

THE HISTORY OF ESTABLISHMENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF MEDICAL PHYSICS

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Abstract:

In connection with the first 10 global celebrations of the International Day of Medical Physics (IDMP), the article lists the events, which triggered the creation of the IDMP by the International Organization for Medical Physics (IOMP). The processes and people associated with the establishment of the IDMP on 7 November – the birthday of Maria Skłodowska-Curie, as well as the following establishment of the IDMP Award of the IOMP are also presented.

Keywords: Medical Physics, International Day of Medical Physics, IDMP, IOMP

I. Introduction

The International Day of Medical Physics (IDMP) was triggered by the announcement in 2011 of the recognition of the professional occupations of *medical physicists* and *biomedical engineer*. This great success for the profession was of huge importance for the colleagues from Low and Middle Income (LMI) countries, where the professions were not included in the registries of the respective Ministry of Labour and the colleagues were employed under various titles not directly linked with the profession.

The International Union of Physical and Engineering Sciences in Medicine (IUPESM – the Union between IOMP and IFMBE) started discussions with the International Labour Organisation (ILO) immediately after its achievement of becoming full member in 1999 of the International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU, now ICS), thus including medical physics and biomedical engineering as separate scientific fields [1].

The discussions with ILO aimed inclusion of the professional occupations medical physicist and biomedical engineer in the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO), each with its unique code – and ID for each profession respected by all Ministries of Labour. These negotiations took many years and included several officers of IUPESM, most active were Azam Niroomand-Rad, Fridtjof Nuesslin, Peter Smith and Slavik Tabakov. Finally in 2011 it was announced that ILO has included ISCO-08 the professional occupation medical physicist under category 2111 and biomedical engineer under 2149 [2, 3].

IOMP was seeking ideas how to celebrate this great achievement. The idea came in 2012 from the Latin American Association of Medical Physics (ALFIM). A colleague from Venezuela Mr Julio Pinuela proposed to the then President of ALFIM Dr Simone Kodlulovich Renha the idea to have a professional day (as various other professions have). Dr Renha discussed this with the then IOMP President Dr Fridtjof Nuesslin, who fully supported it and proposed it to the ExCom of the International Organisation of Medical Physics (IOMP) during the spring of 2011. The idea of a professional day was immediately supported by all members of the IOMP Executive Committee (ExCom).

II. The selection of the IDMP Date and professional patron

The initial ideas about the date of the IDMP included the end of August (related to the important meeting in Montreal on 26 August 1962, when an International Steering Committee decided to form IOMP from 1 January 1963). However a date in August was seen as unpractical as many colleagues are on vacation at that time.

At the IOMP ExCom meeting on 26 May 2012 (at the World Congress in Beijing), a new date emerged – 8 November (related to the discovery of X-ray by W K Roentgen). It was decided the first IDMP celebration to be in 2013 to additionally celebrate the 50th Anniversary of IOMP.

However, several months after this it appeared that by coincidence at the same time the European Society of Radiology (ESR), the Radiological Society of North America (RSNA), and the American College of Radiology

(ACR) are discussing the establishment of the International Day of Radiology (IDoR) exactly on 8 November (it was first celebrated on 8 November 2012 and continues to this day) [4]. These discussions were related to the already celebrated by ESR European Day of Radiology on 10 February 2011 (the first and only such celebration, commemorating Roentgen's death). It also appeared that 8 November is already celebrated by the International Society of Radiographers and Radiological Technologists (ISRRT) from 2007 as World Radiography Day [5]. Thus, IOMP had to look for another suitable date for the IDMP.

At the IOMP ExCom meeting on 19 July 2012 the new ETC Chair Dr John Damilakis was charged with the organisations and coordination of the first IDMPs. The new idea for the date of the IDMP came on 19 October 2012 at the VIth European Conference of Medical Physics in Sofia, Bulgaria. This event was attended by a group of several IOMP officers – Slavik Tabakov (Vice-President), Madan Rehani (Secretary General), John Damilakis (ETC Chair) and Virginia Tsapaki (MPWB Chair). Dr John Damilakis proposed to the group several alternative dates, associated with the pioneers of radiation, and all immediately assembled around one of these - 7 November – commemorating the birthday of Maria Skłodowska-Curie (7 November 1867). The group decided to propose to IOMP ExCom and to firmly support 7 November as the date for International Day of Medical Physics.

