health professionals working in the Roma area. In September 2006 we celebrated World Suicide Prevention Day as well as the National Suicide Prevention Week 2006 with conferences and symposia. I also organized events for Italy for World Mental Health Day 2006 (October 10th) dedicated to suicide prevention.

Seminars for undergraduates at the II Medical School of Sapienza University of Rome focused on early intervention and stigmatization of suicide. In February 2007 we hosted a conference in Rome on why people commit suicide. This included David Lester's presentation on Katie's diary and discussion of research priorities in suicidology. I organized a workshop on psychological pain in suicides and survivors at the 15th Congress of the Association of European Psychiatrists (March 2007). I conducted, with colleagues, the first Italian validation study of the Beck Hopelessness Scale. We also focussed on increasing understanding of suicide in military personnel and police officers. Events to educate and

promote awareness were organized in various locations, and were very much appreciated by crisis centers, self-help groups and agencies that provide support to the mentally ill and to survivors of suicide.

Due to the increasing awareness of suicide prevention, stimulated by all of these recent activities, the Ministry of Health will develop suicide prevention guidelines which will be distributed in all health environments, and as IASP national representative I have been invited to contribute to these.

Maurizio Pompili, M.D.
IASP National Representative - Italy
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SYMPOSIUM AND CONFERENCES



12th European Symposium on Suicide and Suicidal Behaviour
27th - 30th August 2008
Glasgow - Scotland

The 2nd Announcement is now available at <http://www.hamptonmedical.com/pdf/2008/esssb12/announcement.pdf>
Registration is now open and closing date for submission of abstracts is 3rd March 2008

The 41st American Association of Suicidology (AAS) Conference 16 - 19 April 2008
Boston Park Plaza, Boston

www.suicidology.org/displaycommon.cfm?an=19%20



2008 Conference
Jointly presented by the **Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention and Association Québécoise de prévention du suicide**
Quebec City, October 2008

For more information, please check: www.aqps.info



3RD ASIA PACIFIC REGIONAL CONFERENCE OF SUICIDE PREVENTION

Suicide research and prevention in times of rapid change in the Asia Pacific Region: Opportunities and challenges

31 October - 3 November 2008, Hong Kong

For submission of abstracts, registration details and programme overview see the website <http://csr.p.hku.hk/iasp2008>.

The conference is organized by the International Association for Suicide Prevention and the HKJC Centre for Suicide Research and Prevention, Faculty of Social Sciences, the University of Hong Kong.

Important Dates

- Deadline for Abstract/Poster Submission April 30, 2008
- Notification of Results June 30, 2008
- Deadline for Early Bird Registration July 15, 2008
- Deadline for Normal Registration Sep 30, 2008

