

REPORT ON THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON MEDICAL PHYSICS

Habana, Cuba
April 8 - 10, 2002

The first Cuba-USA medical physics collaboration was an International Conference on Medical Physics that was held successfully in Habana, Cuba, April 8-10, 2002. The Cuban Physical Society (SCF), the American Association for Physicists in Medicine (AAPM), and the American Physical Society (APS) with the support of the US Liaison Committee to IUPAP (USLC) organized this conference. The meeting was endorsed by the Cuban Academy of Sciences (ACC), Ministry of Public Health (MINSAP), International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), International Organization for Medical Physics (IOMP), International Union for Physical and Engineering Sciences in Medicine (IUPESM), Latin American Centre for Physics (CLAF) and the Latin American Association for Medical Physicists (ALFIM). Partial financial support for participants was provided by the APS, USLC and CLAF. The co-organizers of this meeting were Victor Fajer, President of the Cuban Physical Society and Azam Niroomand-Rad, Vice-president of IOMP and Chair of AAPM International Affairs Committee. Irving Lerch, Director of International Affairs and member of the Executive Committee for the US Liaison Committee to IUPAP represented the APS. The secretary of the conference was Roberto Fraxedas, head of the Medical Physics and Biophysics Section of the Cuban Physical Society.

The objectives of this workshop were to discuss the "Technology and Medical Physics in Patient Diagnosis and Therapy". The main topics covered were: HDR Brach therapy: update and perspectives, Recent Advances in Radiation Therapy with LINAC's, DMLC, IMRT, QA and QC in Medical Physics Procedures, Image fusion in Diagnostic Imaging, Digital Image Applications in Medical Imaging, Signal processing and analysis in Biomedicine, and Laser techniques in Medicine.

A joint faculty of 24 members of AAPM and APS, 3 from ALFIM, 2 from the Swedish Society of Medical Physicists and 3 from SCF offered 42 oral

presentations in two courses, 5 therapy sessions, 4 diagnostic sessions, 4 nuclear medicine sessions, 2 radiological protection sessions and 2 biophysics and laser physics sessions. Also 41 posters were presented in two Poster Sessions followed by discussion sessions. There were a total of 103 participants (29 from foreign countries, 74 from Cuba). The conference was held at Havana's International Press Center, with two conference rooms and a poster exhibit hall.

The program began with welcoming remarks address by Dr. Fajer, Dr. Lerch, and Dr. Niroomand-Rad. Dr. Yamila de Armas, Vice Minister of Health Care of the Cuba Ministry of Health, conducted the closing ceremony and Dr. Azam Niroomand-Rad. Dr. Yamila de Armas made warm remarks regarding the significance of this conference for the Cuban medical physicists. Best hope and wishes for future USA-Cuba collaboration were exchanged.

An evening visit was made to the new facilities of the National Institute of Oncology (INOR), where Dr. Alberto Céspedes (Director of INOR) and Dr. Rolando Camacho (head of the National Group of Oncology) received the visitors. Dr. Rodolfo Alfonso, head of the Radiation Physics Section, showed the Radiotherapy installations and the works performed by the medical physicists.

As in every scientific meeting, not everything was work. The visitors were also able to hear Cuban music and taste local foods and beverages, visit Old Havana and enjoy local hospitality in their free time. This conference left among the participants not only knowledge but also the warmth feeling of brotherhood and friendship.

Last but not least, we would like to express our appreciation to all AAPM faculty and Local Organizing Committee for their extraordinary efforts in organizing this program. The success of this program was due to the hard work and commitment

of AAPM faculty as well as local organizer. We had a memorable experience and made new friendships.

Wonderful memories of this experience will certainly be lasting.

Azam Niroomand-Rad, Ph.D.

IOMP Vice President

Chair AAPM Int'l Affairs Comm.

Professor & Director of Clinical Physics

Georgetown University Medical Center

Washington D.C., USA

Roberto Fraxedas, Ph.D.

Vice President, Cuban Physical Society

Medical Physics & Biophysics Section

Technical Vice Director

Institute of Nephrology

Ave 26 y Boyeros

Habana 10600, Cuba

Victor Fajer, Ph.D.

President, Cuban Physical Society

Centre of Technological Applications and Nuclear
Development

Habana, Cuba

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The American Physical Society

One Physics Ellipse

College Park, MD 20740-3844

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