



Balint Bulletin No. 13

March, 2009

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AUSTRALIAN NEWS

Committee of Management

The BSA has had an extremely busy and productive year and now has around 70 members. A downside of our productivity has been difficulty in finding the time to produce an edition of Balint Bulletin during the last 12 months. The work of the Society is being done by a small group of people working on a voluntary basis. We encourage interested people who are not yet involved with our work to consider joining us. We welcome enquiries from people interested in serving on the Committee of Management, on its subcommittees, and on the state based committees. We are particularly interested in having more GPs involved.

The Committee of Management (COM) currently consists of:

Melbourne members: John Barton (president), Bill Betts (vice-president and chair of Victorian committee), Ann-Marie Diggins (secretary), Ruth Dunn (treasurer), Marion Lustig (immediate past president and chair of publicity subcommittee) and Sally Manuell;

Sydney members: Laurie Lovell-Simons (chair of N.S.W. committee and chair of medical educators and leadership, accreditation and training subcommittees), Leonie Sullivan (chair of rural and remote subcommittee), Alexa Gilbert-Obrart (international representative);

Brisbane member: Penny Love (chair of Queensland committee);

Hobart member: Frank Meumann.

Subcommittees of the COM are:

Leadership, accreditation and training, convener Laurie Lovell-Simons
lauriels@tpg.com.au

Rural and remote, convener Leonie Sullivan lesull@optusnet.com.au

Publicity, convener Marion Lustig mlustig@optusnet.com.au

Medical educators, convener Laurie Lovell-Simons lauriels@tpg.com.au

The Committee is delighted to have welcomed two new committee members recently. They are Frank Meumann and Sally Manuell. Frank is a GP in Hobart; the CEO of, and a medical educator with, General Practice Training Tasmania; a member of the National Standing Committee - Education for the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners; chair of a group which is writing the new national RACGP standards for general practice vocational training; and the co-leader of a Balint group in Hobart for three years. Sally is a Melbourne GP and has been a member of a Balint group for about 8 years.

The Committee of Management will be holding a retreat in late April in Victoria to discuss the Society's future directions.

Brochures and poster

The Society has produced a colorful, informative brochure entitled: Should I join a Balint group? Questions GPs ask about Balint groups. This was written by Marion Lustig with assistance from the publicity subcommittee. Hard copies have been sent to all members and are available from John Barton jbarton@aapt.net.au Electronic versions are available from the Society's website <http://www.balintaustralia.org/brochures.htm> We hope this brochure will inspire more GPs to join ongoing Balint groups and we encourage colleagues to distribute it appropriately.

The Society has also produced an AO size poster with similar text to the brochure. This is suitable for conference presentations and was presented at the RACGP/Wonca meeting in Melbourne in 2008. It is available for colleagues to use at appropriate events.

Balint Intensive Workshop

Report by Penny Love

The BSA ran a Balint Intensive Workshop at Windsor just outside Sydney on August 14 -17, 2008. This was a very successful conference, with 39 participants from Australia and New Zealand. The faculty consisted of Australians John Barton, Alexa Gilbert-Obrart, Penny Love, Laurie Lovell-Simons, Leonie Sullivan, Marion Lustig and Americans Frank Dornfest (founding president of American Balint Society and former president, International Balint Federation), Albert Lichtenstein (co-ordinator of supervision and former secretary, American Balint Society) Donald Nease (president, American Balint Society and vice-president, International Balint Federation) and Ann Sinclair (president elect, American Balint Society). All the faculty were part of a hard-working organizing committee, chaired by Penny Love, which operated via telephone link-up for several months, and also included Ann-Marie Diggins and Helen Kerr. As a result of the workshop, there have been moves to establish several new Balint groups.

The two Intensives which the Society has run in 2007 and 2008 have been very successful and we are keen for this to be an annual event. However, due to the enormous workload involved, it is unlikely that we will be able to organize one in 2009 unless there is an offer of significant help from an organization or individuals willing to be hosts.

We have an offer to host an Intensive from the Goodfellow Unit in the Department of General Practice, Auckland Medical School in NZ in 2010.

Presentation at Sydney GPCE

At the Sydney GPCE in May 2008, Dr Raymond Seidler presented a session on Doctor's Mental Health and as part of this interviewed Ms Alexa Gilbert-Obrart and Dr Jan Orman about Balint groups.

