

# INTERNATIONAL UNION AGAINST THE VENEREAL DISEASES AND THE TREPONEMATOSES

## PRESIDENTIAL NOTE, 1962

The International Union against the Venereal Diseases and the Treponematoses (I.U.V.D.T.) was founded in January, 1923, as a movement to co-ordinate the activities in all countries of voluntary organizations concerned with social measures for the control of venereal diseases. The major stimulus was the great increase in these infections during and immediately after the first world war, and the first initiative was taken by the League of Red Cross Societies and the Belgian Association against Venereal Disease. At the inaugural meeting there were delegates from nineteen countries, all of which joined the newly-formed organization. The Union was soon firmly established with its headquarters in Paris and during the past 40 years, although its fortunes have fluctuated, it has continued to work as a truly international organization, promoting study of the problems and coordinating activities in the field of V.D. control. From 1923 until the second world war, meetings were held almost every year in important centres, including, amongst others, Brussels, The Hague, London, Madrid, Budapest, Cologne, Algiers, and Cairo. After the second world war, the activities of the Union were re-commenced in 1947, since when General Assemblies have been held in Paris, Copenhagen, Rome, again in Paris, in Rotterdam, Naples, Stockholm, London, and Washington. In addition, meetings have been organized by the Regional Offices from time to time. The list of past presidents reflects the international character of the Union, comprising Dr. Bayet (*Belgium*), Dr. Ehlers (*Denmark*), Dr. Dubois (*Switzerland*), Dr. Snow (*U.S.A.*), Dr. Hermans (*the Netherlands*), Dr. Cavaillon (*France*), and Dr. Webster (*U.S.A.*). Most of the national representatives have been physicians engaged in clinical venereology and inevitably there have been important technical discussions; but the Union has always concerned itself with the social aspects of the control of venereal disease, such as case-finding, contact-tracing, prostitution, sexual behaviour, the special problems of seamen, anti-venereal legislation,

health education, and the like. The aim has been to attract the interest and assist the activities not only of physicians practising in the subject, but of epidemiologists, psychiatrists, psychologists, public health nurses, social workers, and all concerned with human behaviour and its effect on the spread of venereal diseases. For this reason it was decided, at the general assembly held in Washington, D.C., in September, 1962, to amend the statutes of the Union to permit a new category of membership. In the past the membership has consisted of organizations interested in the problem or working in the field. The new type of membership is open to all individuals who are interested in the activities of the Union. It is hoped that all who wish to know more about the possibility of individual membership will write to the Secretary-General (Prof. G. A. Canaperia, Via Salaria, 237, Roma, Italia), to one of the Regional Offices, or to the secretary of the Medical Society for the Study of Venereal Diseases (Dr. C. S. Nicol, St. Thomas's Hospital, London, S.W.1, England).

It is a matter of considerable pride and pleasure to me, the first President of the Union from the United Kingdom, to introduce this, the first *International Bulletin*, the production of which has been made possible by the kindness of the *British Journal of Venereal Diseases* and its Editor. It is hoped to produce other numbers of the Bulletin at regular intervals as a means of communicating information and keeping in touch with members in the intervals between General Assemblies and Regional meetings.

In these days of anxiety concerning the world-wide increase in venereal diseases the importance of cooperation in international measures for control cannot be over-emphasized. Of course the Health Departments of the various countries are primarily responsible for epidemiological procedures in the control of venereal disease and for technical methods in diagnosis and treatment. In respect of the latter also, the World Health Organization, with which the

Union maintains close contact, has done outstanding work. Nevertheless, all who study the subject agree that non-governmental organizations have an important part to play. Mr. T. Lefoy Richman of the National Commission on Community Health Services, New York, in discussing the control of syphilis, has expressed the opinion that in countries whose political structure is basically democratic, control is not possible without the effective leadership of non-governmental organizations, which

reflect the concern of non-professional citizens, outside government, voluntarily giving their time to the board and committee work that stimulates and directs effective action. There is much to be said for this point of view and it is one of the main functions of the Union to stimulate and coordinate such activities in all countries. I hope that all who are interested in the problem will give the Union their full support.

