

MBC NEWS

NATIONAL BURNS WEEK



Group picture

The Mediterranean Council for Burns and Fire Disasters (MBC) was invited to participate in the National Burns Week (NBW) organized by the Emirates Medical Association – Plastic Surgery Society in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Interior from October 28 till November 4, 2007 in Dubai. This event was the first of its kind in the United Arab Emirates and the region. The credit for its organization surely goes to the dedication, insight, and enthusiasm of Dr Ali Al-Numairy, President of the Plastic Surgery Society, who pledged to make the NBW a yearly activity.

This event was granted the high patronage of H.H. Sheikh Hamdan Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, deputy Ruler of Dubai, Minister of Finance and Industry, President of Dubai Health Authority. The NBW was planned to provide comprehensive information and education targeting the many aspects of burn care to both health care professionals and community members alike. Activities of this week were designed to provide an opportunity for burn, fire, and life-safety educators, the public, industries, and major companies to unite in sharing common burn awareness and spread a prevention message to the community. In addition to scientific sessions held on the first three days, a National Campaign was organized to spread information and distribute educational materials (booklets, flyers, posters) related to burn awareness to students, parents, social associations, medical centers, companies, etc. A press conference was held and closing recommendations were announced. Several press and television interviews were conducted with guest speakers and participants, further spreading the overall impact of this burn education and prevention campaign.



Dr Ali Al-Numairy with Dr Bishara Atiyeh

MBC was represented by B. Atiyeh, MD, MBC General Secretary, and was actively involved in the high-level scientific sessions reaffirming its strong support to this important educational and prevention campaign. It was agreed that the participation of MBC in next year's NBW will be more substantial and probably a formal Burn Instructional Course might be integrated within the activities of this week. All the MBC structures – website, journal, and Burnet – will be dedicated to support this event and announce it to the professional Burn Health Care Community at large.

Beirut, November 21, 2007

**Prepared by B. Atiyeh, MD, FACS,
MBC General Secretary**

OBITUARY

Prof. Dr Rudy P. Hermans, M.D., 1926-2008

Rudy Hermans was a Dutch general surgeon and urologist. In the early sixties, his hospital, the Rode Kruis Ziekenhuis (Red Cross Hospital) in Beverwijk, regularly received patients with major burns from the nearby steel works. Within the hospital and in the Netherlands, no burn centres were available and Rudy wanted to change this: thus, he started to travel to learn about burn care and to broaden his experience and knowledge. He visited many established centres in the world and, while being taught about burn care, made a great deal of friends in the meantime.

He combined his own learning trips with lobbying for the establishment of a burn centre, and in 1974 the first burn centre in the Netherlands was opened in Beverwijk. It was soon followed by two more centres and Rudy played a major role in the establishment of these centres as well.

In 1971 the Dutch Burn Foundation was started, and he was one of the major drivers of this, soon to be famous, foundation. Rudy was also instrumental in the development of the Dutch Skin Bank, now the Euro Skin Bank, which has built a major reputation for itself through the development of glycerolised cadaver skin, used for the treatment of partial-thickness burns as well as in the sandwich technique, of which Rudy was a major proponent. The Beverwijk burn centre and the Euro Skin Bank became highly rated institutions and received many international visitors.

After the Dutch Burn Association, the European Burn Association followed, and, again, Rudy was one of the main initiators. For his work, the EBA honoured him by instituting the

“Rudy Hermans Lecture”.

Not only the technical aspects of burn care had his interest: his bedside manner and general care of the patients' well-being were highly rated, as were his general surgery skills.

Rudy retired at the age of 65 but remained active in the burn community long afterwards.

He was entrepreneurial and very dexterous: as a teenager he had a small factory where he built miniature airplanes out of balsa wood, and together with his family he built a very comfortable second house out of a barn in his beloved rural France. He enjoyed the good things in life but preferred a glass of wine at home with friends and colleagues to serious dinners.

For his work and dedication he received many awards, including two Dutch knighthoods, the Everett Idris Evans Award (1983), the G. Whitaker International Burns Prize (1994), and an Award of the International Red Cross.

Rudy passed away on January 8th, 2008. He had been suffering from vascular dementia for a while, but his death was still unexpected: he broke his hip after a fall, developed a major post-op gastric bleeding which could not be stopped via a gastroscopy, and died from irreversible shock.

He leaves his wife and three sons behind.

His good sense of humour, generosity, and friendship will be dearly missed.

The Editors

G. WHITAKER INTERNATIONAL BURNS PRIZE-PALERMO (Italy) Under the patronage of the Authorities of the Sicilian Region for 2009

By law n. 57 of June 14th 1983 the Sicilian Regional Assembly authorized the President of the Region to grant the Giuseppe Whitaker Foundation, a non profit-making organization under the patronage of the Accademia dei Lincei with seat in Palermo, a contribution for the establishment of the annual G. Whitaker International Burns Prize aimed at recognizing the activity of the most qualified experts from all countries in the field of burns pathology and treatment.

Law n. 23 of December 2002 establishes that the prize becomes biannual.

The next prize will be awarded in 2009 in Palermo at the seat of the G. Whitaker Foundation.

The amount of the prize is fixed at Euro 20,660.00.

The Adjudicating Committee is composed of the President of the Foundation, the President of the Sicilian Region, the Representative of the National Lincei Academy within the G. Whitaker Foundation, the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and Surgery of Palermo University or his nominee, a Representative of the Italian Society of Plastic Surgery, three experts in the field of prevention, pathology, therapy and functional recovery of burns, the winner of the prize awarded in the previous year, and a legal expert nominated in agreement with the President of the Region as a guarantee of the respect for the scientific purpose which the legislators intended to achieve when establishing the prize.

Anyone who considers himself to be qualified to compete for the award may send by **January 31st 2009** his detailed curriculum vitae to: Michele Masellis M.D., Secretary-Member of the Scientific Committee, G. Whitaker Foundation, Via Dante 167, 90141 Palermo, Italy.