



**Balint Bulletin No. 10
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AUSTRALIAN NEWS

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Balint Leaders Workshop- Hobart 2007

Our first Balint Leaders Weekend will be held in Hobart from May 31-June 3, 2007. The workshop is for anyone interested in Balint groups for GPs, and particularly those interested in leading groups, whether or not they have previous experience. Participants must be in clinical practice and willing to present cases.

Most of the work will be done in small ongoing groups with designated group leaders. Each small group will conduct a number of Balint group sessions, with opportunities for participants to present cases and to lead or co-lead sessions and receive feedback. There will also be topic-focused sessions, large group discussions and social activities.

Three highly experienced members of the American Balint Society will be guest leaders at this workshop – Clive Brock, Frank Dornfest and Albert Lichtenstein, together with Australian leaders.

For further information, go to <http://www.balintaustralia.net/events.htm>

Workshop in Perth 2007

There will be a Balint workshop in Perth with visiting American Balint leader Albert Lichtenstein and Marion Lustig on June 16-17. Details TBA.

Scientific meetings 2007

There will be scientific meetings in Sydney on June 5 and in Brisbane on June 7 with visiting American Balint group leader, Dr Frank Dornfest. Details TBA.

There will be a seminar in Perth on June 18 with visiting American Balint group leader Dr Albert Lichtenstein. Details contact <wwolman@westnet.com.au>

INTERNATIONAL BALINT FEDERATION

We have applied to be affiliated with the International Balint Federation and expect our application to be accepted at their next Council meeting in Potsdam, Germany later this month.

RECENT EVENTS

Scientific meetings 2006

In 2006 we hosted two scientific meetings with visiting German Balint experts Heide Otten (President of the International Balint Federation and Secretary of the German Balint Society) and Ernst Petzold, who is the President of the German Balint Society:

Melbourne meeting on September 28: A participatory workshop: "The Benefits of Balint Groups " and Sydney meeting on October 3.: An interactive lecture: "Balint groups and their value in medical practice" (Sydney meeting co-sponsored by the Balint Society of Australia and the Doctors Health Advisory Service (NSW) and held at A.M.A. (NSW) premises).

In both meetings, our visitors gave an introductory talk followed by a "fishbowl" Balint group. Volunteers formed an impromptu Balint group, with the rest of the attendees observing. There was a lively discussion afterwards. 19 people attended in Melbourne and 40 attended in Sydney.

Participants' comments included:

“I did enjoy the meeting - Heidi is just lovely. the smoothness of her work is a real mark of her skill and experience. It was a marvellous opportunity to see a master in action” (Hilary Ash, Melbourne).

“Heide presented a very polished power point presentation about the principles of Balint. Heide was able to provide research statistics to back up the claim that Balint helped support doctors in their practice. The evidence was impressive...Heide used the traditional Balint technique with great skill. A GP in the group presented his problem and a lively discussion ensued...Most comments were supportive and encouraging however there were one or two challenging comments about psychoanalysis and its lack of practicality. All in all the evening I felt was a great success...” (Tom Wilmot, Sydney).

RACGP Brisbane, 2006

For the third successive year, we ran a Balint workshop and a Balint leadership workshop at this annual national GP conference October 5-8, 2006. Most of the work in the Balint workshop was in two small groups, led by Heide Otten and Bill Betts respectively, with opportunities for a number of other group leader/participants to take a turn at leading the groups. Leader de-briefing sessions allowed the leaders to share their knowledge and experience about Balint group leadership.

There was also a fascinating Balint-influenced workshop co-led by Heide Otten and John Barton entitled “Action and reflection – a new method for running a case based peer group”.

Heide Otten in thanking us for hosting her visit to Australia, called it “ a wonderful stay... The doctor-patient-relationship brings up fascinating stories wherever! A warm and hearty thank you to all, who were with us during our stay, who hosted us, worked with us, supported us...”

Balint group opportunities

There are people working towards starting new groups in Perth (contact Wendy-Lyn Wolman), Sydney (contact Laurie Lovell-Symons and Canberra (contact Jane Sheedy). A new group in Sydney is looking for additional members (contact Leonie Sullivan) and a Melbourne group requires new members (contact Marion Lustig). Please contact state

representatives to enquire about joining or starting a Balint group in your area. All contact information is on our website at <http://www.balintaustralia.org/contacts.htm>

Articles

An article by Albert Lichtenstein and Marion Lustig entitled “Integrating intuition and reasoning - How Balint groups can help medical decision making” appeared in a recent edition of Australian Family Physician.

- <http://www.racgp.org.au/Content/NavigationMenu/Publications/AustralianFamilyPhys/2006issues/afp200612/20061205lichtenstein.pdf>

Another interesting article: What General Practitioners Find Satisfying in Their Work: Implications for Health Care System Reform
<http://www.annfammed.org/cgi/content/full/4/6/500?eaf>

There are three new articles on our website about Balint groups for medical students in the U.K., by Peter Schoenberg and Heather Suckling. There is also an excellent handout about Balint groups by Heather Suckling.

Press

A feature article about Balint groups appeared in Australian Doctor on December 8, 2006 and can be found at:

<http://www.australiandoctor.com.au/articles/2c/0c04792c.asp>
<http://www.australiandoctor.com.au/articles/2c/0c04792c.asp>

(accessible online only to medical practitioners)

OVERSEAS NEWS

American Balint Society

American Balint Society Leadership Intensive workshops are held twice yearly.

There will be a Balint weekend in Providence, Rhode Island on April 13-14, 2007.

For information on both of the above, see <http://famed.musc.edu/balint/>

Balint Society (U.K.)

The next annual Oxford weekend will be held from September 28-30, 2007.
Information: www.balint.co.uk

International Balint Federation

The next International Balint Federation Congress (held every two years) will be held in Lisbon, Portugal from September 1-5, 2007.

Medical students are invited to submit an essay for the 2007 International Balint Award, in which they describe and reflect on their personal experience of a student-patient relationship. For details of any of the above, see <http://www.balintinternational.com/downloads/15CongBalint.pdf>