Melbourne scientific meeting

Visiting American Balint practitioners Donald Nease and Frank Dornfest (for details see above under Balint Intensive Workshop) presented a scientific meeting in Melbourne on August 19, 2008, on the topic of Balint groups in general practice training. As well as discussing their extensive experience with Balint groups in family medicine residency programs in the U.S.A., they co-led a "fishbowl" demonstration Balint group.

Melbourne workshop

Visiting psychotherapist and Balint group leader from the U.K., Herbert Hahn presented a half day workshop in Melbourne on November 29, 2008 entitled: Our words and their music: a Balint perspective for clinicians. The workshop was mainly a "fishbowl" experience of Balint work and was enthusiastically received. Herbert will present another workshop in Melbourne later in 2009.

Townsville weekend workshop and scientific meeting

Two Balint related events occurred in Townsville in 2008 – a presentation by visiting Americans Ann Sinclair and Albert Lichtenstein, and a Balint weekend workshop with leaders Mary Emelaus and Penny Love. There is now an ongoing Balint group for GPs in Townsville, led by Mary Emelaus.

WONCA/RACGP

The BSA ran a Balint workshop at the RACGP Annual Scientific Convention/WONCA Conference in Melbourne from October 1-5, 2008 with leaders Helen Kerr, John Barton, Jo Wright and Cathy Fraser.

Mental Health Points

A Sydney group has been successful in applying for mental health points for their participation in a Balint group. Further information: Leonie Sullivan lesull@optusnet.com.au

Balint work with medical educators and supervisors

Report by Laurie Lovell-Simons, Frank Meumann and Leonie Sullivan: Balint leaders working in partnership with GPET and their medical educators and supervisors

In 2008, General Practice Education and Training (GPET) provided the funding and some administrative support for two events for medical educators and GP supervisors.

Frank Meumann, a general practitioner and CEO of General Practice Training Tasmania (GPTT) chaired an excellent Balint Workshop with 20 medical educator and GP supervisor participants from around Australia meeting in Hobart for two and a half days in late April. Don Nease (vice-president of the the International Balint Federation and President of the American Balint Society) Heide Otten (past president of the International Balint Federation and of the German Balint Federation) joined Laurie Lovell- Simons and Leonie Sullivan from Sydney in leading the two groups.

There was a strong expression of interest in consolidating this work. This interest was followed up when over 40 GP medical educators, many of whom were the Hobart participants, chose to take the Balint strand for their professional development at the National Medical Education day following the GPET Conference in Wollongong in August 2008. Four groups were convened for a day of Balint work. The event was chaired by Frank Meumann and the groups were led by Frank Meumann, Don Nease, Laurie Lovell-Simons and Leonie Sullivan. Four GP medical educators acted as co-leaders for these groups.

We are very appreciative for the support provided by GPET for these events. The partnership with GPET and their educators and supervisors with the Balint group leaders was a very positive one with an opportunity for all to learn something from the experience in an ongoing way.

Noosa Balint weekend

Penny Love is exploring the possibility of establishing an annual Balint weekend workshop in Noosa.

Leadership intensive workshop

There is a strong possibility that there will be a leadership workshop in New Zealand in 2010.

Australian College of Psychological Medicine conference

John Barton and Cathy Fraser will be convening a Balint workshop at the forthcoming ACPM conference from June 5-7 in Ballarat, Victoria.

NEW ZEALAND NEWS

Leadership training weekends

Two weekends will be led by John Barton and Ann Sinclair (president, American Balint Society) in Auckland on May 16-17 and in Christchurch from May 23- 24. Enquires: John Barton jbarton@aapt.net.au or Peter Huggard phuggard@auckland.ac.nz . To register, contact Cecile Pilkington c.pilkington@auckland.ac.nz

Balint weekends

The following weekend workshops for GPs were held in 2008: Auckland in March, led by John Barton and David Dewes; Auckland in November, led by John Barton and Di Nash and Wellington led by John Barton and Adrienne Ackermann. Many of

the participants in these groups now want to continue with Balint work.

This year, John Barton will be running weekend workshops in Auckland from June 20-21, Christchurch from August 1-2 and Dunedin from October 10-11; co-leaders will be announced. John Barton jbarton@aapt.net.au.

RNZCGP

A two day pre-conference workshop was held in 2008 prior to the RNZGP Conference in Queenstown, led by John Barton and Adrienne Ackermann.

