



Peter J. Ell, MD

Nuclear Medicine Organizations in Europe

Europe is a pleasant paradox. It houses distinct nations with distinct languages and cultures under the umbrella of a unified community with common laws and values. New countries are emerging with the dismantling of old social and political structures. Additionally, the divisiveness between East and West has abated. Indeed, a new European Renaissance has begun.

European Nuclear Physicians Caught up Changes

The fairly recent formation of the European Association of Nuclear Medicine (EANM) illustrates the unification efforts occurring throughout Western Europe. The EANM was founded in London during the European Congress in 1985.

It resulted from the fusion of the two then existing societies—the European Nuclear Medicine Society (ENMS) and the Society of Nuclear Medicine, Europe (SNME). The presidents and secretaries of both Societies at that time (Drs. B. Nosslin, K. Britton, H. Schmidt and myself) signed the initial contract which permitted this unique development in the field of nuclear medicine in Europe to take place.

At the time of its founding, the EANM had less than 1000 physician and scientist members, about 20 associate members (technologists) and less than 30 corporate members. If the success of an Association is to be measured in terms of its membership growth, then the EANM has indeed succeeded spectacularly. Presently, the EANM has approximately 3000 members and 174 associate members. The association includes delegates from 26 national nuclear medicine societies throughout Europe. Corporate membership is strong and industry has finally organized similar to nuclear medicine manufacturers in the U.S. The Association of Radiopharmaceutical Producers in Europe and the European Nuclear Medicine Equipment Suppliers are now the official organizations that are partners with the EANM to promote nuclear medicine in Europe.

Lack of Technologist Members

The membership figures of EANM point to some fundamental differences between the EANM and the SNM. In contrast with what occurs in the SNM, the proportion of technologist members of EANM—although growing very encouragingly—is still small. This difference should not be overlooked.

There are two main reasons for this profile in Europe: First, the language barrier is still a major difficulty. Second, training and accreditation programs vary enormously. Although this also holds true for medical schools and resident training programs, there is even more diversity in training programs for technologists in Europe. Efforts are underway to address these differences, but they will be time-consuming.

Structured like a parliamentary system, the EANM is a two-chamber organization. Nuclear medicine societies from

each European member nation elects delegates to the National Delegate Assembly which then elects the EANM President, the Secretary and the Task Group Coordinator. The Members Assembly, the second chamber, elects the three other members of the Executive Committee, namely the EANM Treasurer, Congress President and Congress President-Elect. The Members Assembly also determines the membership fee structure of the Association. At present, voting occurs during the Annual Congresses.

The main activity of the Association is its Annual Congress which rotates through major European cities. These annual events have increased steadily in quality and now are conducted over five days with multiple educational sessions and large scientific and industrial exhibitions. The EANM Annual Congress is, without a doubt, the largest nuclear medicine event in Europe. The meeting's size and attendance compare favorably with other major specialty meetings in Europe.

Major Progress in Recent Years

Major advances have occurred within EANM over the last three years, including improved overall accuracy of membership lists and addresses, fees collection and payment protocols. These were particular problems given that the EANM is international.

In addition to progress in the administrative area, the EANM created the European School of Nuclear Medicine (ESNM), whose goal is to deliver practical teaching seminars in those areas of Europe that otherwise lack formalized training programs. An international faculty is actively supporting this endeavor, presently chaired by Professor Wolfgang S. Becker, MD, at the Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg, Krankenhausstrasse in Germany. Working in close collaboration and cooperation with the Union of European Medical Specialities—which monitors the activities of specialties across Europe—these activities are part of a wider program of continuing education and educational credits that are slowly being developed across medical specialties and national boundaries.

Another project of note is the funding of a cost benefit study in myocardial perfusion scintigraphy based on case and outcome analyses of patients studied in hospitals that either made use of or did not use nuclear cardiology in four countries in Europe.

Another project was the formation of a task force, chaired by Professor Hans Biersack, University of Bonn, Germany, that collated data on breast scintigraphy with MIBI in a multinational, multicenter prospective study. The study found that scintimammography had a significantly higher specificity than either mammography or MRI.

Along with these specific projects, the EANM continues to advance nuclear medicine through a joint collaboration with European nuclear medicine industries. We also publish and distribute

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 the *European Journal of Nuclear Medicine* to our members, even to those who live in areas where economic hardship prevents the arrival of other specialized literature.

