

IMIA

Board Meeting
Annual General Meeting

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Report

IMIA Working Conference

"Progress in BIOLOGICAL FUNCTION ANALYSIS BY COMPUTER TECHNOLOGIES" Berlin, GDR, May 19-23, 1987

This was the first Working Conference of IMIA on this subject and the first one held in the German Democratic Republic.

The Conference was organized by the Society of Biomedical Engineering and Information Processing of the GDR in cooperation with Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin.

It was held at the new lecture centre of the School of Medicine (Charité) of Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin under the auspices of the Vice-Chancellor of this University and the President of IMIA. The Conference was held in Berlin on the 750th Anniversary of this historic city.

The Scientific Programme Committee (SPC) was chaired by Prof. J.L. Willems, Belgium, and the Organizing Committee was headed by Dr. J. Michel, GDR.

The meeting was attended by nearly 200 participants from 22 countries from all over the world, from 9 socialist countries (Bulgaria, PR of China, Czechoslovakia, Cuba, GDR, Hungary, Poland, Roumania, Soviet Union) and 13 non-socialist ones (Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Canada, FRG, France, Great Britain, Ireland, Italy, Japan, The Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden).

The Conference had been called for three major purposes:

- to present essential progress and new approaches opened up by modern computer technologies for analysis and assessment of biological functions, primarily in the context of medical diagnostics,
- to promote integrative thinking of specialists from various fields, and
- to stimulate further optimization and development of computer-supported methods of function analysis for a widening of diagnostic and therapeutic possibilities, especially for preventive medicine.

Various methods of information processing for analysis and assessment of functions of different organ systems were presented and discussed in 76 papers and 20 posters, among which the heart, brain, respiratory and renal systems, as well as of overall regulatory processes.

Strong emphasis was laid on automated EEG analysis and processing of evoked potentials. Perinatal monitoring, ICU and anaesthesia monitoring, decision support and expert systems (biochemical and clinical application) as well as imaging for function analysis

were additional themes of working sessions.

The participants were welcomed in the opening ceremony by Dr. B. Schirmer, Deputy Minister of Health of the GDR, Prof. Ch. Thierfelder, Director of Research at the School of Medicine (Charité), representing the Vice-Chancellor of Humboldt-Universität, and by the Chairmen of the Scientific Programme Committee and the Organizing Committee, respectively.

The scientific programme was subsequently opened by the following four keynote lectures: "Interpretation of Biosignals for function analysis" by Prof. J.H. van Bemmel (The Netherlands), "Integrative physiology: New sources for functional investigations" by Prof. G. Chauvet (France), "Models and artificial intelligence in the laboratory medicine" by Prof. D.G. Cramp (Great Britain), "Silicon and thick film sensors for measuring chemical and mechanical quantities" by Dr. B. Puers and Prof. W. Sansen (Belgium).

On two days the lecture programme was enriched by Lunch Discussions at which invited Experts were available for interdisciplinary discussions of various topics of medical informatics.

One of these eight Meet the Experts events was headed by Prof. P.L. Reichertz, FRG, a highly esteemed pioneer of medical informatics who attended the Working Conference as a guest. His recent untimely death has deeply moved all of us. The contribution made by Professor Reichertz will be unforgotten by all participants at the Working Conference.

The Conference was one of high scientific standards. It turned out to be a forum of intensive multidisciplinary exchange of knowledge and experience.

Receptions by the Minister of Health of the GDR and by the Vice-Chancellor of Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin provided additional excellent opportunities for stimulating talks and an extensive exchange of ideas between scientists from all over the world in an open and friendly atmosphere.

In their closing addresses Prof. S. Kaihara, President of IMIA, and Prof. J.L. Willems, Chairman of the SPC, assessed the conference as very successful in any respect.

A volume of the Abstracts of the contributions was given to each participant at the conference. The volume of the Proceedings edited by J.L. Willems, J.H. van Bemmel and J. Michel is presently being published by North-Holland.

The participants could enjoy a rich programme of culture and entertainment.

Participants from 10 countries took part in the 2-day Post-Conference Tour to Dresden and to Saxon Switzerland. They all were deeply impressed by the cultural highlights in Dresden, including a.o. the opera programme at the rebuilt Semper Opera House, and by the beauty of the landscape of Saxon Switzerland.

After the Working Conference an IMIA Board Meeting was held in Berlin, GDR, on May 25 and 26.