

One of the main aims of The Commonwealth Association of Paediatric Gastroenterology and Nutrition (CAPGAN) is to improve children's health in developing countries by bringing together medical scientists, paediatricians and other health workers, juniors and seniors from developed and developing countries to exchange ideas on how best to prevent and manage diarrhoea and malnutrition in children. Thus, every 2 years, we have a Congress.

This year's Congress (CAPGAN 2017) took place in the Mulungushi International Conference Centre in Lusaka, Zambia, from 25 to 27 September 2017. Professor Paul Kelly (London & Lusaka) and Dr Beatrice Amadi (Lusaka) led on organising the packed three-day event, while CAPGAN's Council contributed as advised. Over 200 delegates attended, each paying a small registration fee which also covered their membership of CAPGAN for the next 2 years.

The first two days featured invited speakers, global experts who gave us the latest public health and clinical research findings, also, 12 junior researchers from Africa, India, Europe and the USA were selected to present their papers while 15 others discussed their posters.

There were several prizes on offer for the best research and presentations: there were CAPGAN travel scholarships for the nine best Abstracts; the Professor Bhupinder Sandhu Prize for the top Gastroenterology presentations; the Professor Peter Sullivan and Dr Barbara Golden Prizes for the best two Nutrition presentations; and the Dr Neelam Mohan prize for the best posters.

Zambia's Minister of Health, Dr Chitalu Chilufya, attended part of the Congress and made an excellent speech on his resolve to improve public health in Zambia and particularly the health of children as the adults of the future. As he is a medical doctor, trained in Zambia, the Congress was of great interest to him, and he extended his respects to his former lecturers and mentors in the audience.

During the Congress, coffees, teas and excellent lunches were provided at the Centre and no-one could have complained of being hungry or thirsty.

On Day 2, I as President, made a small speech to the delegates on the aims of CAPGAN. I emphasised the fact that all who had registered for the Congress were now members of CAPGAN. As such, I expressed the hope that the new members would attend the General Meeting later the same day, work with us in the future to improve child health by a variety of means not the least of which would be to carry out and present their research findings, however small, at the next Congress in 2019. We will also be working towards the aims of the next World Congress which will be held in Copenhagen in 2020.

The same day, CAPGAN Council had a meeting at lunchtime in which nominations were made for the Executive members of Council. This was followed by the General Meeting when elections took place. I handed over the reins of office to Dr Neelam Mohan who has been President-Elect as well as Secretary since CAPGAN 2015 .. which was organised by herself in New Delhi. We also elected Professor Iqbal Memon of Karachi, Pakistan to be President-Elect and Secretary for the next 2 years. I announced that Professor Zulfiqar Bhutta, President of the International Paediatric Association and loyal supporter of CAPGAN, has offered to host the next Congress in Toronto.

The final act on Day 2, in the foyer of the Centre, as delegates were leaving, was a small local choir including several of the organisers, singing the most beautiful Zambian and South African songs .. the perfect way to end a hard day's learning!

Day 3 was funded entirely by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and focussed on Environmental Enteropathy which is an unusual form of intestinal inflammation described relatively recently and

which appears to underlie at least some of the pathology of severe malnutrition. The lectures were exciting, state of the art, including some incredible audiovisuals, and the lecturers were mainly, but not all, from the top Centres in the USA.

We aim to include most if not all the Presentations and Abstracts on CAPGAN's new website www.capgan.info

CAPGAN 2017 was highly successful: research was shared and many new working relationships were forged. ... We look forward to the future, working together to improve the health of children especially those living in poverty; and of course, to CAPGAN 2019 in Toronto.

B Golden

Past President, CAPGAN