



International Commission  
for Mountain Emergency Medicine  
ICAR MEDCOM

**AUTUMN MEETING 2007**  
**PONTRESINA, SWITZERLAND**  
**Oct 18-20, 2007**

**Minutes**

**1. WELCOME**

Hermann: It's a great pleasure for me to open this meeting in Pontresina. First of all I would like to thank all of you for your attendance at this meeting. Moreover, let me say thanks to the **Swiss Alpine Rescue** that arranged this meeting. Later on one of the Swiss friends will explain us some details of the programme.

**2. MEMBERS PRESENT**

Giancelso Agazzi (I) from 19th, Borislav Aleraj (HR), Jan Beaufort (CZ), Jeff Boyd (CA), Hermann Brugger (President) (I), Florian Demetz (I), Tigran Elezovic (BIH), John Ellerton (GB), Fidel Elsensohn (Vice President) (A), Gianluca Marconi (I), Martin Ivanov (BG), Pavel Jonek (PL), Peter Mair (A), Mario Milani (I), Werner Mährlein (D), Maria-Antonia Nerin (E) from 19th, Marie Nordgren (Sweden), Peter Paal (I), Gula Przemyslaw (PL), Oliver Reisten (CH), Peter Rheinberger (FL), Erik Sandstrom (Sweden), Theoharis Sinifakoulis (GR), Sven Skaiaa (N), Inigo Soteras (E), Michael Swangard (CA), Günther Sumann (A) from 19th, Dario Svajda (HR), Steve Teale (SCO), Oleg Tcholakov (BG), Iztok-Tomazin (SLO), Vlahov Vitan (BG), Nicole Vogt (FL), David Watson (CA), Gregoire Zen-Ruffinen (CH), Eveline Winterberger (CH), Ken Zafren (USA) (37 members from 19 countries). Guest – R Capella (REGA, CH)

New members introduced and their rescue activity described.

**Apologies:** Bruce Brink (CA), Tore Dahlberg (N), Ramon Chioconci (Argentina), Ioannis Davidopoulos (GR) Silvia Ferrandis (E), Herbert Forster (D), Tim Kovacs (US), Xavier Ledoux (F), Arthur Morgan (SA), Marcel Sedlacko (SK), Karen Wanger (CA), Urs Wiget (CH)

**3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

Minutes approved.

**4. PROGRAMME OUTLINE**

Programme outlined for the day

**5. PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Our last spring meeting was hosted in Patterdale, in the Lake District of England, from 26<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> April 2007. The Mountain Rescue Council of England and Wales and the Patterdale Mountain Rescue Association, have organised this excellent venue. We stayed in a very nice hut of the Association of British Members of the Swiss Alpine Club. Nearby, in the Mountain Rescue Base of Patterdale we had an excellent room for our sessions with perfect technical facilities, in the middle of the marvelous landscape of the Lake District with its beautiful lakes and hills.

We did some good paper work and went ahead with a series of recommendations. We had also a special guest! David Hillebrandt (Vice President, UIAA Medcom) joined us for two days. We were very happy that David is well recovered from his severe illness.

On Saturday we went out and made a very nice excursion to the Helvellyn (3116 ft). Moreover, as a final great event, we attended a medical session at the University College of St Martin in Ambleside, a

very nice historical town in the heart of the Lake District, where we could give some lectures on different topics to about 100 physicians, paramedics and rescue people. To combine our meeting with this very interesting medical conference was an excellent idea; congratulations, John. In conclusion, I do not exaggerate saying that this was one of the best meetings in the last years. I would wish to thank John Ellerton, and his colleagues from the Mountain Rescue Council and the Patterdale Rescue Team who helped to arrange this meeting. Thanks also to the Association of British Members of the Swiss Alpine Club, the owner of the George Starkey Hut, where we were invited to stay overnight.

Another highlight of this year took place in Aviemore, Scotland from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> October 2007, where was the VIII World Congress on Mountain Medicine, sponsored by the WMS and the ISMM in equal shares. I must say, the Congress was very well organised and a great event with about 400 participants coming from all over the world. To meet so many old friends and to make new ones was absolutely the best. Also the scientific programme was interesting, a good mix between high altitude physiology and practical wilderness medicine. Eric Johnson gave a presentation about lightning strikes confirming Ken's ICAR MEDCOM recommendations. Chris Imray gave an update of frostbite treatment, but no new aspects have been presented. And, David Warrell had a lecture on terrestrial venomous snakebites and stings. His presentation was compatible with our recommendations, but it is a pity that Jeff Boyd had not the opportunity to take part; particularly as our recommendation includes a completely new algorithm that would have been interesting for the auditorium.

