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#### ESSM Today

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# ESSM Today

EUROPEAN SOCIETY FOR SEXUAL MEDICINE – ISSUE 1 – JUNE 2003

## Welcome to *ESSM Today*

*ESSM Today* is the new, regular newsletter for members and friends of the European Society for Sexual Medicine. Although we are a young society, ESSM is already one of the world's foremost organisations for health professionals and scientists working in the field of sexual medicine. Nearly 2,000 delegates from 68 countries attended our 5th Congress in Hamburg, in December 2002.

I hope that *ESSM Today*, which will be published three times a year, will provide you with an interesting, colourful and useful guide to ESSM and its activities and to news about the developing specialty of sexual medicine. Keeping up with news and developments from around the world is always difficult, but with *ESSM Today* and the arrival of *essm.org*, our forthcoming website (see article on page 7), it will be easier to keep in touch and up to date. You will notice that *ESSM Today* and *essm.org* have a similar, easy-to-read style, but they will also contain all the information and links that you will need to locate original papers and articles referred to in news items.

### Sexual medicine in depth

In order that publication of this first issue of the new *ESSM Today* newsletter would coincide with the 2nd International Consultation on Erectile and Sexual Dysfunctions in Paris, June 28 - July 1, 2003, we have had to produce an abbreviated version on this occasion. Future issues of *ESSM Today* will carry more articles and news, a more detailed meetings and events diary, a 'best of the Web' section and many other features. We will also establish an international Editorial Board, so that we can provide a truly European perspective on sexual medicine.

### Both pan-European and country-specific

Another important objective for the future will be the inclusion of regular articles from the increasing number of ESSM-affiliated, national sexual medicine societies around Europe. As these societies grow and expand their activities, they may have their own 'national' page, combining news about sexual medicine of both local and international interest for distribution in their own country together with the normal *ESSM Today* content.

The future of sexual medicine looks set to be tremendously challenging and exciting, and will involve the collaboration of many different professions and specialties. The knowledge, skills and enthusiasm of ESSM members will be central to its development, and good communication and sharing of information and ideas will be crucial to this. For the present, I



am delighted to offer you *ESSM Today* and hope that you will enjoy reading it, both now and in the future.

John Dean  
Editor  
*ESSM Today*

**Footnote:** I offer my sincere thanks to Ignacio Moncada for all the work that he has done over the past year or so in helping to develop *essm.org*. Without his efforts, neither *essm.org* nor *ESSM Today* would be so far advanced.

# An Invitation to Istanbul

6th Congress of the ESSM,  
Istanbul, Turkey,  
November 16-19, 2003

Emre Akkus, Chairman of the ESSM Congress 2003; Department of Urology,  
Cerrahpasa School of Medicine, Istanbul University, Istanbul, Turkey



It is with great pleasure that I invite you to the 6th Congress of the ESSM, to be held in Turkey, Istanbul, between 16 and 19 November, 2003. ESSM Congresses bring together pioneers and opinion-leaders in the field of male and female sexual function and dysfunction. The 6th Congress of the ESSM, to be held between November 16 and 19, 2003, will be no exception, providing delegates with many opportunities to update their knowledge and share and discuss recent advances and developments with their colleagues from all over Europe.

The Scientific Secretariat for the 6th Congress is preparing a challenging and innovative Scientific Programme of Instructional Courses, Interactive Sessions, Master Lectures and Podium Sessions. The Programme will be complemented by stimulating and engaging industry-sponsored symposia and exhibitions.

## Scientific Programme

Our understanding of sexual function and dysfunction in both men and women has greatly benefited from increasing scientific attention in recent years. In particular, the last decade has brought us much information about female sexual function. The many ongoing research projects and studies in this area will in future enable us to shed ever greater light on this fascinating subject.

