



Wonca NEWS

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World family doctors. Caring for people.

WONCA PRESIDENT

DR DONALD LI (HONG KONG, CHINA)
EMAIL: PRESIDENT@WONCA.NET
TWITTER: [@WONCLI](https://twitter.com/WONCLI)

PRESIDENT-ELECT

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YOUNG DOCTOR REPRESENTATIVE

DR ANA NUNES BARATA (PORTUGAL)

WONCA CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

DR HARRIS LYGIDAKIS

WONCA WORLD SECRETARIAT

WORLD ORGANIZATION OF FAMILY DOCTORS
AVENUE DES ARTS 7-8
1210 BRUSSELS
BELGIUM

EMAIL: SECRETARIAT@WONCA.NET

PHONE: +32 (0) 2 329 00 75

WONCA EDITOR

MARIA DOLORES ZAVALA
EMAIL: EDITOR@WONCA.NET

TRANSLATIONS

DR JIE GU
DR HUA YANG
DR JULIEN ARTIGNY

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Dr Donald Li, WONCA President

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Each year on 19th May family doctors across the globe – and many of their patients! - celebrate [World Family Doctor Day](#). World Family Doctor Day is an opportunity for all of us - doctors, members of the primary care team, family members and patients – to reflect on the role family medicine plays in our lives.

It is easy to take for granted the fact that good quality family medicine looks after more than 80% of the world's illnesses and diseases, provides immunization and vaccination against most of the world's preventable diseases, provides education and ongoing support to patients who are tackling long term conditions or trying to take better control of their own health.

The work undertaken by family doctors and primary care teams globally provides the most efficient and effective health care for patients. This is not just a cliché: it is not one of those phrases that, if we say it often enough, it will be true. No. The fact that family medicine is the most efficient and effective way to deliver the best health gain is an indisputable fact, based on rigorous research carried out by well-respected academics. Plotting the course of effectiveness in delivery of comprehensive primary care has been reflected in the findings of the distinguished Barbara Starfield through generations of our members and it continues to the present day.

Research (and the findings from research) in family medicine are crucial mechanisms to reflect more accurately the benefits and the challenges of providing comprehensive primary care in the community setting. Our own WONCA Working Party on Research, expertly chaired by Felicity Goodyear-Smith and with membership from across the globe, addresses a wide range of issues of importance to the growth and development of family medicine globally. Despite huge and ongoing effort, it is still a challenge to adequately and correctly reflect on what inputs in primary care derive the best health outcomes. It is hard to measure many aspects of delivery of primary care in a quantitative way. How can we measure the value of continuity of care over the lifetime of a patient, of keeping a life-long health record for individual patients, of management of multimorbidities in patients, of the recognition and acknowledgement by family doctors of specific challenges facing individual families? As the work of the Primary Health Care Performance Initiative (PHCPI) has shown, collecting quantitative data about primary care delivery is a serious challenge.



Within family medicine, our experience and expertise in Artificial Intelligence (AI) is growing quickly. This is a new development for us and working throughout the pandemic has shown us just how sophisticated telemedicine consultations can be, with high resolution cameras and sound. Despite the excellent resource telemedicine and AI and offer us, nothing will replace the face to face physical contact between a family doctor and the patient, with the doctor taking the pulse of the patient, examining lumps and bumps, using their knowledge of the patient's history to get a better indication of underlying issues, and providing reassurance and treatment.

As family doctors we are committed to delivering the best quality primary care available within the financial and systemic constraints in which we live and work. Nobody wants to deliver bad health care. We build on our knowledge and skills through learning from research undertaken, from sharing best practice with our colleagues, and from our patients. All of these innovations and traditional skills will take us to our future.

Our theme for World Family Doctor Day 2021 is '[Building the future with family doctors](#)'. We have available to us plenty of robust research; we have access to innovations in telemedicine and AI, we share experiences of delivering good quality primary care (most especially during the huge challenge posed by the pandemic); and we have enthusiasm for our profession in abundance. Let us show our clinical and health planning colleagues, as well as our politicians, that building the future with family doctors is the right approach, at the right time, to achieve our shared goal of comprehensive patient-centred health services. [World Family Doctor Day, on 19th May](#), is an opportunity to come together as family doctors around the world and consolidate our call for global commitment to delivery of that comprehensive patient-centred health care to each and every person we serve.

