



President's Blog

(Roger Coates, IRPA President)

What an interesting year! We have now had our four Regional Congresses – Latin America (Havana, Cuba), Asia/Oceania (Melbourne, Australia), Europe (The Hague, Netherlands) and finally the African Regional Congress in Tunis. These have all been incredibly successful, with a combined attendance of around 1500 delegates, which is heading towards 10% of the total IRPA community. In addition, I have been fortunate to visit the annual conferences of our RP societies in India, Israel, the UK and the US, which adds about another 2000 delegates to the list.

So, what comes out of all this? Well, it is clear that our profession has a lot of common challenges and common interests, some of which I will outline below.

There are concerns about the future of our profession – where are the next generation of RP professionals coming from? How do we attract enough people and make sure that they are competent? But whilst there are challenges, there is also hope. The number of young persons engaged in these congresses has been enormous, and their enthusiasm and willingness to engage is stunning. We have had regional launches of our Young Generation Network (YGN) at each Congress, and it seems to me that this is a very timely and successful development within IRPA.

Another important factor is the 'internationalism' of our profession. The main focus of each RP society is of course to address issues within the home country, but the recognition of the benefits of also working and sharing beyond national boundaries is very evident. The number of regional and international networks being established is testimony to this. And the crucial role played by the key international organisations, including IAEA, WHO/PAHO and ICRP is also clear – as shown at the recent African Congress, a region with limited resources and a somewhat scattered RP community.

The other comforting factor common across all these conferences is the recognition of the importance of many of IRPA's current key themes. I mention above the importance of the YGN, but our other programmes also seem to be of great interest and relevance. These include radiation safety culture, both in general and specifically in the healthcare sector. Public understanding of radiation and risk is always an issue of great concern and interest, and our current emphasis on decision-making at low doses – including such issues as 'reasonableness' in ALARA, conservatism in our assessments, and ensuring value for money for society – have all been reflected in discussions.

This gives me great confidence that IRPA is indeed playing a central role within our profession, encouraging cooperation between professionals, raising and exploring key issues and linking effectively with our vital international partners.

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Radiation Safety Culture in Health Care: Joint initiative of IRPA, WHO and IOMP

(Bernard Le Guen, IRPA Executive Officer)

The trends in healthcare, across the globe, involve rapidly advancing scientific and technological developments, and their implementation. Radiation safety culture is becoming a topic of increasing interest and importance globally. IRPA does have a legitimate role to play in the medical sector. As a follow-up of the publication of the Guiding Principles for Establishing a Radiation Protection Culture in 2014, a joint initiative of IRPA, IOMP and WHO, has been the radiation safety culture in healthcare. While radiation safety of patients and staff is getting improved, there is a need for actions to develop a culture of safety and to integrate the actions with safety culture of the hospitals.

A series of workshops have been organized in different regions of the world, gathering representatives from health care providers, regulatory bodies, health authorities, manufacturers, and patients' associations, to collect feedback and identify key elements of Radiation Safety Culture (RSC). The aim of these workshops was also to collect safety and culture issues in different regions to help in setting priorities for establishing and maintaining RSC. The purpose is to develop a framework document providing guidance for the establishment and maintenance of a RSC, as part of a sustainable safety culture program in health care settings. IAEA joined us and contributed to the document. A final regional workshop will be organized in San Diego next February, just after the 52nd HPS Midyear Meeting and will be an opportunity to present and discuss this first preliminary draft. The final document must be ready for the IRPA15 congress in Seoul in May 2020.

We have a motto at IRPA : *Embedding Radiation Protection at a common cultural level within an organization is by far the most effective way of delivering the performance to which we all aspire.* Continuous improvement in Radiation Safety Culture in health care must be our common responsibility!



IRPA will strengthen its activities in the field of non-ionizing radiation

(Klaus Henrichs and Sigurdur Magnusson, IRPA EC)

Following a discussion on the financial support of International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) during the Executive Council (EC) meeting in 2017, a short questionnaire was developed in the spring of 2018 in order to learn from the Associate Societies (AS) about their activities and interests in the area of non-ionizing radiation.

1.	Does your society have activities in the field of NIR?		
	Optical radiation (incoherent)	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
	Laserradiation	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
	Electromagnetic fields	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
2.	Please describe the activities of your AS:		
3.	As seen by your AS: Would it be helpful if IRPA develops actions in the field of NIR?	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
4.	Which kind of activities and support your AS would expect from IRPA?		
5.	Are members of your AS ready to support future IRPA activities in the field of NIR?		
	Please give contact information:		

Answers were received from 17 AS. The majority (>60%) of these AS reported activities in nearly all fields (optical, laser, electromagnetic fields), indicating the urgent need for IRPA to develop a strategy and intensifies actions in this field. A follow-up survey of the AS on the activities and supports they would expect from IRPA revealed that they need the same as for ionizing radiation.