Recognition as a Separate Specialty

In highlighting some differences between the EANM and the SNM, it is also important to note the differences in how nuclear medicine is practiced in Europe compared to the U.S. The EEC has formally recognized nuclear medicine as a separate specialty in its own right. This is not just a legal fact but reflects the day-to-day practice of nuclear medicine. The vast majority of treatments and studies are performed in autonomous nuclear medicine departments or institutes—not only in large academic centers but in small or regional hospitals. The overall trend, with some exceptions, is toward specialization and recognition of nuclear medicine as a distinct specialty. Nuclear medicine is clearly separate from radiology as is illustrated by the UEMS Section of Nuclear Medicine.

Nuclear medicine therapy has been practiced vigorously in Europe and differs considerably in scope from that practiced in the U.S. This is not too surprising in light of the high incidence

of thyroid disease in central Europe. Moreover, a three-year mail-in survey to EANM members (response rate 24%) found that nuclear physicians had treated a total of 8578 patients, involving 13,450 different joints, by administering radiopharmaceuticals. Rheumatoid arthritis was the reason for treatment in 71% of the patients, with the knee being the most frequently treated joint. The survey concluded that radiation synovectomy is widely practiced throughout Europe, a fact which has encouraged radiopharmaceutical manufacturers as well as U.S. nuclear physicians to explore this topic.

There is much to be gained if the EANM and SNM are willing to learn from and participate in each other's activities. I am personally delighted that the SNM Leadership has agreed to develop a close liaison with the EANM Leadership to establish a program of joint collaboration.

—Peter J. Ell, MD

Dr. Ell is the president of the EANM. He is a professor of nuclear medicine at the Institute of Nuclear Medicine at Middlesex Hospital in London, England. This commentary is based on a speech he presented at the Business Meeting at the SNM's 1996 Annual Meeting in Denver, CO held in June.

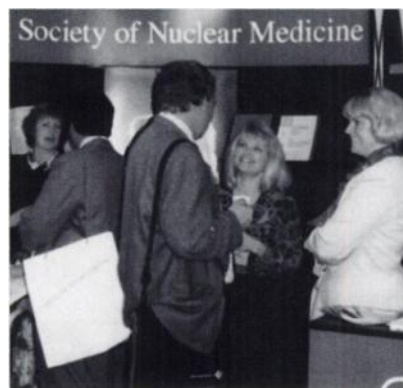
SNM Booth Scores Success at European Meeting

A busy stream of interested attendees visited the Society of Nuclear Medicine (SNM) booth during the recent European Association of Nuclear Medicine Annual Meeting held September 14-18, in Copenhagen, Denmark. SNM Associate Director of Marketing and Public Relations Kristin Ludwig and Director of Membership Services Lori Tremmel Freeman provided attendees with an international version of the same services they provide at the SNM Annual Meetings.

Altogether, 200 current SNM international members submitted renewal applications at the booth, and 34 new members were recruited onsite. Eighty-four current members chose to take advantage of the Membership Department's "early bird" renewal offer, enabling EANM attendees to confirm 1997 memberships at 1996 rates. Approximately \$2500 in sales of Society products was earned over the course of the four-day meeting.

"It shows the world of nuclear medicine that we're a major player, that we're serious about reaching out to nuclear medicine throughout the world," said one U.S. member attending the European meeting.

Enhanced SNM presence at the Copen-



hagen meeting as well as future EANM meetings and a newly designed traveling exhibit booth represents the latest step in a plan for International Member Outreach conceived by Tremmel Freeman, Ludwig and Director of Communications, John Childs, PhD, and endorsed by the SNM Board of Directors during the June Annual Meeting.

Increased article submissions to *JNM* from non-U.S. authors, more abstract submissions for the SNM Annual Meeting, and increased Annual Meeting attendance by international members, led SNM senior staff to explore how the Society can better communicate its services to nuclear medicine physicians,

technologists and scientists outside the U.S.

EANM attendees received an advance announcement describing Society offerings at the upcoming meeting. Advertisements placed in the EANM Abstract Book encouraged meeting-goers to visit the booth. On site, international nuclear medicine professionals were given the opportunity to participate in a needs survey.

"EANM attendees now know about our booth and seek us out," said Tremmel Freeman. "In person, one on one, we were able to describe the benefits of SNM membership to international nuclear medicine professionals. We were able to counter the idea that ours is only a U.S. society."

SNM President Michael Devous, Sr, PhD, who along with other Society leaders was present at the meeting, praised SNM international outreach activities. "The SNM presence at the EANM garnered great enthusiasm among and substantial interest in both our European members and non-member representatives of the nuclear medicine community," he said. "In addition, SNM staff provided exposure for SNM products and services, while fostering a sense of mutual cooperation between our two societies."