Feedback from the IRPA Regional Congresses 2018

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IRPA President
International Radiation Protection Association (IRPA)

The international professional association for RP practitioners

• 52 Associate Societies
  - Representing 67 countries
  - Over 18,000 individual members

Enormous resources of practical knowledge and experience in radiation protection: scientists, operators, regulators, medical practitioners, government advisers etc

Covering a multicultural background, and large and small societies
IRPA provides a medium for communication and advancement of radiation protection throughout the world.

We encompass the full spectrum of national experiences, from large developed countries through to practitioners working in small developing nations.
IRPA Strategic Priorities

- To promote our role as the international voice of the RP profession
- To support the needs of the Associate Societies by developing, enhancing and sharing good practice and high standards of professionalism.
- To support the education and training of RP professionals
IRPA Congresses

IRPA’s four year cycle 2016 – 2020

International Congresses:
- Cape Town 2016
- Seoul 2020

Regional Congresses 2018
- Latin America
- Asia/Oceania
- Europe
- Africa
IRPA Congresses

• Share scientific knowledge, experiences and good practice

• Provide a platform for interaction with key international organisations and associations

• Education and training for professionals
  – Eg Refresher Courses

• Support the ‘Future of our Profession’
  – Young persons prize competition, networking etc

• Associate Society Forum – meeting to discuss RP society issues
Latin American Regional Congress

- Havana, Cuba, 16-20 April
- Hosted by RP Section of the Cuban Physics Society
- Theme ‘Safety Culture – a Shared Responsibility’
- ~ 500 delegates, including over 200 from 21 countries outside Cuba
Asia/Oceania Regional Congress

- Melbourne, Australia, 20-23 May
- Hosted by the Australasian Radiation Protection Society
- Theme ‘Evolving Standards, Risk Perception and Opportunities’
- Over 300 delegates, including Japan, China, Korea, Malaysia and India
European Regional Congress

The Hague, Netherlands, 4-8 June
Hosted by the Dutch Society for Radiation Protection
Theme ‘Sustainability in Radiation Protection’
Over 600 delegates from many countries
African Regional Congress

Tunis, Tunisia, 6-9 September
Hosted by the Tunisian Association of Radiation Protection against Ionizing and Non Ionizing Radiations (ATPRI&NI)
Theme 'Towards Sustainability in Radiation Protection'
Over 200 delegates from around 25 African countries
Thanks

IRPA acknowledges the key support from IAEA and WHO/PAHO in making these congresses a success

- Support for the scientific programme
- Support for delegate attendance
Regional Congresses Overview

Attended by over 1,600 practitioners around the world

• All fields – medical, nuclear, academia, regulatory etc
• Big and small, developed and lesser developed countries, Including those who currently have no RP Society

Five Key Themes emerged

- concerns over the future of the profession
- the importance of developing and embedding a good RP culture
- greater emphasis on ‘practical protection’
- importance of cooperation across borders
- public understanding of radiation is a key concern
Concerns over the future of the profession

Where is the next generation of RP professionals coming from, and how do we transfer our knowledge and gain competence?

• A variable picture across the continents and sectors, but a common concern
  – The nuclear sector is a particular challenge in some countries

• Needs positive programmes to link with universities, to mentor and encourage young professionals and provide exciting career pathways
  – as well as knowledge transfer programmes

• Special encouragement/support for females
IRPA and ‘the future of our profession’

Young Professionals and Scientists Prize Competition at every congress

- Encourage each national society to support its candidate
- Note - three of the four competitions were won by young ladies!