*Dr Donald Li,
President*

WORLD FAMILY DOCTOR DAY 2021



BUILDING THE FUTURE WITH FAMILY DOCTORS



We are now on the road to World Family Doctor Day 2021, and we are thrilled to announce this year's theme: [Building the Future with Family Doctors!](#)

Our 2021 theme, which is aligned with the [Year of the Health and Care Workers 2021](#) declared by the World Health Organization (WHO), highlights the

role that Family Medicine and Primary Care Community (doctors, nurses, members of the primary care teams) play in our lives.

We'll be posting more details here shortly, along with a Toolkit with all the necessary elements for you to join this important date!

Stay tuned for more details!

FROM THE HEADQUARTERS

The [World Family Doctor Day](#), first declared in 2010 and celebrated every year on 19 May, is an opportunity to acknowledge and advocate for the pivotal role of family doctors and primary care teams.

Last year, at the beginning of the pandemic, we emphasised the role of family doctors on the frontline, being those “*first in, last out*”. One year on, the WHO has appropriately designated 2021 the Year of Health and Care Workers, commemorating those who lost their lives in the pandemic and calling for urgent investments in health workers.

We are all appreciative of the efforts and dedication of health and care workers, including family doctors and members of primary care teams. Taking stock of the ongoing crisis, it is also crucial to look ahead. Accordingly, this year’s World Family Doctor Day theme, “*Building the future with family doctors*”, is an invitation to identify those crucial lessons learnt and reflect on the key structural blocks of our future, such as the primary care teams, the patients, new technologies and our global community.

We would like to invite our Member Organizations and the global community of family doctors to come together and celebrate the day in recognition of the central role of family doctors in strengthening health systems. To facilitate the planning of activities at a national or local level, we are preparing a campaign with a media kit, which will be launched one month before the World Family Doctor Day, on 19 April. The campaign will contain key umbrella messages that can be tailored to your advocacy efforts, as well as a media kit with material that can be personalised and used in your communications.

We invite you to check our website on 19 April for the official launch of the campaign material. We would also like to receive reports from your activities and advocacy efforts so that we can share them on the related Facebook page and feature some highlights in future editions of WONCA News.

Mark your calendars and stay safe.

Dr Harris Lygidakis,
WONCA CEO



FROM THE EDITOR

THE THIRD EDITION IS HERE!

During this month, most activities at the WONCA Secretariat focused on the preparations of our [Extraordinary General Meeting in May 2021](#). It has been a busy but fruitful month in which our team have had the opportunity to interact with our Member Organizations in these decisive steps towards modernity and inclusiveness.

Along with the governance activities, we also have had multiple connections and interactions with our regions, working parties, and special interest groups. The WONCA Family stays active even during these challenging times, and it is an honour for me to share the latest news from and for our colleagues around the world!

ABOUT THIS ISSUE

We begin this issue with the [President's column](#) and essential information regarding our flag event: [World Family Doctors Day 2021 \(WFDD\)](#). In his column, Dr Donald Li reveals this year's theme, so I invite you to read the full article and find out more about this important date.

[From the Headquarters](#) also offers detailed information regarding this important celebration for the Primary Care Community. You will also find a brief introduction regarding [WFDD 2021](#) and a preview of the visual identity we have prepared for this celebration.

This issue also includes a short article regarding [World Health Day](#), celebrated only a few days ago. WONCA joined this year's campaign, "Building a fairer, healthier world", with statements from members of the WONCA Executive Committee, regarding the role of family medicine and primary care teams to achieve the fundamental principle of Health for All.

This edition for April also gathers relevant information from our Working Parties, such as this month's free access articles from [Education for Primary Care](#), shared by our Working Party on Education, and the most recent news from our [Working Party on Mental Health](#) with a bulletin written by the Chair, Prof Chris Dowrick. We keep sharing valuable stories on our section "Ageing Lines" from our WONCA Special Interest Group on Ageing and Health and continue promoting young doctors activities with the inclusion of the [Young Doctors Movement newsletter](#) in this edition.

Lastly, we bring you our guest feature by Dr John Wynn-Jones, and his popular [Rural Miscellany](#), along with WONCA Conference News and the most recent announcements and updates from the WONCA Family.

As always, I hope you enjoy this issue, and please remember that you can drop me a line (or an article!) at editor@wonca.net

Happy reading, and Stay Safe!

