

BASEM External Meeting Sponsorship Award 2016 - Dr Brian Johnson

HEPA Europe 2016 - European network for the promotion of Health-Enhancing Physical Activity. Annual Conference, Belfast 28-30th October 2016



Article by **Dr Brian Johnson**. MFSEM. GP



Welcome to Queens University, Belfast

I am very grateful to BASEM in awarding me sponsorship to attend this interesting conference, which was one of the best I have attended on physical activity. Held at the delightful Queens University, Belfast, with the beautiful Botanical gardens next door, it was especially poignant for me to attend this prestigious university as it was here that both my father and mother trained in medicine. My own sporting gene came from my mother who, whilst at Queens, set up the first organised woman's athletics in Ireland. She also recorded the first ever female quarter mile record, improving them four times during 1947-48. Trips back to N. Ireland for me in the 70's and 80's had memories of the troubles with frequent army patrols and searches whenever entering Belfast. Today Belfast is peaceful and vibrant again and at this conference there was a new war on physical inactivity being fought. The conference entertained 300 delegates from 24 countries, largely scientific researchers and policy makers, who came together to share the best research and policy ideas and disseminate the most effective strategies on the promotion of physical activity.

Held over two and a half days the conference had multiple

sessions across many themes including: active ageing, disease populations, physical activity determinants in children, social disadvantages, policy, sport, non-communicable diseases, workplaces, school based interventions, built and natural environment, physical activity campaigns and more. These choices meant there was always something of interest to attend and meet like-minded colleagues from around Europe.

Adrian Bauman gave a key note lecture on 'What gets published in physical activity research and why it seldom has an influence in policy?' So very true! But that is now up to us in BASEM and FSEM to pursue.

Catrine Tudor-Locke also gave a keynote talk on 'Getting the numbers right: step counting indices for practice and policy.' This talk by one of the leading researchers into



Palm House in the Botanical Gardens

pedometers was surprisingly fascinating and took a simple process and challenged our thoughts on step monitoring. See her research for her explanations!

Speakers from our four home countries explained their household activity results, why they differ and perhaps why there is no real difference in

activity within our counties. An agreement to work towards harmonising the surveys was a useful conclusion.

This conference brings many experts together and for anyone interested in physical activity medicine, particularly if they are going to be a specialist then I would recommend they attend. Next year it will be held



Conference dinner venue: The City Hall



Walkway around leisure centre

in Croatia and returns to London in 2018

Socially the conference organisers made great efforts to integrate the nationalities. Practising physical activity opportunities were available at lunch times varying from rowing machines in the food hall to Shinti on the lawns in front of the university. A conference dinner was held in the historical city hall after a tour and talk on the history of the building. Post dinner, a moderate-vigor-

ous workout then took place with a traditional Céili with most delegates enjoying this and comparing it with their own traditional dances. My pedometer recorded well over 12,000 quality steps that day!

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