The First GP Congress

A look-back at August 1978 in Johannesburg and the Renaissance of the Family Practitioner by the late Professor HW Snyman reported by George Davie.

Introduction
The Faculty Committee of the College accepted the fact that the time was ripe for the first Congress for General Practitioners. It was suggested that the organisation should be shared by all groups in the Republic interested in the furthering of good general practice.

A representative committee of active bodies in the northern part of our country was constituted, and Lilly/Dista Pharmaceuticals, who offered to partially underwrite the Congress costs, was also represented.

This committee consisted of:
Dr B Feiler
Dr G Davie
Prof D van Staden
Dr P Cusins
Dr R Berell.

This Congress was the first to be organised solely by General Practitioners, and most of the papers delivered were by General Practitioners, many in active practice.

The Congress was the first of the combined efforts of:
- The Faculty of General Practice of the College of Medicine of South Africa.
- The National General Practitioners Group of the Medical Association of South Africa.
- The Department of Family Practice of the University of Pretoria.
- The Division of Continuing Education of the University of the Witwatersrand.
- Lilly/Dista Laboratories.

We have been questioned as to why we organised this Congress. Well, first we wanted to have a Congress for our own discipline, and then those of us who have been fortunate enough to attend the World Conferences organised by WONCA (that is the World Organisation of National Colleges and Academies of General Practice) realise the vital and important role South African General Practitioners have played in this international body. Our contributions to the political and scientific fields have been immense, so much so that two of our members are on the World Council, and one is a member of the Executive Committee.

Thus, up to August 1978, the General Practitioner in the Republic and the neighbouring territories have coped exceptionally well in surviving the modern changes and attitudes towards General Practice - what of our future needs?

Will we be able to justify our present international standing?

The advances made in the delivery of primary and continuing care by General Practitioners throughout the world over the past two decades has been tremendous, thus we realised that there was an urgent necessity for General Practitioners from South Africa and neighbouring territories to gather together to discuss important issues which directly affect our relationships with our colleagues, our patients, and at the same time, improving our own standards.

Hopefully at the conclusion of this Congress, legislators for the future of General Practice in South Africa will be aware of our discipline’s urgent requirements – the two most important issues being: Firstly, the establishment of Departments of General Practice (or Family Medicine) at each of the Medical Schools in the Republic of South Africa, for, at the moment only one such Department is effectively in existence - at the University of Pretoria.

Secondly - the Republic must be one of the few remaining countries of the world where the doctor just out of Medical School, or having completed a year of internship, can commence practice as a General Practitioner without having had any vocational training whatever, thus the establishment of vocational training centres is essential for our future.

These essential issues for the future General Practitioner in South Africa, and many other problems, were considered.
### CONGRESS PROGRAMME AUGUST 1978

**Opening address by Dr BM Fehler, Convenor of the Congress Committee**

**Die Renaissance van die Huisarts**  
*Professor HW Snyman*

**The Pharmacist and the GP**  
*Mr R Pegg*

**Standards for Undergraduate & Postgraduate Training**  
*Professor GR Beaton and Dr Peter Cusins*

**Verwyding na Speciaaliste en Paramedici**  
*Professor ADP van den Berg*

**Detecting Neonatal Abnormalities**  
*Professor SE Levin*

**Die Besteck van Huisarts-chirurgie**  
*Dr EW Turton*

**Abnormale Ontwikkeling in die Kleuter**  
*Dr JA Erasmus*

**Cardiology in General Practice**  
*Dr G Clemen*

**Die Nuwe Gesondheidswette**  
*Dr J de Beer*

**A Practical Approach to Alcoholism & Drug Abuse**  
*Dr S de Miranda*

**Medicine and the Media**  
*Mr W Bernard*

**Standaarde in Hedendaagse Praktyk**  
*Dr PJ Schutte*

**Psychodynamics of General Practice**  
*Dr S Lerenstein*

**Learning Problems of the Child**  
*Ms Freda Muller*

**The Normal Confinement**  
*Professor ET Mokgokong*

**Problems of the Adolescent**  
*Dr DR Gurnell*

**The General Practice Laboratory**  
*Dr G Davie*

**Handling the Emergency**  
*Dr JH Lerenstein*

**The Role of Primary Health Care Nurses**  
*Professor L Wagstaff*

**The Cost of Medical Treatment**  
*Mrs Margaret Lessing*

**Continuing Patient Care**  
*Dr B Jaffe*

**Vocational Training**  
*Dr EL Murray*

**Sexual Counselling**  
*Dr BLW Sparks*

**Die Moderne Standaard Narkose**  
*Professor MJ Ungemach*

**Die Waarde van Gereelde Fisiese Ondersoek**  
*Professor AM Coetzee*

**Diagnostic Radiology in General Practice**  
*Dr G Meyer*

**Die Rol van Distriksgeneesheer in die Gemeenskap**  
*Dr NJ Schepers*

**Die Huisarts se Gelde en Mediese Fondse**  
*Dr WJ Pietersen*

**The Psychodynamics of the Life of a Doctor's Wife**  
*Mrs Yvette Fehler*

**Closing Address by Professor F Daubenton**