Sincerely,
Maria Dolores Zavala,
WONCA Editor



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on Social Media



WONCA AND WHO

Every year on 7 April, we celebrate World Health Day, a date focused on raising awareness about the importance of health as a fundamental right, drawing attention to a specific health topic of concern to people worldwide.

Under the theme «Building a fairer and healthier world», this year's campaign tackles current inequities in healthcare conditions, highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), iniquity is not only unfair, but it is preventable, and calls global leaders "to ensure that everyone has living and working conditions that are conducive to good health."



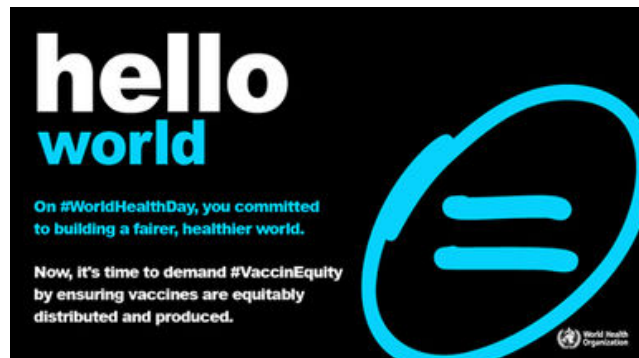
All over the world, some groups struggle to make ends meet with little daily income, have poorer housing conditions and education, fewer employment opportunities, experience greater gender inequality and have little or no access to safe environments, clean water and air, food security and health services. This leads to unnecessary suffering, avoidable illness, and premature death. And it harms our societies and economies.



The WHO also reaffirms the commitment to "ensure that everyone, everywhere, can realize the right to good health."

**with information of the WHO*

On World Health Day —and every day— WONCA advocates for health equity and pays tribute to the work of family doctors and health workers, nurses, & researchers around the world for the great work they do every single day.



WONCA joined this year's campaign, with statements from members of the WONCA Executive Committee, regarding the role of family medicine and primary care teams to achieve Health for All!

"On World Health Day, Family Doctors reaffirm their commitment to **Health for all** and **Universal Health Coverage**.

This is not just an ideal but an organising principle: Everybody is entitled to the highest possible standard of health and **Family Doctors** will lead **Primary Healthcare Teams** to achieve this"

Dr Donald Li,
WONCA President

hello
it's world health day



"Biography and biology are **equal determinants** of human health. Family Doctors are **trained to understand** the interplay between the two.

Health for all!"

Dr Anna Stavdal
WONCA President- Elect

hello
it's world health day



"There is no true World health without equity. We must continue to work together to improve the health of all people through healthy environments, accessible jobs and food, education, universal health coverage, and strong primary care.

World health requires we use a health equity lens for all decisions and care we provide".

Dr Viviana Martinez-Bianchi
WONCA - WHO liaison

hello
it's world health day



WONCA WP & SIG NEWS

EDUCATION

EDUCATION FOR PRIMARY CARE

FREE ACCESS ARTICLES

COMPASSION BECOMES REAL WHEN WE RECOGNISE OUR OWN HUMANITY

So much has been learnt through Covid-19 on the use of the virtual environment for communication and as a learning platform. The WWPE regional Executive have been exploring the global impact. It is crucial we move forward not only embracing what we have learnt but also retaining what as generalists we hold as key holistic compassionate care.

We must not lose touch with the values intrinsic to Family Medicine. For this month, Our affiliated journal Education for Primary Care 32:1 offers some important [FREE access articles](#) exploring primary care education post Covid-19 and argues we must not lose touch with the values intrinsic to Family Medicine.

It also offers FREE access for a month to an important leading article: Integrated clinical learning: team teaching and team learning in primary care. From Roger Strasser and Sue Berry.

Read the full article [here](#).

Prof Val Wass, Chair WONCA Working Party on Education, updates on the latest open access items in Education for Primary Care.



RURAL PRACTICE

BECOME A RURAL SEEDS AMBASSADOR

In order to have a fair world with access for all we need to have more health professionals in rural areas. This idea provided the inspiration in 2015 to start the Rural Family Medicine Cafe project. This was followed by Rural Health Success Stories in 2016 and later we became the Rural Seeds Networking. Rural Seeds was launched in 2017. Since then, many projects and presentations on rural health have been done. We are a network composed mainly of students and young doctors with an interest in rural medicine. Many of us discovered rural by accident and our desire for rural health has turned us into passionate activists and advocates for rural health.