Sexual function of both men and women remains a taboo subject, although the degree varies with different attitudes and cultural conceptions, in many countries across the world. However, greater knowledge and understanding of sexual health can only lead to better diagnosis and treatment of disorders and, hence, promote sexual awareness, satisfaction and pleasure. The 6th Congress of the ESSM promises to be one of the more important milestones in the journey towards a greater openness and promotion of new ideas about the sexual health of both men and women.

The era of phosphodiesterase type 5 (PDE 5) inhibitors has opened a new horizon for the treatment of erectile dysfunction (ED) in men. Both diagnostic methodology and treatment options have, as a result of the introduction of these agents, become simpler. However, newer PDE 5 inhibitors are now coming to market, and

this will undoubtedly raise questions about the most appropriate treatment for ED in both physicians' and patients' minds. Some of the current responses to these types of questions, along with the scientific rationale behind them, will be presented at the 6th Congress.

The Congress will also host presentations on new surgical methods and innovative implants and patch materials. There will undoubtedly be much debate on these various modalities - perhaps no more so than in the planned session on video surgery. Importantly, one of the major roles of the ESSM is education of both physicians and patients - an especially key event during Congress will be the promotion of a new educational programme from the society.



## Istanbul awaits

The intense, informative Scientific Programme of the 6th Congress will be complemented by an enjoyable and interesting schedule of social events. The Local Organising Committee is currently finalised this programme but, among other benefits, the planned events will enable delegates to explore the beauty of Istanbul.

Turkey bridges two continents and has, throughout the centuries, sheltered the oldest and greatest cultures and civilisations of the world. Reflecting this, the city of Istanbul is exotic in rhythm yet distinctively Western in feel.

Istanbul - the gateway to Turkey - is the economic capital of the country and one of the most colourful and lively cities in the



world. In its long history, the city has felt the influence of three great empires: Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman. It has been a meeting place of different religions and cultures that have managed to live together

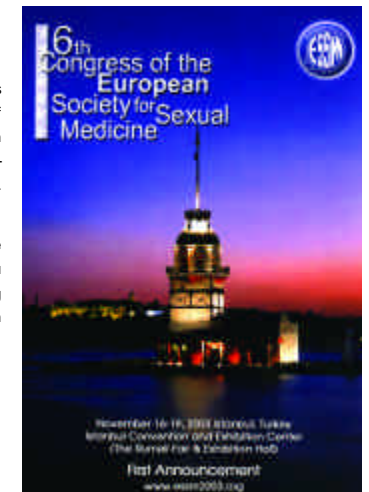
in peace and harmony. It is also an excellent Congress destination that combines ultramodern amenities, the splendours of empires and the time-honoured tradition of Turkish hospitality.

## Ultramodern Congress facilities

Istanbul's International Congress Center is located in the heart of the city's business, cultural and commercial districts. It is within walking distance of many of the well-known international hotels as well as other accommodation ranging from small inns to 5-star hotels. Within the Congress Center itself, top-quality in-house catering services can meet all your food and beverage needs.

Direct flights from all major European cities make it easy to reach Istanbul. While visiting the city, you will be able to enjoy all home comforts while simultaneously experiencing sights, sounds and smells that will carry you swiftly to another culture and another time! The ESSM is greatly looking forward to hosting the 6th Congress of the ESSM in Turkey. Don't miss out on this wonderful opportunity to share the experience with us.

- ◆ Let's meet where the beauty of the continents and cultures meet.
- ◆ Let's meet to strengthen our relations and friendship.
- ◆ Let's meet to get maximum benefit from a scientific congress
- ◆ Let's meet in Istanbul.



Further information on the 6th Congress of the ESSM can be found at [www.essm2003.org](http://www.essm2003.org). The full Scientific Programme will be available here, along with all logistical details including registration, when finalised. Abstracts and posters can be submitted, and there will be full Congress on-line services during and following the event.



Edoardo Pescatori, ESSM European Sexual Awareness Event Coordinator; Andrology Service, Hesperia Hospital, Modena, Italy

# The First ESSM European Sexual Awareness Event, February 2003

## Implementing the Event: an amazing burst of creativity

More than 30,000 posters and 100,000 flyers with the Event slogan were provided by the ESSM to the formally committed countries.