Günther Sumann gave an excellent presentation on our new recommendation on fluid replacement, which was met with great interest in the auditorium and was extensively discussed. Thank you, Günther, for this very good performance. On Saturday was a session about mountain rescue where Colin Grissom and Bruno Durrer talked about avalanche rescue and I have presented the study about mountain emergency medicine in Europe and North America. In addition I have added some information on our new Diploma of Mountain Emergency Doctor. After the presentation several colleagues came to me asking for more information about the International Diploma and where the courses will be held. I have the impression that our Specialty Courses in Mountain Emergency Medicine are of more interest than we believed.

With Buddha Basnyat, I had a talk about a course in mountain emergency medicine for physicians and sherpas in Nepal. Buddha said that he would be happy if we could come to Nepal in order to organise a one week course in or near Kathmandu. Fabiola León-Levarde from Peru has also asked if we could be able to hold a rescue course in Peru before or after the next World Congress 2010. The DVD was on sale at the ISMM stand and the DVD was played on a screen in the lobby during the three days of the congress.

So, the whole congress was highly interesting and we all enjoyed the experience. 13 ICAR MEDCOM members have attended (Gege Agazzi, Buddha Basnyat, Hermann Brugger, Ramon Chioconi, Bruno Durrer, John Ellerton, Xavier Ledoux, Maria Antonia Nerin, Oliver Reisten, Sven Skajja, Inigo Soteras, Steve Teal, Ken Zafren).

On Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> October, before the congress commenced, a joint meeting between ICAR and UIAA MEDCOM was held in the Glenmore Lodge near Aviemore. 10 members from ICAR and 15 from UIAA MEDCOM with Buddha Basnyat as President and David Hillebrandt as Vice-President as well as Jim Milledge from ISMM, were present at the meeting. In particular, we discussed the revision of the Diploma. After the meeting, David Hillebrandt invited us for lunch and I would like to thank David very much indeed for this initiative.

On Friday 5<sup>th</sup>, I have attended the meeting of the Executive Committee of ISMM. Jim Milledge is going to be replaced by Marco Maggiorini next year and the next World Congress will be held in 2010 in Arequipa Peru, organised by Fabiola León-Levarde. At this session I have briefly presented the goals and future projects of ICAR MEDCOM and proposed that ICAR should have more time during the Congress for the presentation of its scientific work and recommendations. Moreover, I have addressed John West as Editor in Chief of the High Altitude Medicine And Biology Journal saying that we would be very grateful if at least one emergency medical publication per issue could be considered and eventually find a place in the journal.

We have had two IKAR-EC meetings this year, both in Benken, Switzerland. The first was in January where I was substituted by Fidel due to a knee operation.

The second was on 6<sup>th</sup> September. As suggested by some ICAR MEDCOM members, I proposed to the committee to separate the costs for the Congress from the costs for accommodation at the annual meetings. All EC members declined to accept this proposal.

Another item was the ICAR recommendation on avalanche rescue devices. This project did not meet a great interest in the committee. Most of the members are not convinced that there is a need for a publication and they find that putting the paper on the internet will be enough. So I decided to withdraw this paper.

## 6. FINANCIAL REPORT

@ 8500 euro in bank. Sales of DVD continue. **Delegates** to send Fidel a stock balance by Dec 2007.

## 7. DVD 'TIME IS LIFE'

DVD sales continue – about 400 left. Consensus Guidelines - very few left largely with delegates. **Delegates** reminded to give Fidel the money for those sold.

## 8. INTERNET

Changes to ICAR website will be demonstrated later – ability to alter addresses in the restricted area to be added. **Delegates** reminded to register with their personal data on the ICAR website.

List server working well.