A. J. KING *President*

## BULLETIN OF THE I.U.V.D.T.

### GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 1962

The General Assembly of the I.U.V.D.T. was held at the Sheraton Park Hotel, Washington, D.C., on September 3, 1962. Seventy delegates from 23 countries attended. The business is summarized below.

#### ELECTION OF OFFICERS

*President:*

Ambrose J. King, F.R.C.S., Adviser in Venereal Diseases, Ministry of Health, London, was elected President in succession to Bruce Webster, M.D., Chairman, American Social Health Association, V.D. Advisory Committee, New York. Dr. King, who has been a Vice-President of the I.U.V.D.T. since 1959, is Senior Physician of the Whitechapel Clinic of the London Hospital.

Other Officers, elected or re-elected, were as follows:

*Secretary-General:*

Giovanni A. Canaperia, M.D., M.P.H., Via Salaria, 237, Rome, Italy.

*Assistant Secretaries-General:*

Axel Perdrup, M.D., Denmark.  
Mrs. Josephine Tuller, U.S.A.

*Vice-Presidents:*

Tukuji Ichikawa, M.D., Japan.  
H. Brun-Pedersen, M.D., Denmark.  
Claude S. Nicol, M.D., F.R.C.P., United Kingdom.  
Malcolm Tottie, M.D., Sweden.  
Bruce Webster, M.D., U.S.A.

*Technical Counsellors:*

William Brown, M.D., U.S.A.  
Rafael Bustillos-Mendez, M.D., Mexico.  
Pierre Durel, M.D., France.  
K. Gawalowsky, M.D., Czechoslovakia.  
Pierra Vejjabul, M.D., Thailand.

*Treasurer:*

Goffredo Tassi, M.D., Italy.

*Legal Counsellor:*

M. Pfeiffer, France.

*Administrative Secretary:*

Mme. M. Huet-Troué, France.

#### STATUTES

The Assembly approved the new Statutes with the amendments suggested by the Executive Committee.

#### INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP

The General Assembly discussed the valuable contributions which could be made by individual

members to the development and effectiveness of the Union and it was decided to encourage individual doctors, public health workers, sociologists, psychologists, social workers, and others interested in V.D. control to join the Union. The Executive Committee was asked to promote a plan to increase the number of individual members and to define their rights and obligations.

#### FUTURE MEETINGS OF THE UNION

It was agreed that the meetings held every 5 years in liaison with the International Congress of Dermatology should be continued, as many venereologists attend this Congress which usually allots a separate section to Venereology.

The interim General Assembly should be arranged for the second or third year after each International Congress of Dermatology and the Executive Committee was empowered to determine the place of the next Assembly in 1964 or 1965 in the light of possible invitations by Member Organizations.

#### FUTURE PROGRAMME

The General Assembly agreed that the Union's future programme should include studies of:

- (1) Methods and applications of contact-tracing;
- (2) Medical education; graduate and post-graduate teaching of venereal diseases and the treponematoses in medical schools;

- (3) Psychological aspects of human behaviour and their importance in the spread of venereal disease;
- (4) Health education of the general public.

#### RELATIONSHIP WITH W.H.O.

The General Assembly noted, with pleasure, the friendly relationship existing between the Union and the World Health Organization and expressed the wish that it should be both continued and increased in view of the new criteria established by WHO in respect of non-governmental organizations.

#### RELATIONSHIP WITH MEMBERS

The General Assembly discussed the problem of keeping in touch with members between General Assembly meetings and recommended the publication of a Bulletin.

#### PRESENTATION OF AWARD OF MERIT TO THE INSTITUTE FOR SEX RESEARCH

During the General Assembly in Washington, D.C., the Union honoured the Institute for Sex Research for its work in placing the study of sexual behaviour on a scientific basis. Dr. Webster, President of the Union, presented the Award to Dr. J. H. Gagnon, Research Associate of the Institute.

