



Annual General Meeting 2009

**27 March 2009, Main Hall, Woburn House, 20 Tavistock Square, London WC1H
9HQ at 4.30pm**

MINUTES

Present

Behrooz Astaneh, Iranian Journal of Medical Sciences
Brian Fath, Towson University
Kate Watkins, ESHRE
Andy Williams, ESHRE
Helen Beard, ESHRE
Sam Moore, ACAMH
Teresa Dudley, Rheumatology
Kate Wilson, Rheumatology
Brian Mullin, EMC
Norman Noah, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine
Deborah Kirklin, UCL
Erlend Hem, Journal of the Norwegian Medical Association
Emma Veitch, Public Library of Science
Siri Lunde, The Norwegian Medical Association
Hazel Jones, King's College, London
Jane Alfred, Development
Michele Harms, St George's, University of London
Emily Jesper, BJOG: An International Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology
Bryony Urquhart, Wiley-Blackwell
Seema Kang, The Lancet
Virginia Barbour, PLoS Medicine
Tim Feest, COPE Operations Director
Linda Gough, COPE Administrator
Chris Graf, Wiley-Blackwell
Richard Green, COPE Ombudsman
Trish Groves, BMJ
Charlotte Haug, Journal of the Norwegian Medical Association
Sabine Kleinert – The Lancet (COPE Vice-Chair)

Jeremy Theobald – BUPA (COPE treasurer)
Liz Wager – Sideview (COPE secretary) (incoming Chair)
Harvey Marcovitch, BMJPG (outgoing Chair)
Richard O'Hagan, COPE council (incoming interim Secretary)
Margaret Rees, Maturitas
Pritpal S Tamber, Map of Medicine
Andre Van Steirteghem, Human Reproduction
Jeannie Wurz, COPE Newsletter editor

(1) Chairman's report

We held a strategy meeting in June to decide whether our prime responsibility is to members or whether we have a wider role in the world of research and publication ethics, as the latter seems to have been thrust upon us as we have become better known.

We considered whether to widen our role beyond biomedicine and this, too has happened by default with the mass membership of Elsevier, Wiley-Blackwell, Springer and Taylor & Francis journals which we welcome.

We considered what we might offer to our ultimate funders, namely editors' employers, and held a successful meeting with representatives of all but one of the major publishing groups signed up to COPE.

Issues arose as to how to secure a funding stream and whether our current structure allowed for it. A report on the future structure of COPE was prepared by Richard O'Hagan and led to the appointment of Tim Feest as Chief Operations Officer

We also welcomed two new Council members, Randell Stephenson, editor of Journal of Geodynamics and Chris Graf publisher of International Journal of Clinical Practice.

We lost the services of Tim Albert, who has been a tower of strength to COPE over the last 3 years, especially with getting the Bulletin off the ground. The first issue has now appeared and we welcome the editor, Jeannie Wurz.

Elections for chair and vice chair led to Liz Wager taking over the former and Sabine Kleinert remains in her position. Four Council posts come up for election shortly and will be advertised on the website.

The redesigned website is up and running – amongst other things, members can now vote and register for meetings online .

Tasks completed included provision of dummy letters on responding to issues such as suspected image manipulation, redundancy, authorship changes etc., guidance for the constitution of a board of directors of a learned society journal, the COPE ethics audit which was piloted and went live in January. We have since heard that one publisher intends to request all its editors to complete the audit and will collate the results.

The COPE ombudsman reported on a long-running dispute over COPE's handling of a complaint of duplication where two member journals were involved.

COPE is working on a retraction flowchart and will be contributing to the 2nd World Conference on Research Integrity in Singapore 2010 and the Peer Review meeting in Vancouver in 2009. We will be holding our own seminar in the US in November at which we hope many of our new US members will attend.

A joint project with CrossCheck on antiplagiarism software is in progress as are the arrangements for the content of a distance learning project for journal editors on publication ethics.

(2) Treasurer's report for 2008

Income

Total income for the year was £142,700, up some £100,000 on the previous year. This was of course the result of Elsevier, Springer, Wiley-Blackwell and Taylor & Francis joining all their journals. The seminar yielded £400 from eight paying non-members. Other income was contributions from attendees to the 10th anniversary dinner. The only significant member lost in 2008 was the Dutch Medical Journal and negotiations are underway to get them to renew.

Costs

Product Costs

Printing costs were zero in 2008 as it was decided that the annual reports should not be printed any more. Stationery and postage increased owing to the increased number of members. The internet and web costs were large owing to the complete rebuild and redesign of the website. The cost was larger than expected as the project grew beyond its original scope to accommodate the extra members, and to change to a better content management system (CMS) than the one originally specified. Insurance was as expected. Legal fees reduced from 2007 owing to the company and charitable status being completed.

Freelance Costs

Technical editing was less than expected, as work on the annual reports was delayed. But advertising in The Guardian for the post of Operational Director was an additional expense. Administrator charges were up owing to the amount of work that needed to be done on the website and because of the increase in our members. Expenses were higher than expected owing to extraordinary meetings that were held, such as interviews for the Operational Director.

Meeting / Seminars

Forum meeting costs were as expected. The Council meeting costs are much reduced owing to there being no extraordinary Council meetings. Seminar costs and expenses were as expected.

Sponsorship / Research

Research costs were lower than budgeted because the second tranche of funding was not allocated owing to there being no suitable projects.

Balance

The balance of the COPE bank account on 12 March 2009 was £152,261.31.