It is a great pleasure for me to report on the exciting experience of the first European Sexual Awareness Event, which took place throughout Europe in February 2003. This initiative was the largest international campaign on sexual health promoted by a scientific society relying exclusively on society funds, at least at a central level.

This article describes how the Event was designed and implemented in different countries. A subsequent article, to be published in a forthcoming issue of *ESSM Today*, will focus on campaign outcomes and on data gathered by an 'ad hoc' survey designed in conjunction with the Event itself.

The proposal for a pan-European Sexual Awareness Event was originally put forward at an Executive Committee meeting of the former European Society for Sexual and Impotence Research (ESSIR) on February 2002. After enthusiastic approval of the project and the appointment of both an Awareness Event Coordinator (myself), and an 'ad hoc' Awareness Event Committee, a long preparatory process was started.

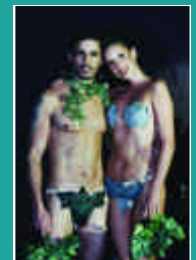
From the beginning, it was decided that the campaign should actively partner with the European Sexual Dysfunction Alliance (ESDA). The ESDA is a European network of patient support centres and helpines that aims to inform and encourage patients to seek medical help.



Each country translated the slogan where necessary, added logos of any national societies endorsing the Event and highlighted possible national initiatives during the campaign. These materials were circulated in many different locations, including GP surgeries and ED specialists' offices, pharmacies, universities, shelters for elderly people, town/city bulletin boards, cinemas, city halls, shopping centres, police offices, fire stations, prisons and corporations.

It has been amazing to see how many original, creative initiatives were organised and implemented by the countries involved in the Event. Here are a few examples:

- In **Greece**, a 3rd Film Festival on Sexuality was announced and *The Red Book on Sexuality*, which included many questions and answers on sexual matters, was published.
- **Israel**, among many initiatives under a campaign theme *It is time to remove the fig leaf*, promoted a glamorous fashion show (right) with discussion about sexuality; reached out to communities usually not exposed to the topic, such as religious minorities, Ethiopian and Russian immigrants, and elderly and diabetic patients; promoted lectures to both medical staff and lay public involving more than 5,000 people, with singers performing love songs and actresses telling love stories; devoted an evening to tasting of 'natural aphrodisiacs'; organised art exhibitions with local artists' paintings and sculptures dealing with sexuality and erotica; and ran nine 'open' clinics.



- **Poland** carried out a street survey (right) on *What do Polish people know about sexuality?*



- **Portugal** organised a successful mobile advice service on the streets of Lisbon.



## ESSM European Sexual Event overview

The idea behind the Event was for the ESSM to centrally develop a common message across Europe, producing core campaign materials, posters and flyers that could be translated into different languages.

Each European country would then hold a national press conference around the time of St Valentine's Day, February 14. Each country would also devise its own national specific initiatives and decide the length (in days) of the Event. The only stipulation was that all such events should culminate on St Valentine's Day itself.

We decided that the Event had to address the issues without discriminating between male and female sexuality. We identified the core message as the link between sexuality and health - thus, if sexuality is impaired medical attention should be sought. The common Event slogan, translated appropriately in participating countries, was formulated as *There's something between your body and your emotions: your sexual health. Ask if you are in trouble.* The translated leaflets, as used in the different countries, are reproduced above.

## European Sexual Event: participating countries

A total of 20 European countries with either ESSM members or ESDA associations were contacted; the invitation to join the Event was also extended to Eastern European countries. The following 15 countries committed themselves to the campaign: Greece, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovak Republic, Spain, Turkey and the UK. Belgium, Russia and Sweden also provided much-needed external support.

