



Balint Bulletin No. 11

August 2007

Editor: Marion Lustig

Contact: 03 95715111 or mlustig@optusnet.com.au

AUSTRALIAN NEWS

COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT NEWS

Annual General Meeting

This was held in Melbourne on July 16. The President and Treasurer presented reports. The President's report can be found on the website at http://www.balintaustralia.net/AGM_report_07.pdf

The President highlighted the achievements of a very busy year including growth in our membership to 57 members. Highlights include our first Balint Leadership Workshop, several scientific meetings and workshops, establishment of our website, two articles in Australian Family Physician and our affiliation with the International Balint Federation.

At the meeting, Marion Lustig and John Barton stood down as President and vice-President respectively and were replaced by John Barton as President and Bill Betts as vice-President. Other office-holders remain as previously: Ann-Marie Diggins as Secretary and Ruth Dunn as Treasurer, and Marion Lustig (as Immediate Past President) and Pauline Pearson remain on the Committee of Management.

Leadership, accreditation and training

A new subcommittee, chaired by Penny Love, has been formed to start working towards leadership accreditation and training. The first task of the committee will be to produce a discussion paper about the issues involved.

Medical educators' workshop

A subcommittee has been formed to plan a weekend workshop for medical educators. Anyone interested in being on this subcommittee should contact John Barton (see website link below).

Help wanted

There are vacancies for the following positions:

1. The Melbourne based Committee of Management is seeking new members and is particularly keen to have more GP members. Interested people should contact John Barton.
2. The medical educators' subcommittee invites participation by interested members. Please contact John Barton.
3. We are looking for someone to take responsibility for an Email discussion forum for our members. You would need to have the relevant IT skills or be prepared to learn them (which we can facilitate). Please contact John Barton.

RECENT EVENTS

Balint Leadership Workshop- Hobart 2007

Our first Balint Leadership Workshop was held in Hobart from May 31-June 3, 2007. Faculty consisted of visiting leaders from the U.S.A. (Frank Dornfest, Clive Brock and Lisa Buck), Australian leaders (Marion Lustig, Laurie Lovell-Symons and Leonie Sullivan) and Penny Love (workshop co-ordinator). All of the above were part of a very hard-working organizing committee convened by Marion Lustig and also including Frank Meumann, Alexa Gilbert-Obrart and John Barton. 34 people attended. Feedback from participants was overwhelmingly positive and our highly experienced American visitors also complimented us on the high calibre of both the workshop and of our participants and leaders. Much of the work took place in small groups in which participants had opportunities to experience Balint work as group participants, case presenters, group leaders and co-leaders. Each small group session was followed by a de-brief in which there was extensive discussion and teaching about the nature of Balint group work and the leader's role, with particular emphasis on people's experience of the preceding group session. Despite the packed timetable of nearly three days of very intensive and demanding work, there was time to make new friendships and renew old ones; stretch the legs, give the winter woollies an airing and explore some of Hobart's delights; and enjoy far too much excellent food and wine. Particular thanks are due to the Old Woolstore conference staff and to our local host Dr Frank Meumann for making us feel so welcome.

Meeting with registrars in Brisbane

An evening meeting was held on June 7 with Frank Dornfest (from the U.S.A.), Penny Love, Helen Kerr, Marion Lustig, John Buckley who is the director of training for SE Queensland and 11 registrars from south-east Queensland. The meeting was part of their regular training consortium conference. Frank presented a talk/powerpoint about the nature and benefits

of Balint training, Marion spoke briefly about the BSA and there was time for questions and discussion. John Buckley was supportive of the idea of organizing a group for registrars if there was sufficient interest and there did seem to be interest among those attending.

Australian College of Psychological Medicine workshop in Brisbane
A morning workshop was held on June 8 with Frank Dornfest (from the U.S.A). Penny Love, Marion Lustig and 7 others, mainly GPs practicing predominantly as psychotherapists. Frank gave a another version of his talk/powerpoint about the nature and benefits of Balint training, Marion spoke about the BSA, and Frank and Penny led the group for three cases.

Meeting in Sydney

A meeting was held on June 5, co-sponsored by the BSA and the NSW Doctors' Health Advisory Service, with Frank Dornfest and Clive Brock from the U.S.A. Frank did his talk/powerpoint about the nature and benefits of Balint training and then attendees divided into two groups for case presentations. The groups were led by Laurie Lovell-Symons with Frank and Leonie Sullivan with Clive. About 25 people attended.

Meeting in Perth: "A Taste of Balint"

Pauline Pearson from Melbourne led an evening meeting on July 5 attended by 10 people who included GPs, psychiatrists, clinical psychologists and psychotherapists. The main focus was an opportunity to experience Balint work through discussion of two cases.

NEW ZEALAND NEWS

John Barton (GP/psychotherapist, Melbourne) and Rebecca Denford (Psychoanalytic psychiatrist, Ashburn Clinic, Dunedin) recently ran a Balint weekend for seven GPs in Wanaka. This follows other Balint weekends in Hanmer Springs and Auckland last year and more are planned for Hamilton (late 2007) and Wanaka (early 2008). For more information contact John Barton at: jbarton@aapt.net.au

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Workshop in Perth 2007

The Balint workshop in Perth which was to have been led by visiting American Balint leader Albert Lichtenstein and Marion Lustig in June has been re-scheduled for October 20-21. This is an opportunity for GPs and other interested people (including those who may be interested in training to be leaders) to experience Balint work at a one and a half day weekend workshop. Group leaders will be Marion Lustig and John Barton from Melbourne, with additional interstate Balint group leaders, depending on numbers. Please send expressions of interest to Marion Lustig (see website link below). A flyer and registration form will be sent out soon.

