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2003 Meeting Report: Keynote Address WFME Issues Global Medical Education Standards

In 2002, the World Federation for Medical Education (WFME), headquartered at the University of Copenhagen, Denmark, issued global standards for physicians' continuous professional development (CPD), announced Hans Karle, MD, DMSc, President, WFME; and President, Medical Society of Copenhagen, during the Keynote Address at the Eighth Annual Global Alliance for Medical Education (GAME) Meeting.

Held June 22-24, 2003, at the Westin New York at Times Square, the GAME meeting attracted 125 continuing medical education (CME) professionals and session speakers from around the world to explore global developments in physician education.

CPD is a broader concept than CME, going far beyond medical training, explained Dr. Karle. CPD covers managerial, social, and interpersonal issues, such as communication skills, patient advocacy, knowledge of public health and health policy, and system-based improvement of care.

Self-directed learning is the cornerstone of CPD, Dr. Karle said, and therefore CPD must be tailored to the needs of the individual physician. A variety of learning formats should be utilized and education should be collaborative; for instance, doctors should engage with their colleagues in learning networks and share experiences. CPD should also include interdisciplinary team learning, when appropriate, he said.

The mission statement for the global CPD standards for quality improvement says that the medical profession, in consultation with relevant authorities and employers, must define the mission and intended outcomes of CPD and make them publicly known. The standards also state that physicians' employers must provide them with the time and resources for CPD. Like U.S.-based CME, CPD must include needs assessment, and educational activities must be regularly evaluated and updated.

These standards should be the basis for CPD providers to design educational activities, he said. The guidelines also can be used by national or regional authorities for monitoring, recognizing, and accrediting CPD. These standards were scheduled to be endorsed at the 2003 World Conference on Medical Education.