

# IIHA NEWS



## IIHA takes part in Healthy Planet Forum

A few years ago a joint project between Michigan University and the Institute of Sociology in Moscow found that between 60 per cent and 70 per cent of Russians expected various types of disaster — economic, ecological, political — in the near future. Most Russians feared impoverishment and many feared the criminalisation of society.

The "near future" has arrived and some of these fears have come true. The financial meltdown last year left many people in economic straits. Professionals employed by the State, such as engineers, health administrators, doctors, now go months without pay, pensioners receive a mere pittance and could not survive without the support of their families. The birth rate is going down, the death rate going up; millions stay away from work because of illness; there are epidemics of diseases associated with poverty and poor hygiene, such as tuberculosis.

This is true of most of the states of the former Soviet Union; and this is why the International Integrated Health Association (IIHA), which was founded in 1993 to promote international co-operation in the field of health care, hopes to play an active part in the Healthy Planet Forum, at least as a participant in the Women Health and Environment seminar on 15 June. The conference takes place on 15-18 June alongside the Third Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health for Europe, organised by the World Health Organisation.

It will be a unique gathering of

people from voluntary organisations, local authorities, health workers and citizen groups of all sorts from all parts of Europe. All those who support the work of IIHA are urged to join us at the Forum. A fee of £10 will cover four days of planning, discussion and action about health and the environment. IIHA needs your support at the conference to promote a project to improve reproductive health in the former Soviet Union. A leaflet enclosed with this newsletter contains an application form.

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IIHA was founded in Moscow in 1987 as the Renaissance Group, which was one of the first groups to campaign for new ways of thinking about health, politics, economics and ecology. The motivation for forming our charity was Einstein's warning: "Unless there is a substantial change in our way of thinking, mankind has no future." A statement about global warming and the deteriorating envi-

ronment, which we published at the time, had the support of the late John Dawson, Secretary of the Ethical Committee of the BMA and the late Ian Munro, Editor of the Lancet. Jonathan Porritt, then director of Friends of the Earth, also wrote to us saying "You have taken on an important initiative."

In 1990 IIHA, which aimed at changing our approach to health, towards patient-centred care, involving family and community with the emphasis on the promotion of health rather than the cure of disease, was launched in the House of Commons at a meeting of Russian and British doctors with David Ennals, a former UK Secretary of State for Health in the chair. Then in 1992 we became a registered charity.

One of our first initiatives was an international conference in Moscow entitled Health at the Workplace, held almost precisely five years ago, in June 1994. We received letters of support from President Boris Yeltsin and Yuri Lushkov, mayor of Moscow.

The conference devoted a great deal of attention to the conditions necessary for safe motherhood. Then as now maternal mortality was high. Many children died in the first year of life and of these the majority died at birth. Points made by Dr O'Frioiva, of the Russian Academy of Medical Sciences Research Centre of Obstetrics, Gynaecology and Perinatology, are as true today as they were then.

Dr Frioiva stressed the need for:

1. socio-economical support of families by the State
2. the safeguarding of the health of

working women

(c) health among adolescents. Including education for parenthood among young men and women

(d) optimum health care for women at all stages of their lives especially in adolescence and the childbearing years

IIHA is now seeking sponsorship for the development of reproductive healthcare projects in partnership with:

*Ukraine Family Planning Services* (Professor Irena Vovk)  
*Mother and Baby Care* (Dr Larisa Novic);  
*Mama 86* (Anna Syomina) care of the environment, parental and child health care.  
*Blagodiniste* (Valentino Ruschenko): Family planning charity working on educational programmes in Kiev, in turn supported by Spanish *Galina Blanco* (food manufacturing company offering humanitarian aid) and the Dutch *Chernobyl Women*.

#### Problems to be addressed

The continuing effects of Chernobyl, only sixty miles from Kiev, and other serious environmental pollution.

Poverty. Ukraine has been suffering worse poverty than Russia. Two people out of three are said not to get enough to eat, especially the young.

Abortion, particularly among teenagers. Professor Vovk welcomes IIHA's offer of help with preconception nutrition programme.

An *Association for Planning for Parenthood* is planned with the aim of improving the health of new-borns. The association will work with other groups and authorities concerned with the problems of reproductive health, including like-minded NGOs and the Family Planning Service.

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## Know How awards IIHA £10,000 for Odessa training initiative

A grant of £10,000 has been awarded to IIHA by the Know How Fund Healthcare Small Partnerships Scheme. The SPS board congratulated IIHA on the clear objectives and focus of this application. The grant will launch an innovative multidisciplinary training programme in the Black Sea Port of Odessa, in Ukraine, where IIHA is helping to develop a training centre for medical professionals and families.

The project focuses initially on nurse training to develop the hands on day to day care of children with CF. IIHA nursing consultant Isobel Matheson has designed a self-teach training pack for nurses. The pack will give the specifics of cystic fibrosis management and will also emphasise the 'normal' child and family rather than the *sick* child. The aim is to focus on helping children and families to cope with illness and enjoy a full life.