## The First ESSM European Sexual Awareness Event, February 2003

Continued

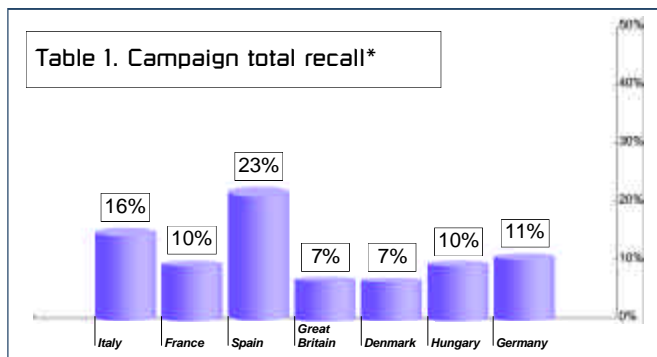
## Implementing the Event: an amazing burst of creativity

Continued from page 5

Further, many countries either activated a dedicated helpline for the Event or monitored the calls of their existing helplines (ESDA countries). Results in those countries with dedicated websites noted a large rise in 'hits'. Many countries also had both national and local TV broadcasting on the Event, as well as dedicated radio shows and national and local newspaper coverage.

## The Survey: Impact of the ESSM Sexual Awareness Event and much more

Table 1. Campaign total recall\*



\*Participants were asked whether they remembered the ESSM Sexual Awareness campaign

The ESSM decided also to appoint an independent research institute to perform a survey around the time of the European Sexual Awareness Event. The survey had distinct goals:

- ◆ To measure Event outcomes in terms of total campaign recall level (see Table 1) and to gather information on the most appropriate media to improve information on sexual health. The aim was to identify best strategies for possible future awareness campaigns on sexual issues.

- ◆ To investigate the knowledge of pathologies affecting sexual function in both sexes and of the medical specialties aimed at solving and/or treating the most common sexual disorders.

- ◆ To investigate attitudes and behaviours when a sexual disorder occurs in both individuals and couples.

The survey was performed in seven countries: Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Spain and Great Britain. It

consisted of 1,000 telephone interviews per country, 400 of which were performed in urban areas, where the Event was perhaps most highly visible, and 600 in rural areas, where the Event may not have had such a high profile. Pre-arranged percentages of males (70%) and females (30%), in an age range of 40-69 years, were evaluated. The methodology involved telephone interviewing with CATI

(Computer Assisted Telephoning Interview) technology, during which a questionnaire containing 18 fully structured questions was administered.

The survey results showed the high impact of the Event (see Table 1). Further, they clearly encourage future efforts for similar and even better Events. In particular, it has become apparent in many countries that there are still high percentages of both men and women requiring education on sexual issues.

A full discussion of the survey results will appear in a subsequent article.

# Let's meet in Istanbul!

## A message from the ESSM President

Dimitris Hatzichristou, ESSM President; Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Thessaloniki, Greece

Since 1995, ESSM meetings have become the most important scientific event in Europe in the field of sexual medicine. The time for the 6th ESSM Congress, to be held in Istanbul, is now fast approaching.

There are several innovations in this year's Congress. Educational courses are now divided in two categories: *Instructional courses*, for clinicians who wish to obtain knowledge in and experience of the management of sexual dysfunction; and *Workshops*, where specific issues will be addressed by experts. Further, *Interactive sessions* that include case study presentations will enable full audience participation.

The Congress Programme provides many opportunities to discuss all aspects of human sexuality and sexual problems in men and women. The structure of the meeting will allow each physician to pursue his/her special interests; it will also bring together general and family practitioners, psychiatrists, psychologists and sex therapists, urologists, endocrinologists, cardiologists, diabetologists, gynaecologists and other healthcare professionals with an interest in the field.

State-of-the-art lectures and round tables on critical research issues, together with formal oral and poster presentations of *YOUR* innovative basic and clinical research, will make this meeting as successful as last year's Congress in Hamburg. So, please submit the best of your research.