It has been such a journey from a simple idea in 2015 to a world wide network today! The journey has sometimes been difficult but also filled with joy. We have built real connections through collaboration with our project coordinators and also the WONCA Working Party on Rural Practice with experienced rural doctors and health professionals in general.



WONCA WP & SIG NEWS

In 2021, the first ambassadors of this wonderful network are completing this journey in front of Rural Seeds. Our aim was to show those interested in rural health that anyone can be an advocate and that big changes often start with small steps and working together. We are really excited to say that even you can be an ambassador!

Applications are open until May 15th 2021. Results of the selection process will be announced in 30th June 2021.

[▶ Fill the form to be an ambassador!](#)



AGEING AND HEALTH

AGEING LINES: STORIES FROM CAREGIVERS AND ELDERLY PATIENTS

This is a space dedicated to caregivers and elderly patients, created with anonymous collaborations from the WONCA Special Interest Group on Ageing and Health. This section includes inspiring anecdotes for the simple purpose of adding value and quality to older patient's lives.

"Many family physicians in Singapore work in community hospitals which provide convalescence and rehabilitation care to seniors who are in their post acute phase of illness. My team and I work closely with link workers (called well being co-ordinators in Singapore) who provide social prescribing to improve the well-being of our patients.



When the Covid-19 pandemic hit our shores, the social isolation of our patients were severely aggravated. Mobile technology and social media became an essential means of maintaining social connections. Entry to shops and supermarkets require the use of contact tracing apps that run on QR codes and mobile phones. Most of our patients are unfamiliar with the use of apps on mobile phones. Our link workers decided to do something about it and introduced e-social prescribing.

Using the principles of elder-friendly pedagogy, we designed and developed simple lessons that teach smartphone skills such as Connecting to Wi-Fi, QR Code Scanning and use of WhatsApp for staying in touch with friends and family. Much to everyone's surprise, many of our elderly patients responded enthusiastically. The greatest reward for our team was to see the gleam of pride and confidence in the eyes of our patients when they whipped out their smartphones and started calling and messaging their friends and family. They are an inspiration and reminded us that one is never too old to learn."

WONCA WP & SIG NEWS

MENTAL HEALTH

BULLETIN FROM CHRIS DOWRICK

Dear colleagues,

Thanks to everyone who has been involved in the recent discussion of mental health competencies of family doctors. This is so important, not only in those many countries where we are the main (if not only) source of expert help for our patients, but also in those countries where we do have access to specialist care. It is at the heart of what I believe our Working Party needs to do: enhance the knowledge, skills and confidence of family doctors in diagnosing and managing common mental health problems, and where possible build closer and more effective working relationships with our mental health specialist colleagues.

So it is good to be reminded of examples of valuable work in these areas, as well as what still needs to be done:

- Joseph Ariba (Nigeria), our Africa Vice-Chair, is planning a primary mental health care training programme across Africa, and already has expressions of interest from more than 80 family doctors. We will be pleased to support him in this important project.
- We maintain our efforts to continue and expand our advocacy programme for young family doctors.
- In the UK, there are promising plans for policy engagement between our Royal Colleges of General Practice and Psychiatry, co-chaired our own Amanda Howe and by Linda Gask.

We are working closely with Maria van den Muijsenbergh (Netherlands) and members of the WONCA Migrant Care Special Interest Group, to provide information for family doctors who are caring for the mental health of migrants. Thanks to Jill Benson, we now have an exciting opportunity to create a webinar and podcast on this topic, in collaboration with the Black Dog Institute in Australia see:

www.blackdoginstitute.org.au

The World Health Organisation is updating its very influential mhGAP Intervention Guide. I have been invited to join the Topic Expert Group on 'other significant emotional and unexplained somatic complaints'. Next month I am also taking part in a WHO consultation workshop on the public health importance of Parkinson's Disease.

And in our quest to combine music and mental health, I understand from Alfredo de Olivera Neto (Brazil) that the WONCA video version of the Beatle's Here Comes the Sun is nearly complete. I can't wait to see it!

With my best wishes to you all

Chris

Professor Christopher Dowrick, chair of the WONCA Working Party on Mental Health.