Balint group for medical students

Recently there was a one day Balint group for medical students in Auckland, led by John Barton and Peter Huggard. The six students who attended found the work very worthwhile and are keen for more.

BALINT GROUP OPPORTUNITIES

Please contact state representatives to enquire about joining or starting a Balint group in your area.

Perth A new Balint group has just started in Perth. Contact Judy Griffiths judygriffiths@gmail.com

Sydney Contact Laurie Lovell-Simons lauriels@tpg.com.au

There is a group in Lane Cove which currently has no vacancies. Other proposed groups in Sydney are as follows: Lower North Shore 1st & 3rd Mon. evenings 8 – 9.30 p.m. with Laurie Lovell-Simons 02 94276610 or lauriels@tpg.com.au and Leonie Sullivan 02 94189351 or lesull@optusnet.com.au; Lower North Shore Tuesdays 1-2.30 p.m. with Leonie Sullivan (as above); Lower North Shore Wednesdays 1.15-2.45 p.m. with Laurie Lovell-Simons (as above); Eastern Suburbs Wednesdays 7-8.30 p.m. with Alexa Gilbert-Obrart 0418633433 or agilbertobart@bigpond.com and Mary Cameron 0414485882. Sydney leaders are keen to establish and lead ongoing groups in any other location and also to conduct Balint workshops for one or two days for GPs and other health professionals.

Port Macquarie contact Brenda Campbell campbelldesign@bigpond.com

Canberra contact Jane Sheedy daniel_jane@bigpond.com

Victoria contact John Barton jbarton@aapt.net.au There are groups in Frankston, Hawthorn, Footscray, Kew and Heidelberg. New groups are planned in Lilydale and Ballarat. Bitte Muller and Shake Seigel from the U.K. are visiting Bendigo for the year and are interested in starting a group there.

Queensland contact Penny Love: pl273743@bigpond.net.au There are groups in Brisbane (contact Penny Love) and Townsville (contact Mary Emelaus

maryemeleus@ledanet.com.au or Mary Wade marywade@tpg.com.au. There is interest in establishing new groups in Cairns (contact Peter Vanrietyvelde pvanrietvelde@omegahealth.com.au and Toowoomba (contact Penny Love pl273743@bigpond.net.au).

Tasmania. Contact Frank Meumann frankm@netspace.net.au

South Australia There are two longstanding groups. contact Dr Anne Sved-Williams svedwill@hcn.net.au

Northern Territory Contact Sam Heard sam.heard@oceaninformatics.biz

New Zealand There are ongoing groups in Auckland, Hamilton, Nelson and Wellington. There are possible new groups forming in Dunedin, Christchurch and another one in Wellington. Contact John Barton jbarton@aapt.net.au rural and Mark Davis is setting up an ongoing group for rural and remote GPs davisltd@xtra.co.nz

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

General Practice Congress in Denmark

The 16th Nordic Congress of General Practice will be held from May 13-16 in Copenhagen. It will include a Balint workshop and a Balint symposium. www.gp2009cph.com or Helena Nielson (president, Danish Balint Society) galina@dadlnet.dk

IBF Council meeting and Balint Workshop Chicago April 17-19

The next IBF Council meeting will include a weekend Balint workshop and will take place in Chicago from April 17-19, 2009. Alexa Gilbert-Obrart will represent our Society. <http://www.americanbalintsociety.org> IBF council meetings take place every 6 months and usually incorporate some Balint work.

American Balint Society Leadership Intensive Workshops

These are held every American spring and fall and have been greatly appreciated by many Australian participants. <http://www.americanbalintsociety.org>

Oxford Balint Weekend

This annual Balint workshop will take place from September 25-27, 2009. http://www.balint.co.uk/news/balint_weekend.html

International Balint Congress

The next of these 2 yearly congresses will be held in Brasow, Romania from September 5-9, 2009. A number of Australians are planning to attend. These congresses are very collegial and enjoyable and provide an opportunity to meet enthusiastic Balintians from around the world. <http://balintcongress2009.com/>

ARTICLES

The Rumanian Balint Society website has a number of articles about Balint work in

English at http://balint.xhost.ro/english_reports.htm

VIDEO

A feature on Balint in Medscape.

<http://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/585452?src=mp&spon=17&uac=107128CG>