ESSM this year has created rigorous guidelines for all activities included in the Scientific Programme, ensuring the highest standards of ethics, science and professionalism. Our generous partners in industry have enthusiastically supported these changes and strengthened their commitment to the ESSM as a whole and the Istanbul meeting in general.

Istanbul, situated at the eastern edge of Europe, and with centuries of history and tradition, offers a unique experience for every visitor. The Local Organising Committee is working hard to organise what will be an outstanding Social Programme.

I look forward to meeting with you and celebrating together in Istanbul.

## www.essm.org: a new, powerful, tool for ESSM communications

The new ESSM website will soon be available at [www.essm.org](http://www.essm.org). The website is being designed and built for interactivity and will, in future, be the main conduit of communication between the ESSM and its Members.

The launch site will contain all information previously on [www.essir.org](http://www.essir.org), as well as a new and regularly updated news section. Over the coming months, we will be increasing the site's interactivity and adding further features. These include membership management areas, search facilities and CME functions. We also aim to include educational resources such as webcasts of audio and video presentations from major symposia and conferences.

One helpful feature will be our planned 'Mail-a-colleague' link, denoted by an envelope icon. You will see this icon on every page and can use it to easily email information to colleagues.

Some areas - for example, our innovative interactive discussion forum - will be protected. To access these features you will need to be an ESSM Member or to have signed-up to the website as a registered user. Full instructions will be available at the site.

We welcome your feedback and ideas as we continue to develop this powerful and important resource. Please contact us by filling in the on-line form in the 'feedback' section.



Preliminary designs for [www.essm.org](http://www.essm.org)

## Acknowledgements

Many people put a great deal of effort into this project, believing in it although at times it seemed that time, personal energies and funds were running out. I am thankful to them all. Of the many, I would like in particular to acknowledge the following: the Historical Group of the Awareness Event Committee: Ciro Basile Fasolo, Ilan Gruenwald, Nille Klinge, Antonio Martin-Morales, Stamatias Papaharitou, Paolo Turchi; Ann Tailor for invaluable help in coordinating ESDA countries; Gyorgy Papp for enthusiastic efforts in coordinating Eastern European countries; Yoram Vardi and Dimitris Hatzichristou for personal support; and the PR Agency Burson Marsteller for a great job, well beyond the formally agreed engagement.

# Looking forward to London

7th Congress of the ESSM,  
London, UK,  
4-8 December, 2004



David Ralph, Chairman of the 7th ESSM Congress; Institute of Urology and Nephrology (University College of London), London, UK

We cordially invite you to join us at the 7th Congress of the ESSM, to be held at the Hilton Metropole, London, UK, between 4 and 8 December, 2004.

The Congress will reflect the 'state of the art' and present recent developments in the science of male and female dysfunction. It aims to foster the work of and provide a forum for young scientists in this rapidly evolving field. The main topics will include, among others, prevention and epidemiology of erectile dysfunction, female sexual dysfunction, new pharmacological therapies, penile carcinoma, Peyronie's disease, and sexuality in aging couples. Abstract submissions for the formal oral and poster presentation sessions are invited from all, but particularly from junior, scientists.

An Educational Programme will run concurrently with the Scientific Programme. Delegates will also be able to enjoy a series of spectacular social events. London in December, with its wealth of museums, theatres and opportunities for Christmas shopping, will provide an atmos-

pheric backdrop to this exciting and prestigious meeting.

The Congress venue, the Hilton Metropole, can accommodate up to 2,000 delegates and is ideally located at the heart of the city. Delegates will be able to take full advantage of both a speedy, 15-minute, express rail link to Heathrow Airport and easy access to the attractions of central London.

Further information can be found on-line, at [www.essir2004.org](http://www.essir2004.org).



