INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS ON
Rural Health
Rural Health as a social, economic and cultural engine
SEPTEMBER 08 – 11, 2015
More than half of the human population lives and works in rural areas, mainly engaged in agricultural activities. This ancient human activity produces foods and uses land. In a world where the demand for food is growing very quickly, and the quality and quantity of food are basic needs to ensure the health of millions of people. At the same time, agricultural activities are capable of causing environmental resource depletion and varying levels of pollution. As well, rural areas are directly linked with the wellbeing of entire communities, as demonstrated by the recent outbreaks of infectious diseases that were triggered in rural settings. Despite their major social, cultural, ecological and demographic relevance, rural areas are largely neglected by research, prevention and social protection. Rural inhabitants are suffering from an evident gap in life quality, sanitation, income, and distribution of social protection and economic benefits, including occupational health protections and services, as compared to urban dwellers. Importantly, rural communities are organized in villages, where agriculture and related activities are carried out, very often by entire families, in which women, children and elderly represent an important proportion.

Background

The village is the target of all preventive interventions in rural areas. Only an healthy village, inhabited by healthy dwellers, can produce healthy food for the entire community and respect the living environment. At the end of the 16th International Congress on Rural Health, held in Lodi (Italy) on June 2006 the “Lodi Declaration on Healthy Villages”, was approved, and the Global Movement on Healthy Villages was launched.

The Lodi Declaration highlights that due to the complexity and specificity of rural areas, the approach to rural health needs to be holistic, crosscutting, and integrative. Cross-cutting needs include different levels of expertise, (involving for example academia, rural health practitioners, rural community leaders); amongst disciplines (involving general medical practitioners, occupational and environmental medicine, agronomic sciences, veterinary medicine, rural sociology, and health systems); and among countries, particularly addressing the rural differences between the industrialized world, the growing developing countries and those countries in transition. This was partially achieved by the Cartagena Declaration issued during the 17th International Congress in Agricultural Medicine and Rural Health in October 2009, by means of which the region of Latin America committed to strengthen Rural Health and Medicine in this developing region. However, the following specific objectives remain to be achieved:

- Promoting and enforcing universal coverage and access of disadvantaged populations to Primary Health Care and Occupational Health
Care, to improve the health status of rural workers and dwellers and to reduce social inequalities;

- Improving the overall quality of rural enterprises, to produce adequate amounts of high quality food, taking into account both nutritional, safety and hygienic issues;

- Reducing the environmental impact of agricultural activities all over in the world, through the diffusion of “green economy” principles and climate change mitigation and adaptation;

- Reducing the burden of disease attributable to occupational and environmental risks at the workplace, to environmental pollutants generated by agricultural activities, and to the assumption of unhealthy diet.

The opportunity:

Milan is planning to hold the Universal Exhibition in 2015. The central topic is “Energy for Life, Feeding the Planet”, by means of which the centrality of agriculture and rural areas in the world will be strongly highlighted. This event constitutes a unique opportunity for organizing a four day event, and calling professionals, experts and stakeholders from different areas of health and rural sciences unite jointly to address the varied aspects of agriculture and rural health, aimed at priority setting, making rural health problems visible, and finding feasible and sustainable solutions for rural populations.

The proposal

This event targeting international rural health experts will be organized to ensure the participation of the main national and international agencies and organizations involved in Rural Health. In particular, the World Health Organization (WHO) whose life-long efforts towards “Health for All”, is now reinforcing Primary Health Care services as the way to achieve universal health service coverage. Furthermore, since the den Haag Conference, it enhances the integration of Occupational Health services within Primary Health Care. As well, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, the International Labour Office (ILO), International Professional Associations such as WONCA, representing family doctors and, in particular, the WONCA party on Rural Practice, the International Committee on Occupational Health (ICOH), and any other organizations willing to support activities focused on working towards the above mentioned objectives.

We invite all relevant key persons and stakeholders involved in Rural, Environmental, Occupational and Community Health to support us in the organization of this event.

ORGANIZING INSTITUTIONS IN MILAN: THE WHO CC “International Centre for Rural Health” of the University Hospital San Paolo, Milan in collaboration with the Department of Health Sciences of the University of Milan.
Programme

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 2015

Hall
13:00-16:30
Registration

Auditorium
17:00-18:30
Opening Ceremony
Welcome of the National and International Authorities and Institutions

Programme

WEDNESDAY 09 SEPTEMBER 2015

Auditorium
09.00 - 9.45
Keynote Lecture 1
Biological agents

09.45 - 10.30
Keynote Lecture 2
Physical agents

13.00-14.30
Lunch
and poster discussion

14.30-16.30
Parallel session 1
Biological agents

14.30-16.30
Parallel session 2
Physical agents and healthy agricultural work

Hall
10.30 - 11.00
Coffee break

11.00 - 13.00
Plenary session 1
The new ICD-11 and the ILO list of occupational diseases WHO - ILO - FAO

16.30 - 17.00
Coffee break
17-18.30
Parallel session 3
International Organizations for Rural Health and Basic Occupational Health necessities in agriculture

17-18.30
Parallel session 4
Towards the full coverage of health care in rural areas: primary health care and workers’ health

19.30 on
Social events

Programme

THURSDAY 10 SEPTEMBER 2015

**Auditorium**
09.00 - 9.45
Keynote Lecture 3
Chemical agents and environmental health

09.45 - 10.30
Keynote Lecture 4
Musculo-skeletal diseases

10.30 - 11.00
Coffee break

11.00 - 13.00
Plenary session 2
Occupational Health & Primary Health Care

13.00-14.30
Lunch and poster discussion

14.30-16.30
Parallel session 5
Chemical agents and environmental health

14.30-16.30
Parallel session 6
Musculo-skeletal diseases

**Hall**
16.30 - 17.00
Coffee break
Programme

FRIDAY 11 SEPTEMBER 2015

Auditorium

09.00 - 09.45
Keynote Lecture 5
Green economy: safe production and environmental protection

09.45 - 10.30
Keynote Lecture 6
Gender issues at work in rural areas

Hall

10.30 - 11.00
Coffee break

11.00 - 13.00
Plenary session and closing ceremony
Milan Declaration (?)
Organizing Secretariat

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