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*Report from ESPID*

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## **The European Society for the Study and Prevention of Infant Death (ESPID)**

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### **HISTORY OF THE ESPID**

In April 1990, an informal meeting was organized in Brussels by A. Kahn to gather a group of pediatric clinicians and scientists who wanted to address the problem of infant deaths in Europe. It was felt that a joint European research effort could best be coordinated within a new dedicated scientific body, the European Society for the Study and Prevention of Infant Death (ESPID).

A steering committee was entrusted with the preparation of the new Society's Founding Congress. The members of the committee were: K. Bentele (FRG), J. Emery, chairman, (UK), K. Hellweg-Larsen (DK), J. Huber (NL), L. M. Irgens (Norway), P. Johnson (UK), A. Kahn, secretary (Belgium), and M. Michaleli (Greece).

The Founding Congress of the ESPID was held in Rouen, France, on June 6-7, 1991. Under the auspices of WHO Europe (Dr. M. Wagner) and the European Economic Community, EEC (Mrs. L. Papandreou), the founding meeting gathered scientists from all European countries, including Central and Eastern European States, as well as from all European countries such as the U.S., USSR, Greenland, Australia, and New Zealand. More than 350 scientists coming from 27 countries and speaking 19 different languages were present to establish the new European Society.

### **STRUCTURE OF THE ESPID**

Originally, five permanent workgroups were formed and entrusted to three elected officers:

1. Epidemiology and Public Health  
R. G. Carpenter (UK), L. M. Irgens (Norway), E. Taylor (UK),
2. Clinical Problems  
K. Bentele (FRG), E. Mallet (France), A. de Broca (France)
3. Pathology  
J. Berry (UK), K. Hellweg-Larsen (DK), J. Huber (NL),

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4. Physiology  
R. Haidmayer (A), P. Johnson (UK), D. Southall (UK)
5. Psycho-Social Problems  
K. Blueglass (UK), D. Dorival (France), J. Powell (UK).

The five working groups were to meet regularly to clarify common definitions, collect data systematically, establish information clearing houses, and develop prevention strategies.

### EXECUTIVE AND SCIENTIFIC BOARD

The elected heads of the permanent workgroups, assisted by the Executive Board, form the *Scientific Board* of the ESPID which helps to insure high standard of quality of the presentations and publications of the Society.

The leadership of the newly established Society was entrusted to an Executive Board of originally six elected members.

President:	A. Kahn (Belgium)
Vice President:	K. Hellweg-Larsen (Denmark)
Secretary:	K. Bentele (FRG)
Treasurer:	R. Haidmayer (Austria)
Member:	J. Emery (UK)
Member:	E. Mallet (France)

The Executive Board assures the continuous activity of the society and establishes permanent contacts with existing national and international societies and institutions.

A Coordinating Board bridges ESPID with Representatives from Parent Support Groups related to infant death. In particular, joint meetings are organized with the Executive Board of SIDS Europe (formerly SIDS Family Europe).

During the last ESPID International Congress in Graz, Austria in May, 1995, there were, according to the by laws, after reaching term of office, the first subsequent elections/reelections for both the Executive and Scientific Board of the ESPID with the following results:

#### Present Executive Board

President:	K. H. P. Bentele (Hamburg, FRG)
Vice President:	T. O. Rognum (Oslo, Norway)
Secretary:	G. Jorch (Muenster, FRG)
Treasurer:	R. Haidmayer (Graz, Austria)
Member:	J. Emery (Sheffield, UK)
Member:	J. Berry (Bristol, UK)
Member:	E. Mallet (Rouen, France)
Coopted Member:	S. Chantler (London, UK)
Past President:	A. Kahn (Brussels, Belgium)

**Present Scientific Board** (elected heads of the workgroups)

Clinical problems:

A. Kahn (Brussels, Belgium)  
A. de Broca (Amiens, France)  
Ch. Poets (Hanover, FRG)

Physiology:

R. Haidmayer (Graz, Austria)  
H. Lagercrantz (Stockholm, Sweden)  
P. Johnson (Oxford, UK)

Pathology:

T. O. Rognum (Oslo, Norway)  
J. Huber (Utrecht, NL)  
C. Rambaud, (Paris, France)

Epidemiology and Public Health:

R. G. Carpenter (London, UK)  
L. M. Irgens (Bergen, Norway)  
Ch. Einspieler (Graz, Austria)

Psycho-Social Aspects:

K. Bluegrass (Birmingham, UK)  
M. L'Hoir (Utrecht, NL)  
H. Brooks (Glasgow, Scotland)

Molecular Biology (currently being established)

A. Coquerel (Rouen, France)

Thus, the ESPID is a unique multidisciplinary and multinational scientific society focussing on the study and prevention of all kinds of infant deaths, not only sudden infant death, as well as on normal and abnormal infant development and both short and long-term morbidity.

Since the Founding Congress in 1991 in Rouen (France), the ESPID has organized annual meetings with a variety of main themes (1992 in Lübeck, FRG, 1993 in Oxford, UK, 1994 coorganized SIDS International Congress in Stavanger, Norway, 1995 in Graz, Austria, 1996 ESPID Workshop in Kosice, Slovak Republik).

The next VIIth ESPID Congress will be held on May 1-3, 1997 in Barcelona, Spain. Related to this Congress will be a Satellite Hispano-American Symposium on Sudden Infant Death. The local host will be F. F. Cruz-Sanchez, Head of the Local Organizing Committee. The main theme of this ESPID Congress in Barcelona will be: "From Epidemiology to Neurobiology."

### COOPERATION WITH SIDS INTERNATIONAL

The ESPID has also been entrusted to establish the Scientific Board of, and to coorganize the SIDS International Congress which will be held in 1998 in Rouen, France.

Your active participation in the ESPID, especially in any of our society's six permanent working groups related to the field of your primary interest and research activities, as well as in all future ESPID meetings is highly encouraged and welcomed.

For further information, please use the following addresses: ESPID Executive Secretary: Prof. Gerhard Jorch, Universitats-Kinderklinik, Albert Schweitzer Straße 33, D-48149 Münster, FRG, Fax: +49251 83 7809.

ESPID President: Prof. Karl H. P. Bentele, Universitats-Kinderklinik, Martinstrasse 52, D-20246 Hamburg, FRG, Fax: +4940 4717 5435.

Scientific Secretariat of the ESPID Congress 1997 in Barcelona: Dr. Felix F. Cruz-Sanchez, Banco de Tejidos Neurologicos, Hospital Clinic i Provincial de Barcelona, Villaroel, 170-08036 Barcelona/Spain, Fax: + 343 45 1 5272.