Yvonne Romero (Cuba)  Ruth Njantang Nana (Ghana)  Aqeel Akba (Australia)  Nadia Benabdallah (France)
Launch of the IRPA Young Generation Network on each continent at each Regional Congress

- Formal presentations and networking events

**Our Mission**

Our mission is:

“To encourage, inspire and develop the next generation of radiation protection professionals across the world and promote the communication and collaboration of our members”
Developing and embedding a good RP culture

- This was the key theme in Havana, and was reflected at every other congress.
- Best to use the term ‘Radiation Safety Culture’ so it aligns with wider safety culture – radiation is just one of many workplace hazards.
- Growing awareness that culture is key to performance.
- IRPA Guidance at top tier level – and currently drafting specific guidance for the healthcare sector (jointly with IAEA, WHO and IOMP).
Emphasis on practical aspects of protection

Wide recognition of the need for more emphasis on ‘practical protection’, especially when exposures are low.

• ‘Reasonable ‘ in ALARA
• Effective use of the Graded Approach
• Balancing prudence and beneficence : beware over-conservatism

Proportionate decision making at low doses
Cooperation across borders

Working together at many different levels is an essential part of RP

- Sharing experiences, developing common solutions
- Sharing learning opportunities, equipment and facilities

This experience is important everywhere, but is particularly important in Africa and Latin America – professional experience and competence is spread quite thinly
Cooperation across borders – many forms

• Regional assistance and training programmes, eg IAEA and WHO/PAHO
• Formal regional programmes: eg EC (including research platforms)
• Regional regulatory networks eg HERCA, FORO + new African network
• Regional RP society networks
  – Plus new IRPA Young Generation Network, Regional Congresses etc
• ALARA Networks, Image Gently, Afrosafe etc

All these contributions add significantly to competency and effectiveness of both individuals and wider national RP programmes
Public understanding of radiation and risk

Every congress/conference/meeting concludes that we must do more on public understanding!

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Good materials are emerging

Booklets, web-based material

IRPA is sharing good practice across our societies

Eg Schools programmes, Ask the Expert Q&As, etc
IRPA and communication

But as individuals in our profession we are nervous about communicating

We know about radiation, but not so much about communication
But as individuals in our profession we are nervous about communicating.

We know about radiation, but not so much about communication.

**IRPA Task Group:**
The development of the IRPA guiding principles for communicating and stakeholder engagement with the public.

Guidance for RP societies and individual professionals on the art and social science of effective risk communication.
Additional issue – Bonn Call for Action

Current status and key issues: conclusions from the Melbourne Congress session:

• Continue to focus on effective radiation safety culture in healthcare: with greater emphasis on results-oriented activities

• Continue enhancing awareness raising, education and training of health professionals and all other stakeholders

• A closer co-operation between radiation regulatory authorities, health authorities, academia, professional societies and patients is needed
Additional issue – Bonn Call for Action (2)

• Speed of technological development is faster than development of radiation protection solutions: therefore there is a need to have built-in safety in the new equipment design.

• Enhancing justification of diagnostic procedures, especially in pediatrics, should continue being addressed, with an increasing emphasis on personalized medicine & focus on individual radiosensitivity,

• New challenges of high dose patients, exposed to multiple and combined procedures, especially in fluoroscopy-guided interventions and CT scans
Additional issue – Bonn Call for Action (3)

• Most efforts have been focused on advocacy and development of tools, and there has not yet been a visible and measurable significant impact at the operational level in healthcare facilities: Now we must ensure that the benefits are delivered to front line activities. This should be a point of focus for the coming period.

• There is little systematic and objective measurement of progress: attention should be given to developing performance indicators to help ensure that real progress is being made, both at the higher enabling policy level and at the end user facility operation level.
Additional issue – Bonn Call for Action (4)

• Recognition that it would be beneficial to bring the patient perspective somewhat more central and properly integrated into the overall programme in order to help focus the implementation activities.
Next Regional Congresses 2022

Latin America: Santiago, Chile
Asia/Oceania: Mumbai, India
European: Budapest, Hungary
African: Accra, Ghana

North America???
IRPA15

15th International Congress of the International Radiation Protection Association

11 – 15 May 2020 | COEX, Seoul, Korea