Some AS requested the dissemination of guidelines and standards on NIR safety developed by ICNIRP and WHO, if available. It was pointed out that ICNIRP collects scientific results and makes recommendations on limits, but there are currently only limited standards and guidance in the area of NIR, so there is clearly a gap for IRPA to help fill.

Public understanding and communication on NIR was another key feature of the AS responses. There seems to be little difference between IR and NIR in this area (including in medicine).

The EC concluded that there was a very positive outcome to the consultation and that there was definitively an interest within IRPA to work on NIR in the future. It was decided that IRPA will establish a new task group (TG) on NIR. The AS have been asked to nominate members for this TG before the end of 2018.



NSFS, Nordic Society for Radiation Protection

(Ritva Bly, STUK)

The Nordic Society for Radiation Protection (NSFS) was established on June 10th 1964 at the initiative of professor Rolf Sievert. He arranged the first meeting, which included persons active in radiation protection from all the Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden). The first general meeting (conference) was held in Stockholm in 1966. NSFS is a viable society, which has been able to arrange regular meetings for over 50 years.

The five Nordic countries all together have a wide range of activities in radiation protection and nuclear safety, with a large group of professionals working at them. In each country, there are sub-critical groups that have a possibility to unite and form under the NSFS. Each country would be too small to carry out multidisciplinary networking and conferences, but the NSFS has been able to provide a forum for that. However, there have been small scale national activities under the NSFS. Such an event was a competition in Finland on brief presentations about novel approaches in radiation protection. The competition was arranged in June 2018 during a conference on radiation protection organized by STUK (The Radiation and Nuclear Safety Authority). The NSFS awarded the winner with an invitation to participate in the Nordic IRPA on 10-14 June 2019 at Helsinki.

The theme of the Nordic IRPA 2019 is "The Next Level in Radiation Protection". The Nordic and international latest approaches and points of view will be introduced and discussed during the meeting. The conference information will be found on the web page www.nsf.org





The 5th Asian and Oceanic IRPA Regional Congress on Radiation Protection

(Cameron Jeffries, Immediate Past President, ARPS)

The 5th Asian and Oceanic IRPA Regional Congress on Radiation Protection (AOCR-5) was held 20-23 May 2018 in Melbourne Australia. The motto of AOCR-5 was “Key Issues in Radiation Protection: Evolving Standards, Risk Perception and Opportunities”. The Congress was organised by the Australasian Radiation Protection Society (ARPS) with support of our partner Radiation Protection Societies from Asia as well as IRPA, IAEA, ICRP, IOMP, UNSCEAR and WHO.

AOCR-5 was highly successful with more than 300 participants from 16 countries joining us at the Melbourne Convention Centre. There were 126 oral and 50 poster presentations in 21 specific topic streams. An integrated Young Generations Network (YGN) session was held with a dedicated lunch for networking. Nine breakfast refresher courses were delivered during the Congress providing the opportunity for delegates to re-engage on topics of mutual interest.

Prizes were awarded for the Best Young Scientist, Best Poster and People’s Choice. ARPS was pleased to award its inaugural Ronald Rosen Prize for Best Young Scientist during AOCR-5; Ronald Rosen is one of the founding members of ARPS.

Special sessions were held on Radiation Protection in Medicine, Emergency Response and Preparedness, and Safety Culture in Healthcare. A special roundtable session with representatives from industry, regulators, and national and international authorities discussed the regulatory challenges and opportunities on NORM in mining and mineral processing.

We would like to share the following key points highlighted during AOCR-5.

1. The voice of those medical physicists who are also RSOs is important for the radiation protection profession. There is a challenge for these physicists who also need to ensure radiation protection oversight during the medical applications of radiation.
2. Radiation protection professionals need to be able to clearly identify and communicate the risk from a particular radiation activity, and propose measures to deal with the risks identified. Radiation protection professionals should be confident in presenting their solution to radiation regulators.
3. Roger Coates’ keynote presentation on “Prudence and the Hidden Burden of Conservatism” outlined the importance of appropriate application of regulations. Industry and regulators should work together to develop a consistent and measurable “graded” approach to radiation protection.
4. NIR should be a topic fostered within our profession. As radiation protection practitioners, we need to be able to provide information to staff and the community.

We can’t wait to catch up at the next Congress. The 6th Asia and Oceanic IRPA Regional Congress on Radiation Protection will be held in Mumbai, India in 2022.



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