This date has several advantages, among them:

- It was next to the International Day of Radiology, thus allowing in various places medical physicists to celebrate together with their closest medical colleagues – specialist in radiography, radiology and medical imaging;
- It was introducing an excellent patron for the profession - Maria Skłodowska-Curie, what would also attract more young women in the profession
- It was convenient for colleagues from the North as well as from the South hemisphere.

All members of the IOMP ExCom approved 7 November and a number of actions took place. The IDMP Work Group (John Damilakis, William Hendee, Raymond Wu, Simone Kodlulovich Renha, Fridtjof Nusslin) drafted a plan, which was initiated with the creation of a specific area of the IOMP Web site associated with the IDMP [6], plus Facebook and Twitter pages. The preparation of these was headed by Magdalena Stoeva and they were activated early in 2013. Related to these a new IDMP poster was prepared and it was decided each year to have a new poster and new theme.

The IDMP date was announced to all IOMP Regional Organisations and all accepted it. It was also announced in all IOMP Media and was the main topic of the 20th International Conference on Medical Physics (August 2013) in Brighton, UK, co-organised by IOMP, EFOMP and IPPEM – the host of this big Conference celebrating the IOMP Golden Anniversary.

The first celebration of IDMP on 7 November 2013 was a great success. It included an address of the then IOMP President (then Dr KY Cheung), what became a tradition for the years to come. The colleagues were celebrating in many countries – some with seminars and conferences, other with rallies through their cities and various other ways. The IOMP special web site and eMPW include annually many photos of these celebrations [7]. Dr Simone Kodlulovich Renha from ALFIM even prepared IDMP T-shirts for the celebrations.

With the time more and more colleagues from all over the world celebrate this day, which provides an excellent opportunity for the visibility of medical physics in healthcare and society at large.

Each IDMP is associated with specific theme and poster. Further down are listed the IDMP themes during the first 10 years of IDMP. Fig. 1 presents the posters during the first 10 IDMPs (2013-2022).

IDMP Themes for each of the first 10 IDMPs

IDMP 2013: Radiation exposure from medical procedures, ask the Medical Physicist!

IDMP 2014: Looking into the Body – Advancement in Imaging through Medical Physics

IDMP 2015: Better Medical Physics = Better Cancer Care in Radiation Oncology

IDMP 2016: Education in Medical Physics – the Key to Success

IDMP 2017: Medical Physics: Providing Holistic Approach to Women Patients and Women Staff Safety in Radiation Medicine (IDMP 2017 celebrates the 150th birthday of Maria Skłodowska-Curie)

IDMP 2018: Medical Physics for Patient Benefit

IDMP 2019: IT'S A MEDICAL PHYSICS WORLD! (IDMP 2019 celebrates the 35th anniversary of MPW)

IDMP 2020: Medical Physicist as a Health Professional

IDMP 2021: Communicating the Role of Medical Physicists to the Public

IDMP 2022: Medical Physics for Sustainable Healthcare

The theme of the IDMP 2023 is associated with the IOMP 60th Anniversary:
IOMP's 60th Anniversary: Standing on the Shoulders of Giants



Fig. 1 IDMP Posters in the first 10 years

III. Further activities, associated with the IDMP

A main objective of the IOMP in the period 2015-2018 was further increasing the visibility of the profession. Due to this reason at the IOMP ExCom meeting on 10 June 2015 (at WC2015, Toronto) the then IOMP President Dr Slavik Tabakov and the then IOMP Chair of Awards and Honour Com Dr Simone Kodlulovich Renha proposed a special IDMP Award to be established by IOMP. By the end of the year the documents for this award were prepared and published at the December 2015 issue of eMPW.

The IDMP Award was formed to give recognition to the medical physicist of each IOMP region who has made a significant contribution to promoting Medical Physics, including development of scientific work, improvements in patient care and/or contributions for education and training in medical physics. The IDMP Award was made to be presented on the occasion of the celebration of IDMP to one Medical Physicist from each IOMP Regional Organization (EFOMP, AFOMP, SEAFOMP, MEFOMP, ALFIM, FAMPO and North America), totaling 7 awards per year. The recipients of the Award was planned to be announced on the day before IDMP (6 Nov).

