

Dr Kyriakos Maltezis reports to the ABFM

Six months have passed since this wonderful educational event WONCA Europe Conference, in Warsaw, Poland. A lot of things have happened during this period that affected my everyday performance in the surgery in a small village, two hours outside Athens, Greece. Mainly the most important factor that influenced my job this period is the economic crisis in Greece. Salaries and pensions cut down, too much fear about the future and a lot of stress disorders that came up. As a result, resources both in the primary care budget and also in the family's budget are extremely lower.

All these facts directed much more people from the private to the public health care system. The patients per day are much more - so when you have to consult more than 50 people per day, you have less than 10 minutes per consultation. You may find it difficult to believe but lots of patients (especially older) with co-morbidities, increasingly more often ask me to choose which pills they can stop as they cannot afford the monthly cost of their medication, or in order to help financially (even with a small amount) their unemployed children. As the insured patients, since January 2012, are obliged to an extra 15% cost for laboratory tests, even the usual check up (eg for osteoporosis, HbA1c, GFR estimation in CKD, lipids) is usually postponed or rejected by several patients. Trying to overcome these barriers against the spread of non communicable diseases (NCDs), I established the "educational days" in several chronic diseases where I focused on the importance of exercise, walking, diet and other lifestyle modifications that can help prevent or treat NCDs with fewer medications. These "educational days" also helped several local networks and self-support groups to be created.

The second thing WONCA Europe conference 2011 implemented in my everyday practice had to do with immigrant's services. I started to record more effectively all the sporadic emergency cases in my surgery and through these immigrants I tried to build some bridges with others who never usually appear to my surgery. I also had contacts with the local Mayor – plus the local networks I mentioned above - in order to offer them whatever possible for covering their essential needs. Probably some of them will be my target group in my thesis for my Master in General Practice and scientific research in primary care under Professor Lionis (University of Crete) throughout [the RESTORE project](#).

I also became a volunteer member in a pilot program under the Greek Orthodox Church for serving immigrants, homeless and people in need . With a specially equipped vehicle, a group of doctors (usually GP, pediatrician, surgeon) once every week, visits several parishes where people in need are being recorded, examined and given emergency medication if needed, for free. The project steadily expands in order to offer real primary care services in the near future. As I mention through my previous report, the most valuable "lesson learned" that WONCA Europe conference 2011 taught me was the "act local – think global" way of thinking. My participation in this pilot program under the Greek Orthodox Church and in the RESTORE program plus the local community networks in my responsibility population are results of this responsible "*act local – think global*" process.

If I had not been selected as the first European Alain Montegut Global Scholar, this educational journey might never had started - so let me finally express my acknowledgements to the ABFM and personally to the President Mr James Puffer once more, for offering me this wonderful experience.

Yours Sincerely,
Kyriakos Maltezis