

Association of Systematic Kinesiology in Ireland

FICTA Delegates Report 2011 By Clive Lucas and Bridget Mannion



FICTA – Federation of Irish Complementary Therapy Associations
Allows members to exchange views/ideas/discuss and resolve issues/problems
Assists members where possible (e.g. draft documentation)
Puts members' views to Government /statutory bodies, Europe etc.
ASK Ireland is a member – Ted Mannion/Clive Lucas represent ASK Ireland at bi-monthly meetings
They ensure that ASK's views are heard and taken on board when decisions being made
All decisions taken at bi-monthly meetings held in Ranelagh, Dublin
Representative body for 20 members, generally 12/13 at meetings
Steering Committee meets between meetings to progress matters agreed.
Clive Lucas on Steering Committee
Seeking to have more education providers become members

Main issues for FICTA during year:

- Progress Report to the Department of Health enclosing all “regulatory” documents prepared by FICTA for use by its members.
- Survey of Educational Requirements for Category 1 CAM Therapies undertaken by Department of Health and HETAC [Higher Education Training Awards Council].
- FICTA becomes a member of EFCAM [European Federation of Complimentary & Alternative Medicine]
- Invitation to discuss CAM therapy room at Crumlin Children's Hospital.
- Invitation to participate in the Cancer Survivors Conference organised by the Irish Cancer Society.
- FICTA Survey of CAM usage.

I mentioned in last year's report that FICTA had prepared documentation for submission to the Department of Health with a request to meet the then new Minister. The Department indicated that any such meeting should be deferred until the results of their joint review with HETAC of (certain) “Complementary Therapies and Related Academic Programmes” was completed. While this process was underway, HETAC suspended their validation of all programmes for complementary therapies (including FICTA's for a generic award). The results of the review were significantly delayed while the Department and HETAC carried out further research on an international basis and are to be released at a meeting hosted by them on 3rd May next. FICTA's submission to the review emphasised the importance of tailoring education to the type of therapy involved – i.e one size does not fit all. Further information on any recommendations made for the education of practitioners in Category 1 therapies (Osteopathy, Chiropractic, Acupuncture, Herbal Medicine and Chinese Herbal Medicine) will have to await the outcome of that meeting in May. However, it would appear that, for this Category, 3rd level qualifications are likely to be required. Going forward then, it will be important for FICTA and all its members to argue the case for the type and level of education deemed appropriate by them for their therapy.

FICTA became a member of EFCAM around the middle of 2011. The new chair of FICTA has already attended a number of meetings in Brussels. This is a highly important development for FICTA in that it now becomes aware at an early stage of any development taking place in Europe which could have an effect on CAM in Ireland and can hopefully influence its direction through EFCAM. There are a number of European organisations whose members are medical doctors providing CAM therapies and a number of these doctors are of the view that CAM therapies should only be provided by persons with a medical qualification. This is already the position in certain European countries. Therefore, EFCAM has to be vigilant constantly to ensure that such provisions are not enforced on a European wide basis.

Due to the very large amount of work involved, EFCAM, which up to now has been run on a voluntary basis by its small number of members, has found itself in a difficult financial situation which means that they are unlikely to be able to continue working at the present level and also to attend certain conferences which are deemed necessary to enable them to meet with and lobby, policy makers at a European level. With this in mind, EFCAM has requested that its members make a donation on an annual basis in order to ensure that it has sufficient funding to continue its very valuable work. The suggested contribution is one Euro per member of its members practitioner base. In our case, ASK has decided not to levy this amount on its members but to make a contribution of approximately seventy Euro to EFCAM. Most other FICTA members have agreed to do so at this time. A number have yet to make a decision on this matter.

Following a newspaper article indicating that Crumlin Children's Hospital had established a CAM therapy room, FICTA wrote to the hospital congratulating them and enquiring if it could be involved in this project. Following the letter, FICTA was invited to visit the therapy room and to join a committee which would operate and, hopefully, expand over time, the range of services being provided. While only nurses provide the therapies at present, FICTA hopes that this will not be the case in the future. This could be a very important breakthrough for non medical CAM as it is the first time that FICTA has been associated with the provision of CAM therapies in a hospital setting.

FICTA was invited to take a stand at the Cancer Survivors Conference held by the Irish Cancer Society in March last. Again, this was an important first for FICTA in that its members were present to discuss with medical practitioners and cancer survivors how CAM therapies could potentially help such patients. A list of FICTA members, together with their details, was made available to all present.

Very little hard evidence on the extent of the usage of CAM therapies in Ireland is available. In order to rectify this matter, FICTA decided to undertake what it called a "CAM Usage Survey". All FICTA member associations were invited to participate in the survey. You, as a member of ASK Ireland, received a number of e-mail requests to complete the survey in order to ensure that, along with members of other associations, there would be as high a number of replies as possible. The survey closed last week and the results are currently being compiled. These will be made available to all FICTA members in due course.

That survey was extremely important as it was hoped that it would show a very high level of CAM usage through FICTA members so that it could be used in presentations to both the Department of Health and to EFCAM to support our argument that CAM therapies should be an important aspect of overall health care provision in Ireland.

FICTA will hold its AGM on 12th May next at 10 am in the Milltown Park Institute, Sandford Road, Ranelagh, Dublin 6 and members of ASK Ireland are welcome to attend. Some of the subjects outlined above will be discussed at that meeting. End/cl 14.04.11

I present this FICTA Report to the AGM.

Clive Lucas

FICTA Delegate for ASK Ireland 2011-2012