YOUNG DOCTORS' MOVEMENT NEWS

A WORD FROM ANA NUNES BARATA

YDM REPRESENTATIVE ON WONCA EXECUTIVE

The Young Doctors' Movements (YDMs) are WONCA's active network that engages youth and promotes intercultural knowledge exchange that helps to create new ideas, projects and initiatives that contribute for the development of Primary Care at the global level. WONCA's young doctors are defined as in their first five years' of practice as a family doctor OR in training as a family doctor.

Each WONCA region has its own YDM that strives to develop its network and engage with the young doctors from every country it represents. You may find more information about the YDMs here.



JOIN YOUR REGION'S YOUNG DOCTORS' MOVEMENT!

WAYNAKAY - LATIN AMERICA

The 2021 cycle of activities officially began in February with the first meeting of the Board of Directors. Present for this meeting were Ana Nunes, Jacqueline Ponzo, and about ten national representatives of the Waynakay's movement.

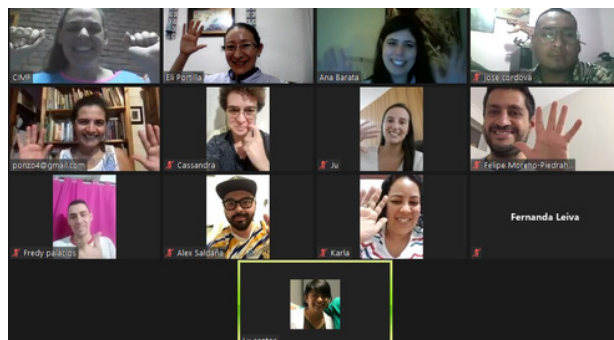
This new year finds us with multiple activities to come, including setting up the next Ibero-American Congress of Family Medicine, which will be 100% virtual, based in the beautiful country of Brazil. Elections for the new Waynakay Board of Directors will be held during this regional event.

We keep on working on the interview cycle "Speaking of Family Medicine", a series of conversations with young family doctors from the Latin American region guided by the journalistic work of Hernán Giacomelli, from Argentina.

This cycle has visited seven countries to date. The interviews are broadcast live on Waynakay Latinoamerica's Facebook Live.

Bearing in mind the enormous difficulties faced by the communities of our America, while responding to the contingency caused by COVID-19, we emphasise the remaining efforts to take care of ourselves.

We hope to meet in person in a not too distant time.



YOUNG DOCTORS' MOVEMENT NEWS

VASCO DA GAMA MOVEMENT EUROPE

BERLIN CONFERENCE AND PRE-CONFERENCE WITH OUR FIRST VIRTUAL EXCHANGE

In December we held our first-ever virtual exchange and VdGM Pre-Conference in the run up to the WONCA Europe Virtual Conference! Both were a great success, with a lot of learning by all the participants, and also by the organisers. The success of the virtual exchange has led to other online exchange events, and we hope that in this way our members can still participate in VdGM in spite of the pandemic.

EDINBURGH ONLINE EVENT

The VdGM Edinburgh Forum has been postponed to January 2022. In the meantime, however, the fantastic HOC led by Sonia Tsukagoshi, gave us a little taste of what they have in store with a fun-packed 2-hour online event. This included inspiring words from Amanda Howe, Anna Stavdal, Mehmet Ungan and Roger Neighbour. We also had a 'Pub Quiz' and Ceilidh dancing!

COUNCIL MEETING - NEW BYLAWS, GREAT DISCUSSIONS

Our Council meeting was held a little later than planned - taking place in February rather than during the Pre-Conference. Among other matters, we discussed and voted on our new Bylaws, replacing the previous Constitution after some hard work by our Good Governance Committee. We also voted on and accepted a proposal to extend VdGM membership by a year to try and mitigate the effects of the pandemic. We had some great small group discussions talking about our strategy and vision for the future of VdGM.



VdGM Special Interest Group Equally Different

TIME TO CELEBRATE WOMEN



Since the XIX century, women have struggled for their rights and inequalities faced. Today we highlighted the importance of fighting for more to conquer more rights and to protect those who depend on women.

1



Effects of Covid-19 pandemic

In 2020 the health of women was adversely impacted through the reallocation of resources and priorities

- Increased maternal mortality and morbidity,
- Increased adolescent pregnancies
- The increased prevalence of sexually transmitted diseases.
- Many women lost access to modern contraceptives.

