

Stronger Together: Charting the Course to Navigate the Future

Anna Stavdal

“In order for our «specimen» – the family doctor – to survive, we need recruitment of young doctors”

Anna Stavdal, president of WONCA Europe, will be a guest of honour at the 5th Vasco da Gama Movement (VdGM) Forum. An event that will take place in early 2018, in the beautiful city of Porto. The Norwegian doctor will deliver a keynote address on the importance of networking to family medicine, during which she will also underline that in these times of non-stop migrations, it is mandatory for health professionals to feel comfortable working in new social and cultural surroundings. In this short interview, Anna Stavdal emphasizes: in order to ensure the survival of the family doctor «specimen» in the «healthcare habitat», it is critical that all countries sustain their efforts to attract more young doctors to the General Practice/Family Medicine speciality.

What are your expectations for the 5th VdGM Forum that will take place in Porto, in January 2018?

I am sure I will meet young colleagues with a creative approach to the serious challenges Europe is facing. First of all, the fact that we still haven't achieved universal health coverage on our continent, the inequity in access to health care seems to increase, rather than the opposite.

You will be one of the keynote speakers, addressing the topic "Stronger Together: Networking Across Borders in Primary Care". What vision will you share with an audience of young and future family doctors?

One of the challenges of contemporary medicine is to defend the broad range of normality, in biology and human behaviour. Diversity is a prerequisite for survival and development. Strong commercial forces tend to push the development in the opposite direction – over-medicalization is a substantial threat to public health. The family doctor, with his/her key role in the life course of individual patients, must protect people against the risk of being subjected to unnecessary medical care, as much as secure support to those with the greatest need to get access to high quality medical care. To do so in an increasingly diverse Europe, family doctors need to understand the society and the context of the patients. We must step outside our comfort zones and learn from people that are different from ourselves. We are also obliged to learn and understand the context of healthcare systems as such, in our own countries and in other European countries. Patients, as well as health professionals, are migrating more than ever. Therefore, sensitivity to differences in culture and mindset is crucial for the family doctor to deliver high quality care to the patient.

Historically, the President of the Executive Board of WONCA Europe has always been a strong presence in VdGM events, such as the annual forums, most of the times with an active participation in workshops or keynote sessions. Do you believe it is important to reinforce that strong bond?

In order for our «specimen» – the family doctor – to survive, we need recruitment of young doctors. In accordance with the importance of diversity, that I expressed earlier, I believe in exchange of experiences and views across borders, even those of gender or age. Without each other, the young and the experienced family doctors will lose a potential momentum for professional development in the field of family medicine. I will do my best to build and maintain a strong bond between the generations of family doctors.

What do you consider to be the main goals of an event such as the VdGM Forum?

Building identity, joining forces and aim at developing messages and statements to share with the rest of the family medicine community.

The Porto Forum is designed to offer a series of “unconference formats” and “out of the box plenary sessions”. What is your take on this innovative approach?

Doctors tend to act conventionally – maybe due to the strong expectations people have of the physician's professional performance. I welcome innovation, and promise to be positive, friendly and critical!



Anna Stavdal, WONCA Europe President





Stronger Together: Charting the Course to Navigate the Future



In January 2018:

5th Vasco da Gama Movement Forum brings together hundreds of General Practice/Family Medicine residents and young family doctors in Porto

The Portuguese Association of Family Medicine will be the host of the 5th Vasco Da Gama Movement Forum, which will take place on the 26-27th January 2018, in the city of Porto. This is one of the most important events for those in Family Medicine/General Practice training and in the first five years of Family Medicine practice as it is a great opportunity to learn and collaborate together in a multi-cultural context.

The Forum's topic is **"Stronger Together: Charting the Course to Navigate the Future"**, aiming at team building in light of the pressing need to collaborate with patients and with other healthcare professionals. The event will cover important and relevant issues ranging from preventive to curative and palliative medicine, rural and urban practice, pre and postgraduate curricula, research and quality, as well as ethical, social and environmental issues related to the future of this discipline.

Teamwork will be tested right away from the first morning onwards – starting with team building activities in the center of the city! This spirit will carry on during the two days of the Forum in the form of innovative sessions, three disruptive keynotes, many ice-breaking activities, among other surprises! There's also going to be a strong social program in one of the most attractive European city destinations as well as a "Healthy Body, Healthy Mind" relaxing session.

We look forward to having a great number of colleagues involved in the different types of activities, so the abstract submission is open until the 15th September 2017. Abstracts may be submitted under the following categories: "oral communications", "posters" that will be presented in spotlight and speed geeking session (posters will be shared previously in social media through promotional videos), "ignite presentations" where you will have the opportunity to tell others about your idea, "special sessions" where you will have the chance to discuss your questions through interactive, innovative methods.

The international and national peers will play an important role in selecting the workshops, ignite and special sessions that will be included in the final program, closely resembling the unconference format. They will also play an important role in selecting the winning communications through dotmocracy and open awards methodology.

There will also be the chance to participate in a pre-forum exchange in Porto which will happen from the 22nd to the 25th January 2018. Everyone's invited!

Registration is already open and each country is limited to 75 registrations. The early bird fee (90€) ends on the 31st October 2017 and from the 1st of November to the 26th of January 2018 registrations will be 110€.

Don't lose this opportunity! We're waiting for you!

vdgm.woncaeurope.org