## OTHER NEWS

#### NATIONAL COUNCIL ON CRIME AND DELINQUENCY (U.S.A.)

The National Council on Crime and Delinquency, 44 East 23rd Street, New York, has proposed an exchange of information on matters of common interest between itself and the I.U.V.D.T. As the Union is interested in the factors leading to the disruption of family life, prostitution, and juvenile delinquency, insofar as they may indirectly contribute to the spread of V.D., co-operation with the National Council on Crime and Delinquency and with its Research Centre in particular, could prove valuable. Members of the I.U.V.D.T. requiring technical information about the prevention, control and treatment of crime, and juvenile delinquency in relation to V.D. should apply to the Union's Secretary-General, who will also welcome information from members about similar studies, planned or in progress, in their own countries.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION ABOUT THE TREPONEMATOSES

As a contribution to the World Forum on Syphilis and Other Treponematoses, the Union's Organizing and Planning Committee published the findings of a survey of the prevalence and trends of syphilis and other treponematoses in 34 countries and of the control measures in use. This Report is in English with abstracts in French or Spanish and copies may still be obtained from the Secretary-General.

#### WORLD FORUM ON SYPHILIS AND OTHER TREPONEMATOSES, 1962

This World Forum, which represented the technical session of the General Assembly of the I.U.V.D.T., took place in Washington, D.C., at the Sheraton Park Hotel, from September 4 to 8, 1962, and was attended by 1,088 delegates from 47 countries. Sponsoring agencies were the American Social

Health Association (which includes the Regional Office for the Americas of the I.U.V.D.T.), the American Venereal Disease Association, and the U.S. Public Health Service, with the participation of the International Union against the Venereal Diseases and the Treponematoses and the World Health Organization.

A Programme Committee under the chairmanship of Dr. W. J. Brown, technical counsellor of the Union and Chief, V.D. Branch of the U.S. Public Health Service, organized the technical sessions of the Forum, which offered a comprehensive presentation of the medical, public health, and behavioural science aspects of syphilis and other treponematoses and their interrelationship throughout the world. Nearly 200 papers were presented on every aspect of the control and prevention of treponematoses.

The Forum reviewed the current state of knowledge about syphilis, which shows a world-wide increase, outlined a future course of action, and agreed on the need for research and investigations in particular fields, including the social aspects, to make further progress possible. Many speakers emphasized the importance of social behaviour in the control of venereal diseases and the need for closer co-operation between the medical and social services to achieve better results.

Dr. T. Guthe, representative of WHO at the Forum, emphasized the world-wide concern about the venereal diseases and stated that the increasing trend may become worse unless strong action is taken at all national levels and unless the international co-operation is improved.

The Forum held plenary sessions in the morning and three concurrent technical sections in the afternoons, a medical section, a public health methods section, and a behavioural science section. The proceedings of the Forum are being published by the U.S. Public Health Service and will be sent to all participants and to the Members of the International Union.

#### SYMPOSIUM ON TREPONEMAL AND NON-TREPONEMAL VENEREAL DISEASES AT XII INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF DERMATOLOGY, 1962

During the XII International Congress of Dermatology in Washington, D.C., following the Meeting of the I.U.V.D.T., a symposium on venereal diseases and treponematoses was held on September 13, 1962.

The chairman of the Symposium was William J. Brown, M.D. (*U.S.A.*) and co-chairmen Giovanni A. Canaperia, M.D. (*Italy*) and Antonio Campos Salas, M.D. (*Mexico*).

The symposium dealt with the epidemiological, clinical, and laboratory aspects of syphilis and other treponematoses; some non-treponemal venereal diseases; gonorrhoea and trichomoniasis. The proceedings of the Symposium will appear in the general proceedings of the International Congress of Dermatology.