2



Economic impact

8/10 of the unemployed during the COVID19 pandemic are women.

Before the pandemic women were doing three times as much unpaid care and domestic work as men.

Globally, women represent 57% of those aged 70 years and 62% of those above 80.

With less live income and lower pensions they have fewer possibilities to access care for themselves.

3



Health impact

Up 70% of the health workforce are women -> front-line health workers as nurses, midwives, and community health workers.

1 in 3 women experience violence during their lifetime but the gender-based violence increased exponentially during 2020 as many women were forced to lockdown with their abusers at the same time that support services access was disrupted.

4



Framework for equality

ONU Policy Brief - 3 principles

- To include women and women's organizations at the heart of the covid-19 response;
- To transform the inequities of unpaid care work into a new, inclusive care economy that works for everyone
- To design socio-economic plans with an intentional focus on the lives and future of women and girls.



YOUNG DOCTORS' MOVEMENT NEWS

VDGM-WAYNAKAY EXCHANGE!

On the 14th of March we held a joint virtual exchange with Waynakay. This was a very fruitful day, exploring the health systems in different parts of the world. We would like to thank WONCA for supporting this endeavour, especially Harris Lygidakis. We plan to have exchanges with other YDMs in the near future too!

INTERNATIONAL WOMENS' DAY

In conjunction with the Family Violence (FV) and Equally Different (ED) SIGs, we marked International Womens' Day.



THE RAJAKUMAR MOVEMENT ASIA PACIFIC

During the COVID-19 Pademic, the Rajakumar Movement has maintained its activities through online sessions.

1. Leadership, Entrepreneurship & Emotional Wellbeing, by Dr Erfen Et Al.
2. Basic Medical Research (Myanmar Primary Care Research Unit, Resident Organization of Philippine's Academy of Family Physicians.
3. Alternative Career for Young Doctors (with YDM Global).

Special thanks to Wong Ping Foo (Chair Elect) Mel Acuavera (Secretary) MYA WIN HNIT (Researcher Coordinator).



YOUNG DOCTORS' MOVEMENT NEWS

THE SPICE ROUTE SOUTH ASIA REGION

YDM WEBINARS

The WONCA Young Doctor Movement hold regular webinar sessions every other month and the Spice Route Movement made active contributions in organizing these webinars. Also Dr. Serin Kuriakose (the Spice Route Chair India) contributed in the first webinar. The recent webinar on **“Lifestyle Medicine: A leap towards a healthy life”** was hosted by the Spice Route and AfriWon on 28th March 2021.

MODULE ON LEADERSHIP SKILLS

Dr Kinley Bhuti (ASPIRE programme representative/Chair Spice Route Bhutan) designed a module with series of presentations on **“Leadership Skills.”**

These presentations were informative, also reflected the qualities of a true leader and presented in regular council monthly.

THE SPICE ROUTE WEBSITE

The Spice Route designed a website by the name of woncaspiceroute.org and was launched in April 2021.

COMMEMORATION OF IMPORTANT DAYS

The Spice Route commemorated some important days by circulating social media messages or videos benefiting the general public as well as family doctors. Some of the important messages circulated were, **International Day of Education** on 24th January by Bangladesh, **International Women’s Day** on 8th March by Bhutan, **International Day of Happiness** on 20th March by India and **World Water Day** on 22nd March by Nepal.

THE SPICE ROUTE COUNCIL MEETINGS & CPD ACTIVITIES

The Country leads of the Spice Route Council regularly meets virtually via Skype every first Sunday of the month to discuss and plan the future activities. Also regular CPD activities for young doctors of their respective countries have been organized by Sri Lanka, India and Pakistan by the name of GPs’ Café, Spice Route Classroom and The Lounge, respectively.



