



FROM THE PRESIDENT

IASP focus on Knowledge Transfer, Translation and Application

In developing suicidology research priorities for the future, the Canadian Institutes for Health Research conducted a national survey in 2003 of programme planners and practitioners to ask what research questions on suicide prevention they would like to have answered. They discover that planners and practitioners often asked for research that was already conducted – they simply were not aware of the results. In keeping with contemporary trends, the complexities of what was formerly called, "knowledge transfer," have been recognized and the more "politically correct" term of "knowledge translation" was introduced, recognising that more needs to be done than simply handing knowledge over. Nowadays, "knowledge application," is the terminology in vogue, indicating that simply knowing what to do is not enough; knowledge also needs to be applied in practice.

Suicide prevention is an area where knowledge application and the development of knowledge is facilitated by the close ties between the research and practice communities. Many IASP initiatives concern Knowledge Application. IASP Congresses combine research and applied sessions, and the implications of research findings and clinical insights are often the focus of attention. The IASP Task Forces, including the three new ones described in this Newsletter, are actively involved in developing ways to facilitate the use of research and clinical insights in suicide prevention activities.

The 2006 World Suicide Prevention Day theme, "With Understanding, New Hope," provides an unique opportunity to organize local, regional and national activities in which research and clinical insights can be shared with practitioners and planners. Furthermore, researchers may learn from practitioners how to better orient and understand their work. Understanding implies much more than empirical data and statistical results. Data that do not correspond with clinical and theoretical insights fall upon deaf ears. Furthermore, recent Canadian research on knowledge application in suicide prevention indicates that the usefulness of research knowledge is a poor predictor of whether or not that knowledge is used. Other variables, including having personal contacts with researchers and having practitioners and planners participate in the development research protocols play a crucial role in determining if research knowledge is actually used. It is my hope that, as you begin planning activities for the 2006 World Suicide Prevention Day, you consider holding knowledge application activities on September 10 which involve contact and exchange between the research and practice communities to further their common goal of prevention suicides. Close collaboration between research and practice has been one of the great strengths of IASP and the 2006 World Suicide Prevention Day can provide a great opportunity to affirm and strengthen these relationships.

Brian L. Mishara, Ph.D.
e-mail: mishara.brian@uqam.ca

Looking back at the World Suicide Prevention Day 2005

In what way could a grassroots oriented campaign like the World Suicide Prevention Day be evaluated? Sooner or later we will really need to take a thorough look at this question, but as we are still in the pioneering days of the WSPD initiative, a simpler approach must be adapted. Since the WSPD primarily aims at increasing public awareness of the problem of suicide, one way we could evaluate results would be to look at the mass media impact. A quick search on the Internet for the exact phrase "World Suicide Prevention Day" as of October 2005 gives about 15 000 "hits" posted in 2005. That's quite impressive. Even more impressive is to read the contents of some of these thousands of pages. It is quite awesome to see how many different and creative ways people have made use of this opportunity to promote suicide prevention. And there are so many countries, communities and contexts who have posted information about their activities on the net. And yet, we know that many local events and activities never reach mass media such as the internet. Nevertheless, these grassroots events are probably the most important of all the different ways the WSPD could be promoted, because they could have the capacity to challenge each of us the most.



The 2005 WSPD motto "Prevention of suicide is everybody's business" represents a challenge to us all. But when the Day was launched simultaneously at press events in Cairo, Durban and Oslo we felt that it was a timely challenge and a call for action that was well received. I will never forget how the federal minister of health of South Africa, the honourable Manto Tsabalala-Msimang, made the IASP WSPD message her own during her opening speech at the XXIII IASP world congress in Durban a couple of days after the WSPD launch. The message was taken. The future will show if it leads to action. We should not underestimate the potential long-term political effects of the World Suicide Prevention Day initiative. In many countries time is now ripe to make new and strategic approaches to suicide prevention and the WSPD may be a useful societal catalyst to put this matter higher up on the political agenda.

I know that the new board of IASP is already making preparations for the WSPD 2006. In this process any input from our individual and organizational members and national representatives will be highly welcomed. There is still a possibility to post your WSPD 2005 at the IASP website (www.iasp.info) where you can also find a lot of inspirational reports from all over the world.