World Psychiatric Congress, Melbourne, 2007.

This congress will have a stream for mental health in primary care. The BSA in conjunction with Don Nease from the U.S.A. will present a 90 minute workshop on Balint group. Congress dates are from November 28 – December 12. Don is currently President of the American Balint Society and vice-President of the International Balint Federation. For further information, go to <http://www.wpa2007melbourne.com/index.php>

“Ozzowa” (Ottawa International Conference on Clinical Competence), Melbourne, 2008.

We are planning to submit a proposal to run a workshop about the use of Balint groups in medical education, together with some U.K. colleagues, at this medical educators’ conference which will be held from March 5-8, 2008. For further information, go to <http://www.ozzawa13.com/index.php>

Balint group opportunities

There are people working towards starting new groups in Perth (contact Dhyan Stein), Sydney (contact Laurie Lovell-Symons) and Canberra (contact Jane Sheedy). There are groups looking for additional members in Sydney (contact Leonie Sullivan) and Melbourne (contact Marion Lustig). Please contact state representatives to enquire about joining or starting a Balint group in your area.

All contact information is on our website at <http://www.balintaustralia.org/contacts.htm>

Articles

Royal College of General Practitioners (2007) Curriculum statement 2: the general practice consultation .

http://www.rcgp.org.uk/pdf/curr_2_the_gp_consultation.pdf

This document from the RCGP outlines the U.K. general practice training curriculum with respect to the consultation. It recommends Balint groups for doctors in training and explains why.

Marcia Smith and Gowri Anandaraja (2007). Mutiny on the Balint: balancing resident developmental needs with the Balint process. *Family Medicine* 39:7, 495-7.

<http://www.stfm.org/fmhub/fm2007/July/Marcia495.pdf>

This article describes a Balint group in an American family medicine training program in which the residents initially expressed strong dissatisfaction with the group. Some modifications were made to allow the group to address professional development topics and the group spontaneously returned to a process more consistent with traditional Balint.

Donald Nease (2007). Mutiny on the Balint? A reflection on the relevance of Balint, 50 years hence. *Family Medicine* 39(7):510-11.

<http://www.stfm.org/fmhub/fm2007/July/Donald510.pdf>

This article, written in response to the article by Smith and Anandaraja cited above, is a thoughtful overview of Balint work. In particular, Nease defines what is unique about Balint groups and considers issues of orthodoxy, boundaries, flexibility and group safety.

ACGME Competencies & Balint Training: Competencies Taught by Balint work (2007).

<http://www.stfm.org/fmhub/fm2007/July/Marcia495.pdf>

This article from the American Balint Society website, lists the competencies as specified by the ACGME which are taught by Balint training. The Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education is responsible for the accreditation of postgraduate medical training programs within the U.S.A.

OVERSEAS NEWS

International Balint Federation

The Balint Society of Australia is now affiliated with the International Balint Federation.

Website: www.balintinternational.com

The e-International Balint Journal is published on-line by the International Balint Federation and provides abstracts of articles in Balint journals from member countries.

http://www.balintinternational.com/downloads/eIBJ_no1_2006.pdf

http://www.balintinternational.com/downloads/eIBJ_no2_2007.pdf

The next International Balint Federation Congress (held every two years) will be held in Lisbon, Portugal from September 1-5, 2007. We will have a healthy contingent of Australians there. This is an opportunity to meet in a welcoming and stimulating atmosphere with Balint enthusiasts from around the world, including opportunities to experience Balint work and to hear about Balint developments in other countries. The 2009 Congress will be in Rumania.

American Balint Society

American Balint Society Leadership Intensive workshops are held twice yearly. The next one will be from November 1-4, 2007 in Bethlehem, PA. For information, go to www.americanbalintsociety.org (note new web address).

Balint Society (U.K.)

The next annual Oxford weekend will be held from September 28-30, 2007, preceded by a Balint Leadership day. There are already some Australians planning to attend.

Information: www.balint.co.uk

Institute for the study of illness and health (Commonweal, California)

Two activities may be of interest to our members:

The Healers' Art course. This is an innovative medical undergraduate course which enables the formation of a community of inquiry between students and

faculty. It takes a highly innovative, interactive, contemplative and didactic approach to enabling students to perceive the personal and universal meaning in their daily experience of medicine. The course has been run in the U.S., Canada, Slovenia and Israel. ISIH runs training workshops for those interested in teaching the course. Further information at http://www.commonweal.org/ishi/programs/healers_art.html

Finding Meaning in Medicine (www.meaninginmedicine.org) is ISHI's outreach program for doctors, medical students and other healthcare professionals and educators. It is a very simple and replicable group process that enables the participants to uncover the deep meaning that lies beneath the daily routine of practice, and to find strength within a community of doctors or other practitioners who share the values of compassion, harmlessness, reverence for life, and service.