#### W.H.O. EXPERT COMMITTEE ON GONOCOCCAL INFECTIONS

The failure throughout the world to control gonorrhoea in spite of the very widespread use of penicillin and other antibiotics was recognized by the Expert Committee on Gonococcal Infections which met in Geneva on November 19, 1962. The reasons for such failure include: the increasing resistance of the gonococcus to antibiotics leading to treatment failures; the very short period of incubation which makes difficult the interruption of the chain of transmission; the great infectiousness and lack of immunity; the difficulty of accurate diagnosis, especially in females; the indifference of the public and the neglect of sex and health education, particularly for young people who represent the most vulnerable group.

The ultimate solution of the problem of gonorrhoea would be immunization and the W.H.O. Expert Committee recommend that research should be aimed at developing a vaccine.

In the meantime, however, it was agreed that none of the traditional ways of protecting the public should be overlooked, that greater use should be made of what is known, and that better laboratory facilities should be provided to improve diagnosis.

The attention of health administrators, doctors, and the general public should be drawn to the increasing hazards of gonorrhoea, especially for women.

Dr. Pierre Durel, technical counsellor of the I.U.V.D.T., attended the meeting as representative of the Union.

#### BRAZIL

Dr. Nelson Brandão Libânio, Director of the "Gaffrée and Guinle Foundation" in Rio de Janeiro, presented an interesting report on the activity of the Organization during the last 40 years. The Foundation, established in 1923 and for many years a Member of the I.U.V.D.T., has done remarkable work in opening a number of Clinics for the diagnosis and treatment of venereal diseases.

#### THAILAND

With the abolition of legalized prostitution in 1960, the Thai Government appointed a special

Committee to study the situation and recommend appropriate measures.

The Committee, under the chairmanship of Dr. Pierra Vejjabul, Technical Counsellor of the I.U.V.D.T., planned the establishment of a "Rehabilitation Centre" for prostitutes. Dr. Pierra Vejjabul has made a very thorough study of prostitution in Bangkok, based on nearly 2,000 cases and covering many social and medical aspects of the problem.

#### U.S.A.

The American Social Health Association has published a report on "Teenagers and Venereal Diseases", which outlines the results of a behavioural study, conducted under the direction of Dr. C. S. Deschin, of 600 teenagers in New York City who had, or thought they had, contracted venereal disease. This pilot study gives a clear demonstration of the importance of the social approach and of the help that the behavioural sciences can give in the prevention and control of venereal diseases.

#### U.S.A. TASK FORCE RECOMMENDS 10-YEAR PROGRAMME TO COMBAT SYPHILIS

A six-point 10-year programme to eradicate syphilis as a public health problem was recommended to the U.S. Public Health Service in a report submitted in January, 1962, by a Task Force headed by Dr. Leona Baumgartner, Commissioner of Health of New York City and appointed by Surgeon-General Luther L. Terry following a House Appropriations Committee request that the Public Health Service develop recommendations for a programme to eliminate syphilis.

The report asks for:

- (1) An intensive national effort providing for at least two visits a year by a qualified health worker to the country's 100,000 general practitioners and one visit per year to the remaining 130,000 physicians to explain the physician's role and responsibility in syphilis control and to raise his level of alertness to the signs and symptoms of syphilis in his patients.
- (2) Establishment of a programme to insure that all blood-processing laboratories report to health departments all positive specimens by name of patient.
- (3) Intensification and extension of current investigation services to cover all infectious syphilis cases.
- (4) Development of a comprehensive and dynamic education programme for professional workers and the general public.
- (5) Continuation of research in syphilis immunology, therapy, and laboratory procedure, together with greater expansion of research into the sex behaviour of adolescents and young adults.
- (6) Unstinted support of the programme by Federal, state, and local governments, even after the reported number of syphilis cases begins to decline.

#### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING *Copenhagen, June, 1963*

A meeting of the Executive Committee of the International Union against the Venereal Diseases and the Treponematoses will be held in Copenhagen on June 6, 1963, on the occasion of a joint meeting of the Danish Society of Dermato-Venereology, the British Medical Society for the Study of Venereal Diseases, and the European Office of the International Union.