Lars Mehlum M.D.,
Past President of IASP

New Task Forces on Suicide in Prisons, Suicide in the Elderly and Suicide and the Media

The IASP Board has recently established three new IASP Task Forces. The first, **Task Force on Suicide in Prisons**, will be chaired by **Marc Daigle** (marc.daigle@uqtr.ca). The mandate of the prisons task force is to bring together the available knowledge and expertise on suicidal behaviour in prisons in order to facilitate the widest dissemination of the fundamentals of suicide prevention in prisons. The task force will be involved in collecting "grey literature" on suicide in prisons (reports, government publications) and disseminating this information. They will create a bank of official strategies on suicide prevention in prisons which will be available on the IASP Website, including available screening instruments specific to inmate populations. They are also interested in preparing an international grant application to test these instruments and will be preparing a one day symposium or workshop to be presented at the next IASP Congress in 2007 in Ireland. They are also interested in working on updating the WHO (2000) guide "Presenting Suicide: A Resource for Prison Officers."

The IASP **Task Force on Suicide and the Elderly** will work to identify and report on prevention projects that focus on the elderly. Its goal is to increase IASP involvement in elderly suicide prevention and to increase awareness and understanding about suicide in the elderly. They plan to critically evaluate prevention programmes which have the elder population as a main target group,

identify the limits and strengths of these projects as well as organizing symposia on suicide in older adults at IASP Congresses. In addition, they will develop a specific section on suicide in the elderly on the IASP Website. IASP members who are interested in this Task Force should contact **Sylvie Lapierre** (Sylvie.Lapierre@uqtr.ca) or **Annette Erlangsen** (aer@ncrr.dk).

The third new IASP Task Force is the **Task Force on Suicide and the Media**. Their goal is to improve linkages between suicide experts and media professionals. They intend to systematically review research about suicide in the media, including evaluations of media guidelines, to identify gaps in the knowledge, to develop a research agenda to address these gaps and to encourage relevant research. They plan to work collaboratively with media professionals to develop recommendations for developing and implementing media guidelines and for promoting media guidelines to journalists, editors and other stakeholders. They plan to develop a "virtual network" of individuals and organisations with an interest in suicide in the media and act as a clearing house for international guidelines on suicide and the media. Besides organizing symposia on suicide and the media at IASP Congresses, they will develop a section on suicide and the media on the IASP Website and develop a bank of experts to act as an internationally recognized IASP-backed spokesperson on issues relating to suicide and the media. The main contact person for this Task Force, which will involve

several collaborating organizations and IASP members who are experts in the field, is **Jane Pirkis** of the University of Melbourne in Australia (j.pirkis@unimelb.edu.au).

"With Understanding, New Hope": World Suicide Prevention Day 2006

The theme of the 4th Annual World Annual Suicide Prevention Day to be held on September 10th 2006 is: **"With Understanding, New Hope."** This theme emphasizes the importance of translating knowledge generated from suicide research and clinical expertise into practice. In the coming months we will be developing material to help organizations throughout the world prepare activities for WSPD 2006. Examples of activities held around the world in 2005 can be found on the IASP Website (www.iasp.info). **This year the WSPD activities will be coordinated by the IASP first vice-president (Annette.beautrais@chmeds.ac.nz) and the IASP President Brian Mishara (mishara.brian@uqam.ca).**

Second International Asia-Pacific International Association of Suicide prevention (IASP) Congress Singapore 10-12 March, 2006

The Second Asia Pacific Suicide Prevention Conference aims to understand the complex topic: "Suicide Prevention - Myth or Reality".

Professor Mishara Brian from Canada, the President of IASP, together with several other invited international speakers will be giving updates on global suicide patterns. They will also introduce best practices in suicide prevention and national suicide prevention policies. Regional and local speakers will further explore suicide related to their own countries and cultures. There will be at least 8 main plenary speeches by our distinguished experts, 5 large symposiums and 28 parallel sessions to cover a wide variety of topics related to suicide - including the philosophy, psychology and societal aspects of suicide; media and internet - related issues; hospital and community-based interventions and numerous other areas. We wish to bring together people from all areas of work who may care for or be in contact with at risk people, with a common goal of suicide prevention. For further information visit <http://www.suicideprevention2006.com.sg/>

Conference Secretariat: Asia Pacific Suicide Prevention 2006 c/o CMA International Consultants Pte Ltd

1 Liang Seah Street, #02-12, Liang Seah Place Singapore 189022 Tel : (65) 6336 2328 Fax : (65) 6336 2583 Email : enquiry@suicideprevention2006.com.sg

