


Working Wonders broadcasted to Russian hospitals in Moscow

The last country to host the EULAR exhibition *Working Wonders* in 2010 was the Russian Federation. EULAR and the Association of Rheumatologists of Russia have a long history together.

всероссийская общественная
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НАДЕЖДА



The director of the State Institute of Rheumatology of the Russian Academy of Medical Sciences (RAMS), Professor Valentina Nasonova, was President of EULAR from 1979-1981. With the State Institute of Rheumatology of RAMS in Moscow being

Russia's leading centre for the development of new methods of diagnostics and treatment and seeing about 45,000 patients annually, it was the ideal institution to display the popular EULAR exhibition. PARE was invited by the Russian patient

organisation, Nadezhda. Nadezhda was founded in 2006 and has about 4,000 members today. Not everybody can afford the membership fee but there are many people who are not registered officially but who support the organisation actively. For Nadezhda there is no difference between members and non-members if people need their help. One of the main ways Nadezhda provides support is advice on how to overcome the bureaucratic hurdles to access free medication.



Nadezhda's President, Natalia Bulgakova, and Professor Evgeny Nasonov speaking at the launch of the Working Wonders exhibition in Moscow



Russian national delegates with the PARE delegation (Florian Klett and Birte Glüsing, second and third on the left, and Marios Kouloumas at the centre), visiting Nadezhda

The organisation started with only 12 regional branches and has grown substantially with 47 branches all over Russia today. 'I personally travelled to 30 regions of Russia and visited the local rheumatology centres of the central hospitals. We organised conferences about new methods of treatment and the importance of patient activities. Our rheumatologists, and namely Professor Nasonov, were instrumental in moving patient activities ahead and we are very grateful for this ongoing support,' said Natalia Bulgakova, President of Nadezhda.

With the Russian Federation being the largest country in the world, there are unique challenges for Nadezhda to overcome. While in other countries a general assembly is usually organised annually, Natalia can only invite members every 5 years as travel is very expensive – it takes about 7 days to travel from the furthest branch, in Vladivostok, to Moscow. 'However, many members of the organisation are treated in Moscow over the year so while they are in hospital we try to meet as often as possible,' explained Natalia. In the future she aims to continue their mission and to found branches in the remaining 36 regions of the Russian Federation.

The launch of the *Working Wonders*

exhibition, on 8 December 2010, was accompanied by several lectures and transferred by tele-video to 53 rheumatology centres of regional hospitals all around Russia. About 1,500 patients and health professionals could participate and connect to the broadcast. One of the main problems of people with rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases (RMDs) in Russia is the lack of rheumatologists, especially in the countryside, so telemedicine is used as way to solve this problem. Marios Kouloumas, Chair of the Standing Committee of PARE gave a presentation on behalf of EULAR and stated: 'We are very impressed by the Russian activities and how modern technology is used to overcome such barriers as distance. It is very inspiring to witness the excellent co-operation between doctors and patients to improve the quality of life of people with RMDs in Russia'. ■

The *Working Wonders* exhibition is continuing to travel across Europe to create awareness of the issues of people with rheumatic diseases at work. Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia, Germany and the Czech Republic are some of the countries where the exhibition is going to stop in 2011. EULAR member organisations interested in hosting the exhibition in their country should contact the EULAR Secretariat for more information at birte.gluensing@eular.org ■



The children's ward at the Institute of Rheumatology is visited by the delegation