has neither the infrastructure nor ambition to assure a quality control system. Future activities of this group were discussed in Prague.

**Study group on synovitis**
The activities of the synovitis study group focus on the development of the synovial biopsy technique for the diagnostic armamentarium of rheumatologists. Now, training courses in arthroscopy are regularly organised by EULAR. A recently completed survey of arthroscopy in rheumatology identified 24 centres in 10 European countries that frequently use arthroscopic techniques. The participants of this study group collaborate in research on (a) the need to establish acceptable guidelines for training European rheumatologists in arthroscopic techniques; (b) issues relating to tissue selections and preparation; and (c) the methodology needed to quantify the immunohistochimical features of synovial inflammation. The process developed informally with biannual meetings, and a useful forum has evolved for discussing research protocols and data that incorporated synovial biopsy and tissue analysis. 

**ad. a.** After considerable discussion, this task has been completed and a document submitted to ILAR for approval and distribution. The document, which will be published, identifies minimum requirements for accreditation of trainers and training centres, and outlines a basic curriculum for acquiring the necessary skills in arthroscopy. In addition, procedures for the assessment and accreditation of trainees are proposed.

**ad. b.** Collaborative research established that given the practical advantages the use of the closed needle biopsy is justified in many clinicopathological studies.

**EULAR Standing Committee on Paediatric Rheumatology**

During the past years two new organisations have been created to support development in the field of paediatric rheumatology, the Paediatric Rheumatology European Society (PRES) and the Paediatric Rheumatology International Trials Organisation (PRINTO). Together with the EULAR Standing Committee on Paediatric Rheumatology, these organisations form a strong network for the promotion of research, education, and clinical development in paediatric rheumatology in Europe. An important task for the standing committee is to form a strong link between rheumatologists primarily caring for adults and those who primarily care for children in order to exchange knowledge, and in all aspects facilitate fruitful collaboration between the different organisations.

At the yearly meeting of the standing committee in Nice, June 2000, there was a consensus on the wish to arrange the yearly PRES meeting concurrently with the yearly EULAR congress to be held in Stockholm in June 2002. A similar wish was stated by the PRES general assembly held in Geneva, September 2000. The EULAR Executive Committee were supportive of this idea, and it has now been decided that PRES will have its yearly meeting integrated into the EULAR Congress in Stockholm. The programme is already being assembled, and there will be integrated sessions for adult and paediatric rheumatologists as well as sessions arranged primarily for paediatric rheumatologists by PRES. We hope this will be an excellent opportunity to meet, network, and exchange knowledge.

Successful clinical research has been initiated by PRINTO, supported by EU grants. Validation of the Child Health Assessment Questionnaire (CHAQ) and Child Health Questionnaire (CHQ) has been concluded in most European countries and will soon be published in a supplement to *Clinical and Experimental Rheumatology*. The validated questionnaires form important parts of “the core set of outcome" for studies of juvenile idiopathic arthritis (JIA) proposed by a working group in PRINTO. A multicentre trial on parenteral methotrexate in medium versus higher doses in children with JIA has been successfully concluded using the abovementioned “core set of outcome". In April 2001 a consensus conference on core set of outcome measures for juvenile systemic erythematous and juvenile dermatomyositis was held with representatives from 40 nations.

PRES has worked actively on educational issues. Paediatric rheumatology is now a UEMS subsection of the Confederation of European Specialists in Paediatrics and a syllabus and training programme have been approved by UEMS. Work is in progress on training records and accreditation of centres.

PRES held a successful scientific meeting in Geneva in September 2001, with 400 delegates, and the abstracts were published by the *Annals of the Rheumatic Diseases* (2001;60:suppl II). The next yearly meeting will be held in Utrecht, 27–30 September 2001. A special meeting for young investigators will be held in conjunction with the PRES meeting.

For further information see www.pres.org.uk, where you will also find links to EULAR and PRINTO, or www.eular.org, where you will find a link to PRES.

**B A GÄRE**

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**Study group on biochemical markers for cartilage and bone metabolism**
The activities of this group came to an end because the coordinator discontinued his activities. This field is confronted with the fact that clearly effective markers are not available. This lessens the need for a study group, particularly when consensus and implementation issues are involved. In Prague, June 2001, a scientific symposium on biochemical markers was held, followed by discussions on the future of this study group.