Two senior nurses from Odessa are going to work with children's community nurses in Milton Keynes in June. The notion of taking the care of children outside of the hospital is new to Ukraine. Children in Ukraine go into hospital for long periods for rehabilitation. This interferes with their school work and friendships and causes great stress to families. The team from Odessa is also planning to study the establishment of family support groups in the UK and the way in which medical establishments work with voluntary agencies.

### Siberian hospital administrators visit UK

A paper entitled "Nursing in the Ukraine" is to be presented by IIHA nursing consultant and Professor Aryaev, Vice Rector of the Odessa State University, at the Royal College of Nursing International Conference in Bournemouth, on 3 July.

A team led by Dr Mark Rosenthal, paediatric respiratory consultant at London's Royal Brompton Hospital, is going to Odessa in October for a multidisciplinary Cystic Fibrosis training week. Doctors, nurses, physiotherapists, and parents will be invited from other CF centres to take part. The aim is to introduce a multidisciplinary approach to solving problems in managing CF. The project will provide a model which can be used to develop other training programmes for managing children's illnesses. In the longer term IIHA hopes to develop cost effective training through the use of Internet based learning packages and telemedicine.



### HOSPITAL ADMINISTRATORS FROM SIBERIA COME TO WESSEX TO LEARN ABOUT CHILD HEALTHCARE MANAGEMENT

Without the support of the hospital administration it is impossible to make any improvements in the delivery of child health care, which is what in effect we and our Russian partners are trying to do in the case of cystic fibrosis and other chronic illnesses. We were therefore keen to show administrators in Omsk and Novosibirsk Hospital how St Mary's Hospital, Portsmouth and Poole Hospital manage cystic fibrosis.

There have been two exchanges of paediatric consultants going to the Siberian hospitals and Siberian doctors coming here; and there is a general desire to do everything possible to improve the clinical treatment of CF patients.

Dr Alexander Lvov, medical director of the Novosibirsk's Children's Hospital and Dr Mourat Adrybaev, medical director of the Omsk Hospital were impressed with what they saw here. However, as Dr Lvov pointed out, the big difference between the Russian and British health systems is the economic one, with the Russian health service having very limited funds to spend on essential medicines such as pancreatic enzymes and antibiotics, which were in short supply.

Elena Vodianykh, a nurse from Novosibirsk, accompanied Dr Lvov. She said she was going back with some innovative ideas to introduce to their children's wards. For instance, Elena met the play specialist at St Mary's Hospital and was impressed with her method of teaching children to understand their illness and treatment, turning the various procedures into games that were not so upsetting. She also met a child psychiatrist who talked about how to deal with a child's psychological problems.

It is hoped that contacts between the hospitals will continue; and IIHA has been promised reports from the administrators on how best we can help in the promotion and management of child health care in Siberia.

*Left: Dr Mark Rosenthal examines a CF patient in Lviv Regional Children's Hospital*

## *Southampton Paediatric Surgical Team Help Surgeons at Vilnius University Hospital*



*Wessex paediatric cardiac surgeon Marcus Haw has a wrapped and appreciative audience of Lithuanian surgeons and doctors as he explains a complex technique in the operation he is about to perform on an infant in the Vilnius University Hospital*

The Wessex Cardiothoracic Centre's paediatric cardiac team invited IIHA to administer an exchange programme to help the Vilnius University heart surgery clinic who are doing excellent work in providing treatment for infants of one year of age and above. However the Vilnius team experience continuing and persistent problems with the treatment of newborns and children under one with congenital heart disease.

The main object of the visit by paediatric surgeon Marcus Haw and his colleagues in the Southampton paediatric cardiac unit was to demonstrate techniques in surgery, anaesthetics and intensive care. Roy Ridgway, managing director of IIHA, went with the team with the aim of exploring the possibility of establishing a family support group. The visit was funded by the British Embassy in Vilnius and a Lithuanian charity called Status Vaikams.

The following impressions of the visit is by Penny Weatherall, a sister in the paediatric intensive care unit at Southampton General Hospital.

As a sister in a busy paediatric intensive care unit, I don't often get the opportunity to use my knowledge and skills elsewhere. So, when I was asked to join a team of colleagues from the cardiac unit to teach staff at a hospital in Lithuania I was only too pleased to say yes. The hospital is very good by Eastern European standards and is adopting many

of the ways with which we are familiar in the West. One of the main differences between us and the staff in Vilnius is that we work as a team with each person having an important role to play, over there the system is much more hierarchical and it can be difficult to train the most appropriate people.

My role is to work with the nurses and anaesthetist in the intensive care unit. Much of my time is spent showing by example whilst working alongside the nurses. So far we have performed the Arterial Switch procedure on five children: Vaiva, Augusto, Valerica, Cardriole and Aurimus. I will never forget the gratitude of the parents of these children who have now been offered some hope for the future.

We have also developed friendships with the Vilnius team and have been overwhelmed by the warmth and generosity shown to us.