

## EDITORIALS

### **Connecting Our Global Medical Physics Community**

*Perry Sprawls, Co-Editor*

All of us medical physicists generally work in our local hospitals, clinics, and educational institutions. We are members of regional or national medical physics organizations but often separated and isolated from all of the other medical physicists around the world because of great distances and limitations to travel. As a profession, we benefit from being connected so that we can share experiences, especially as we move into the future with the many developments and innovations in both radiation oncology and diagnostic imaging. As these technologies and clinical methods become available and spread around the world there is a critical need for medical physicists with knowledge and experience to support the evolving, and often complex, clinical methods.

The internet and world-wide web (WWW) now provides the foundation for connecting our global community and sharing experiences that can benefit others. The value is in the specific programs that post materials, three examples are considered here.

This journal, Medical Physics International, provides an opportunity for medical physicists in the various countries to share their experience in professional and education program development. It also provides educational resources on many of the advances in clinical methods requiring physics involvement.

The Virtual Library of the American Association of Physicists in Medicine (AAPM) is an extensive source of educational presentations at: <http://aapm.org/education/VL>. It is available to AAPM members and to medical physicists in any of the Developing Countries who register as a Developing Country Education Associate at: <http://aapm.org/international>.

The Windows to the World of Medical Physics at: <http://www.sprawls.org/PhysicsWindows/> is a resource to support medical physics educators in all countries with high-quality visuals to enhance their classroom activities.

As the global medical physics community becomes even more connected through the internet we all benefit by sharing experiences and resources.

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### **2016 – Year dedicated to Medical Physics Education and Training**

*Slavik Tabakov, Co-Editor*

One of the most important aspects for development of any profession is education and training. Many medical physicists take part in various education and training activities, but it is the dissemination of these, what supports the global growth of the profession. With this on mind we initiated in 2013 the new IOMP Journal Medical Physics International, which now surpasses 6000 readers per month. In 2016 IOMP decided to dedicate the International Day of Medical Physics to Education and Training. This coincided with the double growth of the global number of medical physicists in the past 20 years, which is strongly related with the increased number of international education projects and activities and the introduction of e-learning (please see the related paper in this issues of MPI).

To further support the dissemination of education and training activities I proposed to the IOMP ExCom to discuss a new initiative, aiming to increase the educational elements of the International Conference in Medical Physics (ICMP). This new initiative, IOMP School includes educational Symposia and Workshops.

The first IOMP School was launched at the ICMP 2016, in Bangkok. The IOMP School 2016, aims to introduce young medical physicists to the newest developments in the profession. It also includes a Workshop aiming to help colleagues from low-and-middle income countries to build medical physics capacities in their societies and countries. More than 40 educational mini-Symposia were proposed to the ICMP2016 Organisers by colleagues from USA, UK, EFOMP, Japan, Korea, Australis and other AFOMP countries. These formed an educational block covering almost all mornings of the ICMP2016 in Bangkok. The interest to these mini-Symposia from colleagues of Asia is substantial, what is a clear indication of the need of such activity. IOMP plans to carry such IOMP Schools at all future ICMP.