It was decided the first IDMP Awards (for 2015 and 2016) to be presented at the International Medical Physics Conference in Bangkok (9-12 December 2016). Fig.2 shows the first awarding of the IDMP Awards. This

awarding continues since this time. During the first 10 years (2013-2022) 40 colleagues from all IOMP Regional Organisations received the IDMP Award:

2015

Tomas Kron, Australia (AFOMP)
 Julio Pinuela, Venezuela (ALFIM)
 Anchali Krisanachinda, Thailand (SEAFOMP)
 Ibrahim Duhaini, Lebanon (MEFOMP)

2016

Arun Chougule, India (AFOMP)
 Sandra Guzman, Peru (ALFIM)
 Kwan Ng, Malaysia (SEAFOMP)
 Abdalla N. Al-Haj, Saudi Arabia (MEFOMP)

2017

Howell Round, New Zealand (AFOMP)
 Diana Feld, Argentina (ALFIM)
 Huda M. Al-Naemi, Qatar (MEFOMP)
 Virginia Tsapaki, Greece (EFOMP)
 Taofeeq Ige, Nigeria (FAMPO)

2018

Hasin Anupama Azhari, Bangladesh (AFOMP)
 María Ester Brandan, Mexico (ALFIM)
 Jamila Salem Humaid Ali, UAE (MEFOMP)
 Renato Padovani, Italy (EFOMP)
 Caridad Borrás, USA (AAPM)
 Kavuma Awusi, Uganda (FAMPO)

2019

Efi Koutsouveli, Greece (EFOMP)
 Eva Bezak, Australia (AFOMP)
 Jacob van Dyk, Canada (AAPM)
 Hanan Aldousari, Kuwait (MEFOMP)
 Moses Adebayo Aweda, Nigeria (FAMPO)

2020

Tae Suk-Suh, S Korea (AFOMP)
 Carlos E. Almeida, Brazil (ALFIM)
 Oliver Blanck, Germany (EFOMP)
 Christoph Trauernicht, S.Africa (FAMPO)
 Mohammad Hassan Kharita, Qatar (MEFOMP)
 Djarwani S. Soejoko, Indonesia (SEAFOMP)
 Robert Jeraj, USA (AAPM)

2021

Stephen Balter, USA (AAPM)
 Shigekazu Fukuda, Japan (AFOMP)
 Jose Perez Calatayud, Spain (EFOMP)
 Michel Salvator Israel, Bulgaria (EFOMP)
 Francis Hasford, Ghana (FAMPO)
 Mashari Al-nuaimi, KAMP (MEFOMP)

2022

Anchali Krisanachinda, Thailand, (SEAFOMP)
 Rabih Hammoud, QaMPS (MEFOMP)
 Geoffrey S. Ibbott, USA (AAPM)

The IDMP celebrations quickly transferred from the IOMP to the colleagues in the WHO and the IAEA and on 7 November 2017, at the Asia-Oceania Congress of Medical Physics in Jaipur (4-7 November 2017) IAEA made the first global webcast of the IDMP. The IDMP celebration in 2017 was special as it marked the 150th birthday of Maria Skłodowska-Curie. Due to this reason, it was dedicated to women in medical physics. It is interesting, that following the success of the IDMP, our biomedical engineering colleagues started to celebrate globally in October 2016 the Global Clinical Engineering Day (which in fact was set up as such on 21 October 2006).



Fig.2 First presentation of IDMP Awards, Bangkok, 2016

IV. Conclusion

The International Day of Medical Physics provided excellent global visibility of the profession. Additionally it created opportunities for colleagues to meet more often within their societies, as well as with their medical colleagues. The success of the IDMP led to establishing in 2020 of an International Medical Physics Week [8], usually including various online seminars on new medical physics topics.

In several countries IDMP celebrations were associated with open days of medical physics, allowing the professional achievements, new medical equipment and associated methods, to be presented to society at large, medical specialists or university colleagues from other professions.

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