## 9. UIAA/ICAR/ISMM DIPLOMA IN MOUNTAIN MEDICINE

John Ellerton reported on the UIAA/ICAR/ISMM joint meeting held in Aviemore, Scotland (Oct 2007). The Regulations had been updated and would be shortly placed on the member organisations web sites. Changes included: formation of an administrative team to approve courses (Brugger, Ellerton, Brink/Watson for ICAR Medcom); option for course organisers to accept paramedics/nurses and award successful candidates a UIAA/ICAR/ISMM certificate; clarification that the common/basic course was of 100hrs study of which 40% was for the organiser to determine depending on local need; Speciality courses in Rescue (including an additional helicopter module) and expedition/wilderness defined as additional to the common course. Future developments discussed including *not for profit*, external verification of standards, re-accreditation and other issues but not incorporated into Regulations at this stage. Next joint meeting in 3 years!

Speciality rescue modules – currently 4 approved organisers; IKAR Medcom (Fidel Elsensohn), Air Zermatt (Oliver Reisten), OGAHM & Air Rescue College of Christophorus HEMS (Günther Sumann) and Transfrontier hospital, Spain (Inigo Soteras). ICAR Medcom has been asked to do a rescue module in Nepal and Peru. English language course (Air Zermatt) will start next year.

## 10. PAPERS & PUBLICATIONS SUBMITTED OR IN PRESS

Boyd J, Agazzi G, Svajda D, Morgan A, Ferrandis S, Norris B. Snakebite injuries in mountainous terrain: prevention and on-site treatment. *Wild Environm Med*, published

Paal P, Ellerton J, Sumann G, Demetz F, Mair P, Brugger H. Basic Life Support ventilation in mountain rescue. *High Altitude Medicine & Biology*, published

Brugger H, Zweifel B, Etter HJ, Mair P, Ellerton J, Durrer B, Elsensohn F, Boyd J, Sumann G, Falk M. The impact of avalanche rescue devices on survival. *Resuscitation*, published

Jacomot H, Zen Ruffinen G, Winterberger E, Syme D, Ledoux X, Jelk B. The use of extrication devices in crevasse accidents. *Wild Environm Med*, in press

## 11. PAPERS IN PREPARATION

a) Zuljan I, Agazzi G, Svajda D, Boyd J, Ellerton J. Eye problems in mountain rescue.

Corresponding author changed to **Ellerton**, pictures – leave out, UIAA comment (**Buddha Basnyat**) – plan to submit by Christmas

b) Sumann G, Zenruffinen G, Brugger H, Ellerton J, Paal P, Dahlberg T, Zafren K, Mair P. Fluid management in traumatic shock – practical implications for mountain rescue

To be completed (**Brugger**) and submitted (**Sumann**)

c) Elsensohn F, Swangard M, Paal P, Niederklapfer T. Medical training in Mountain Rescue (co-operation with other ICAR commissions)

Questionnaires complete by @ 30 organisations, medical training preferred to first aid, problem of different levels not equating between organisation. Shortening paper and obtaining kennels of information important for a successful paper. To complete at the next meeting (Elsensohn).

d) Tomazin I, Soteras I, Reisten O. Statement on an 'ideal' air rescue service in terms of integration between the services involved (co-operation with other ICAR commissions).

5300 cases collected; research element on quality progressing; ideas on measures of quality and subgroup analysis (time critical patients) discussed; aim at a scientific paper. 2<sup>nd</sup> stage of research – questionnaire outlined; usefulness discussed. Quality is not just outcome but patient comfort. Air commission contact at this stage to develop a short joint recommendation – still under discussion.

Research components to be presented in draft in Spring (Tomazin).

f) Ellerton J, Elsensohn F, Dementz F, Jacomet H, Svajda D, Tomazin I, Paal P. Splinting: Axial - KED, C-collars, spine board, vacuum mattress, pelvic; Extremity - SAM, vacuum, traction.

Spinal immobilisation – systematic review using a Cochrane approach – specific new questions, aspiration risks or peripheral systematic review –including femur; this was the favoured focus. Draft for the spring meeting (Ellerton).

g) Elsensohn F, Zenruffinen G, Ellerton J, Sumann G, Zafren K, Nerin MA, Brugger H. Initial assessment of casualties in the mountains.

Intended for mountain rescuers and paramedics/doctors. Draft/frame for rescuers agreed (Elsensohn).

## 12. SHORT COMMUNICATIONS

Brugger H, Walpoth B. The European hypothermia registry

Best treatment for severe hypothermia particularly in the prehospital phase is largely unknown. EU funding (COST project) application has been made - challenging ratio for acceptance. Erik Sandstrom (Sweden) wishes to join the network. Questionnaire, data sheet and small working group progressing – hopefully to be present at the spring meeting.