## Meetings Diary

16-19 JULY, 2003: BLOOMINGTON, USA

### 29th Annual Meeting of the International Academy of Sex Research (IASR)

Contact J. Michael Bailey, Ph.D., Secretary/Treasurer IASR, Department of Psychology, 2029 Sheridan Rd., Northwestern University, Evanston, IL 60208-2710, USA  
Phone +1 847 49 17 429, fax +1 847 49 17 859, email [jm-bailey@northwestern.edu](mailto:jm-bailey@northwestern.edu), web [www.iasr.org](http://www.iasr.org)

19-24 AUGUST, 2003: LUND, SWEDEN

### 5th European Feminist Research Conference

Contact Centre for Gender Studies, Lund University, Box 117SE-221 00, Lund, Sweden  
Phone +46 46 222 7624/+46 46 222 9778, fax +46 46 222 4004, email [5thfeminist@genus.lu](mailto:5thfeminist@genus.lu), web [www.5thfeminist.lu.se](http://www.5thfeminist.lu.se)

10-13 SEPTEMBER, 2003: GENT, BELGIUM

### 18th International Symposium on Gender Dysphoria

Contact Bean Robinson, Executive Director, HBI/GDA, 1300 2nd Street, Ste. 180, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55454, USA  
Phone +612-625-1500, fax +612-626-8311, email [HBI/GDA@famprac.umn.edu](mailto:HBI/GDA@famprac.umn.edu), web [www.hbigda.org](http://www.hbigda.org)

25 SEPTEMBER, 2003: LONDON, UK

### THE VAGINA DIALOGUES, The Governors' Hall, St Thomas' Hospital, London, UK

Contact Mary Bonner, Education Co-ordinator, INPUT Pain Management Unit, St Thomas' Hospital, London, UK  
Phone: +44 (0)20 7928 9292, ext. 1430, email [mary.bonner@gstt.sthames.nhs.uk](mailto:mary.bonner@gstt.sthames.nhs.uk)

1-4 OCTOBER, 2003: CEBU, THE PHILIPPINES

### 9th Congress of the Asia Pacific Society for Impotence Research (APSIR)

Contact PUA Secretariat 3/F, PCS Building, 992 EDSA, Quezon City 1105, The Philippines  
Phone +632 92 56 740, fax +632 45 44 439, email [pua@info.com.ph](mailto:pua@info.com.ph), web [www.puanet.org](http://www.puanet.org)

16-19 OCTOBER, 2003: AMSTERDAM, THE NETHERLANDS

### International Society for the Study of Women's Sexual Health 2003 Annual Meeting

Contact International Society for the Study of Women's Sexual Health, 1111 N. Plaza Drive, Suite 550, Schaumburg, IL 60173, The Netherlands  
Phone +847-517-7225, fax +847-517-7229, email [isswsh@wjweiser.com](mailto:isswsh@wjweiser.com), web [www.isswsh.org/meetings/program.asp](http://www.isswsh.org/meetings/program.asp)

22-25 DE OCTOBER, 2003: COIMBRA, PORTUGAL

### V Congresso de Sexologia, Coimbra

Contact Os Contextos do Sexo/Audifório dos H.U.C., Contactos: Apartado 9107, 3001-301 Coimbra, Portugal  
Phone +(351) 239 400 454 Ext 12712, fax +(351) 239 828 291, email [geral@spsc.pt](mailto:geral@spsc.pt), web [www.spsc.pt/congresso.asp](http://www.spsc.pt/congresso.asp)

13-15 NOVEMBER 2003: BLOOMINGTON, INDIANA, USA  
**WOMEN'S SEXUALITIES: Historical, Interdisciplinary & International Perspectives Conference**

Contact Gail Fairfield, Administrator, Department of Gender Studies  
Phone USA (812) 855-6977, fax USA (812) 855-4869, email [gfairfie@indiana.edu](mailto:gfairfie@indiana.edu), web [www.kinseyinstitute.org/services/2003](http://www.kinseyinstitute.org/services/2003)

16-19 NOVEMBER, 2003: ISTANBUL, TURKEY

### 6th CONGRESS OF THE EUROPEAN SOCIETY FOR SEXUAL MEDICINE (ESSM)

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