A new study group on genomics and proteomics will be formed.

**F C BREEDVELD**

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EULAR Standing Committee for Social Leagues activities in 2000

Chair's report

The EULAR Standing Committee for Social Leagues has grown both in size and activity during the past few years, thanks to the active involvement of all the members. EULAR Social Leagues have a shared goal of improving quality of life and services for people with arthritis/rheumatism. They are now more active than ever before, participating in the remarkable improvement of EULAR activities with an increasing partnership.

Profile within EULAR meetings

EULAR Social Leagues have an increasing profile within the EULAR meetings. After the meetings in Geneva in 1998 (three days joint programme for health professionals and social leagues) and Glasgow in 1999 (one day stand alone programme), the Social Leagues Programme Committee planned a three day programme for the first annual EULAR Congress in Nice, including one shared day with the health professionals. The programme was well received and attended. The same format was decided for the EULAR 2001 Congress in Prague, with an additional full joint session, on the theme “Communication and partnership”, involving not only social leagues and health professionals but also rheumatologists. We are preparing more full joint sessions in the future.

In Nice, we paid particular attention to the question of access for people with disabilities, which is mandatory for the congresses. During the opening ceremony, one of the official speakers was a woman with arthritis; we hope similar participation will continue over the following EULAR Congresses.

The European manifesto for the third millennium

This manifesto was announced during the opening ceremony of the congress in Prague. This initiative had been successfully launched during the congress in Nice. The manifesto was developed by the EULAR Standing Committee for Social Leagues, together with representatives from Arthritis and Rheumatism International and International Organisation of Youth with Rheumatism. It is aimed at determining what the society can do to improve life for people with arthritis/rheumatism. This declaration of the rights of people with arthritis/rheumatism establishes 10 “calls for action” for meeting the growing challenges presented by arthritis/rheumatism, which will form the basis of the social leagues programme during the annual EULAR Congresses, as from EULAR 2001 in Prague. The manifesto is now in the next stage of its development, which includes increasing administrative support and providing translation for each country.

Stand alone conferences

The EULAR Social Leagues also organise annual stand alone conferences—for example, the worldwide conferences of arthritis and rheumatism patient societies organised by the Social Leagues of EULAR in collaboration with Merck Sharp & Dohme. After Amsterdam and Madrid, the third conference was held in Ljubljana on 14–15 October 2000. We had a very successful two day programme with the themes: “Developing your organisation” and “Disability politics and arthritis”, with a convener for each theme (Barbro Allardt Ljunggren and Michael Bernardy). Sixty nine patient society representatives and 23 countries were represented. Most of the speakers and chairpersons were again people with arthritis/rheumatism.

We are planning the fourth worldwide conference “Arthritis patient on the move 2001”, to be held early November 2001.

Stene Prize

EULAR Social Leagues award the Edgar Stene Prize to a person with arthritis/rheumatism for an essay on a topic chosen by the leagues. Historically, the prize has been awarded every four years. From 2001, it will be awarded every two years, during the annual congress; the EULAR Executive has increased the amount to 3000 Swiss Francs. In 2000, we had 39 entries (15 in 1999). The winner was Ms Frances Bell (UK) for her wonderful essay, “The long way to acceptance of my chronic disease”.

Other projects

EULAR Social Leagues also have several other projects, including participation in the Bone and Joint Decade initiative (International Steering Committee and National Action Network activities); participation in the ILAR Congress in Edmonton; a booklet on social leagues, with input into the EULAR web site; training courses for social leagues and awards for educational projects, made possible with EULAR grants.

I would like to express heartfelt thanks to all the committee members, to Bruno Van Albada our past Chair, to Ms Sophie Edwards our secretary, to Fred and Elly Wyss and Eugenio Plozza at the executive secretariat, and to the executive committee members for their warm support.

Perspectives

In the future, EULAR Social Leagues will continue to grow in size and influence, and continue with collective campaign work through its manifesto and the Bone and Joint Decade initiative. We will examine our aims and our activities to ensure that we continue to meet the needs of EULAR, of our members, and of people with arthritis/rheumatism.

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