Brugger H. Short report on recent 80,000 m<sup>3</sup> rock fall on Mount Einser, Dolomites, Italy.

150 rescuers, 4 emergency Drs – fortunately no casualties. Dust exposure – late complications are unlikely as silicate level in rock was very low.

Barcellona F. (Diemme International) New re-warming techniques & obtaining core temperature reading in the pre-hospital management of hypothermic patients.

Update – The carbon fibre re-warming system has been tried by 118 Bergamo helicopter. Electronic thermometer – two standard 400 probes; wt 200g; battery rechargeable; alarms; electronics will work to -20°C; no memory yet; price 600 euros without memory and print out.

Presentation of Life Bag (Snow pulse)

30 litres pack – able to separate storage area from airbag. 1.3kg, 3 litres volume for the 150 litre airbag; shape of airbag designed to reduce trauma to head and, if casualty is prone, head up. Refill at @200 bar from SCUBA set. EC certificated. No tests on the forces on the cervical spine with this model but generally well received as an improvement. It should be on sale in 2 months for 800 euros.

First aid application for mobile phone advice

Rammimair Georg, President of the White Cross South Tyrol presented a free programme to encourage persons to give first aid. (German & Italian) Also includes emergency number for countries. Download from [www.wik-cb.bz.it](http://www.wik-cb.bz.it) 4000 downloads but no evaluation as yet. Is there a need for mountain specific information – emergency numbers, avalanche etc.? Cost is the only issue. Update is manual at present.

### 13. NEW PAPERS

In the future only two authors (first and senior author) per new paper should be fixed and additional co-authors nominated during work – substantial contributions needed for authorship.

- a) 2008 Ledoux X, Zenruffinen G, Kosinski S, Nerin MA, Brugger H. Medical assistance at mass events in the mountains.
- b) 2009 Elsensohn F, Demetz F, Chioconci R, Tomazin I, Brugger H. Post-traumatic stress disorders in mountain rescue. Focus on rescuers – Austrian contacts
- c) 2009 Milani M, Watson D. Airway management and intubation including alternative devices in mountain rescue.
- d) 2009 Soterias I, Reisten O, Wiget U. Update on ‘a modular first aid for alpinists, mountain guides and alpinist physicians’
- e) Unclear Zafren K, Mair P, Ledoux X. Prevention and on-site treatment of the “suspension syndrome”.
- f) Unclear Sumann G, Dahlberg T, Swangard M, Zafren K, Brugger H. Medical aspects of search for missing persons in mountainous and remote areas (co-operation with other ICAR commissions).

### 14. FORTHCOMING EVENTS ICAR

#### ICAR

2007 November 2 -16 Informal meeting (South Africa) – no update

2008 April 23 – 27 ICAR MEDCOM spring meeting (organised by Mario Milani)

Will be at Pian dei Resinelli, Grigne area, near Lecco, Italy. All ‘Milan’ airports near. Papers to be discussed: Medical training in Mountain Rescue (final) (Elsensohn), Ideal Helicopter system (draft) (Tomazin), Peripheral splints (draft) (Ellerton), Modular first aid sacks (frame) (Reisten), Initial assessment of casualties (frame) (Elsensohn)

2008 October 08 – 12 ICAR MEDCOM fall meeting & general assembly (Chamonix, France)

2009 March-April ICAR MEDCOM spring meeting (Bulgaria)

? 2009 April 1<sup>st</sup> 2 weeks – ICAR Medcom Speciality Rescue Course, Nepal (Ken, Iztok, Günther, Oliver, Marie-Anne, John, Steve, Hermann, Fidel expressed interest)

2009 October ICAR MEDCOM fall meeting & general assembly (Switzerland, Zermatt)

2010 March-April ICAR Medcom spring meeting venue Norway/?Spitzbergen

? 2010 Fall ICAR Medcom Speciality Rescue Course, Peru in conjunction with next World Congress

#### OTHER EVENTS

2007 Nov 03, Austrian & International Mountain Rescue Doctors meeting (Innsbruck, Austria; German language)

14<sup>th</sup> December 2007, Cortina (Italian, English) Accidental Hypothermia

Minutes taken by John Ellerton. Thank you very much!

Pontresina, Switzerland 20<sup>th</sup> Oct 2007