2009 Budget

Income

The total income for the year is budgeted at £176,200, largely dependent on all the major publishers renewing their subscriptions. The seminar cost for non-members is £300 this year to try to recoup a little more of the £5000 it costs to hold and to bring it into line with other commercial conferences.

Costs

Product Costs

Printing costs are budgeted to account for marketing leaflets we have designed to take to various conferences explaining what COPE is and what it does. Post and stationery are comparable. Web costs are for maintenance and for 6 days of additional functionality requests. Insurance increases because of employer indemnity insurance. Marketing costs are increased to buy a pull-up banner to display at conferences. Legal fees are minimal and cover contracts COPE enters into with suppliers. Accountancy fees are needed now COPE is a limited company and a registered charity and has to produce audited accounts each year.

Freelance Costs

The technical editing costs will pay for the last annual report to be delivered. Linda's new agreement with COPE as Administrator increases costs but this will be very necessary now we have a membership so large. Staff expenses pay for the Operations Director to attend all necessary meetings. Other expenses have increased to pay for the Newsletter Editor's travel.

Staff Costs

These obviously pay for the Operations Director.

Meeting/Seminars

Forum meetings are based on the quote for the 2009 meetings being held in Woburn House. Council meetings budget is for two extraordinary meetings if needed. Seminar costs are comparable and expenses are increased to cover travel for our speakers today from overseas.

Sponsorship / Research / Distance Learning

Sponsorship and research cover any projects during the year that COPE wishes to fund. The budget for the distance-learning course covers the first tranche of money for the company building the course and also to pay for the writing of the 10 modules.

Future considerations

As COPE grows, the money coming in each year seems considerable but it must pay for many more services such as this year, for the first time, a full-time member of staff.

There is some contingency in the account and I will suggest that half of this is invested safely (if that's possible these days) for the future in case publishers decide that they are no longer interested in COPE. The other half I suggest an extraordinary Council meeting to discuss a project to fund such as a major research project or funding a bursary for a PhD.

COPE Accounts '06/'07/'08/09

| | 2006 Actual | 2007 Actual | 2008 Actual | 2008 Budget | 2008 Variance | 2009 Budget |
|----------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|------------------|----------------|
| Revenue | | | | | | |
| Subscriptions | 44,966 | 42,940 | 142,700 | 75,000 | 67,700 | 175,000 |
| Seminar Income | -250 | 840 | 400 | 1250 | -850 | 1200 |
| Other Income | 0 | 0 | 350 | 0 | 350 | 0 |
| Total | 44,716 | 43,810 | 143,450 | 76,250 | 67,200 | 176,200 |
| Product Cost | | | | | | |
| Printing | 1,118 | 250 | 0 | 2,500 | -2,500 | 500 |
| Post / Stationery | 8 | 144 | 332 | 150 | 182 | 350 |
| Internet / web | 0 | 0 | 31,022 | 15,000 | 16,022 | 3,000 |
| Insurance | 525 | 575 | 575 | 600 | -25 | 900 |
| Marketing | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 600 |
| Legal fees | 6,057 | 7,857 | 2,040 | 2,500 | -460 | 1,000 |
| Accountancy fees | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3,000 |
| Total | 1,118 | 969 | 31,929 | 18,250 | 13,679 | 9,350 |
| Freelance | | | | | | |
| Technical Editors | 2,814 | 375 | 3,927 | 6,000 | -2,073 | 2,600 |
| Newsletter Editor | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3,500 |
| Administrator | 10,400 | 12,840 | 17,290 | 15,600 | 1,690 | 23,400 |
| Expenses, staff | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1,300 |
| Expenses, freelance | 3,779 | 940 | 1,582 | 1,000 | 582 | 3,350 |
| Total | 23,050 | 22,012 | 24,839 | 25,100 | -261 | 34,150 |
| Staff | | | | | | |
| Ops Director | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 36,667 |
| NI | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4,033 |
| Total | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 40,700 |
| Meetings / Seminars | | | | | | |
| Forum meeting costs | 2,060 | 1,885 | 1,956 | 2,000 | -44 | 2,320 |
| Council meeting costs | 0 | 1,639 | 101 | 1,400 | -1,299 | 1,160 |
| Seminar costs | 1,354 | 4,792 | 4,983 | 5,000 | -17 | 5,000 |
| Seminar expenses | 2,646 | 902 | 1,089 | 1,200 | -111 | 2,500 |
| Total | 6,060 | 9,218 | 8129 | 9,600 | -1,471 | 10,980 |

| | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| Activities | | | | | | |
| Sponsorship | 5,000 | 6,926 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10,000 |
| Research | 0 | 0 | 3,250 | 10,000 | -6,750 | 10,000 |
| Distance-learning course | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 17,000 |
| Total | 5,000 | 6,926 | 0 | 10,000 | 5,197 | 37,700 |
| Total Costs | 35,229 | 39,125 | 68,147 | 62,950 | 62,002 | 132,880 |

(3) Announcement of new officers

The Chair announced the results of the COPE elections for Chair, Vice-Chair and Ombudsman.

Liz Wager was elected the new Chair, Sabine Kleinert retained her position as Vice-Chair and Richard Green remains as Ombudsman.

As the position of Secretary (formerly held by Liz Wager) is now vacant, Council elected Richard O'Hagan as interim Secretary until a formal election is held.

AOB

The new Chair, Liz Wager, thanked the outgoing Chair, Harvey Marcovitch, for all his hard work and excellent leadership over the past 3 years, when so many changes have taken place within the organisation. In true COPE style, Harvey was presented with his own personal "flowchart" suggesting the actions he might take on retiring as Chair.