Date: Sunday, 28th March 2021
Time: From 13:00 - 14:30 GMT



“Healthy Eating”
Ore Taiwo Makinde
Nigeria



“Reducing Stress”
Hella Al Othman
Saudi Arabia



“Physical Activity”
Abdul Hadi B Abdul Manap
Malaysia



“Avoiding Harmful Habits”
Marina J. Ivanovic
Bosnia and Herzegovina

Register: <http://www.wonca.net/ydm-webinar-03>

Co-organized by:



Zainab. M. Anjarwala, Secretary - The Spice Route

YOUNG DOCTORS' MOVEMENT NEWS

AL RAZI EAST MEDITERRANEAN

Since December 2020 to March 2021, Al Razi team held four meetings on monthly basis to discuss and plan future projects. The new chair (Anas Almohtaseb) and the representatives of Saudi Arabia (Adel Yasky), Lebanon (Reina Alameddine), Palestine (Beesan Maraqa), Jordan (Dana Al-Daghlise), Oman (Mohammed Al Ghafri) and Kuwait (Ahmad Fakhreddine) almost regularly attended these meetings.

Participation in YDM leads Webinars:

- **Anas** in the first webinar “Silver Linings: Lessons Learned from the Pandemic”, Jordan experience (29 Nov 2020).
- **Reina** (Lebanon) in the 2nd webinar “Alternative Career for Young Doctors”, Health policy career (24 Jan 2021).
- **Hella Al Othman** (Saudi Arabia) in the 3rd webinar “Lifestyle Medicine”, Reducing stress (28 Mar 2021).

LOCAL TEAMS ACTIVITIES

OMAN

- Participants in Oman Family Medicine Society meeting; two young doctors elected in the board.
- Forming local team: Mohammed AL Ghafri (rep), Hamed AL Qanobi, Anas AL Kimyani , Issa AL Busaidi , Ahmed AL Kharousi, and Yaqoob AL Luwahi.
- Bi-weekly educational quiz to improve medical knowledge of GPs and family physicians in Oman.

JORDAN

- Team: Dana Daghlise (rep),Mahmmoud Al-Soqor, Ehab Jarar, Haneen Taher, and Enas Ammar.



- Three meetings since Dec 2020 to set goals and projects for the next year.
- Application form to recruit new family doctors
- [Awareness video about COVID-19 home isolation, Dec 2020.](#)
- [Video about COVID-19 vaccines in Jordan, Jan 2021.](#)

LEBANON

- Team: Reina Alameddine (rep), Mohamad Ali Jardaly, Mohamad Ramadan, Theodora Bou Saba, Rana Jarrah, and Rim Taleb.
- Members engaged in advocacy groups to push for a “zeroCOVID” strategy in the country.

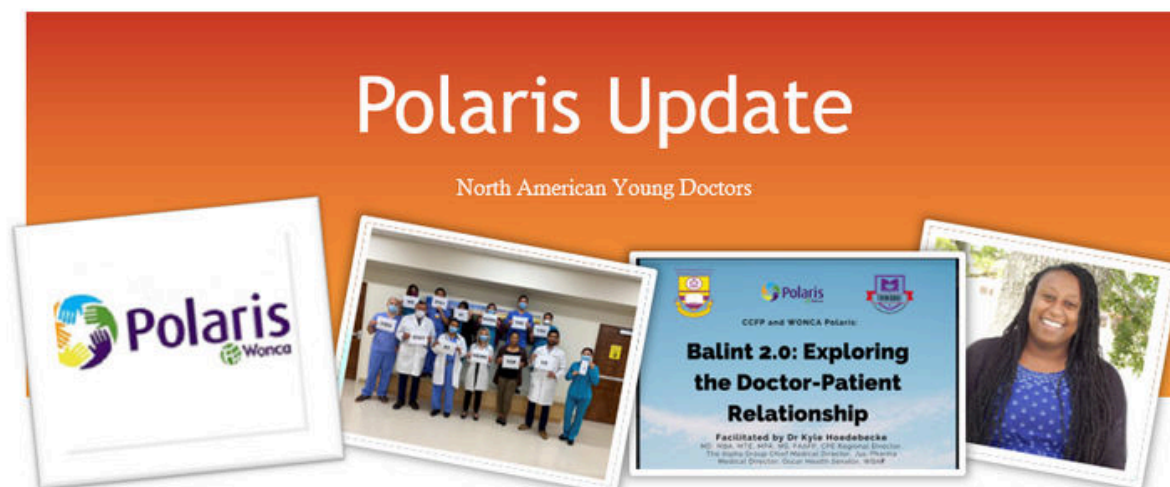
SAUDI ARABIA

- Current Team: Adel Yaski (rep), Sultan Al Howti, Mohmmmed Al Yosef, Ghadah Al Rajhi, Renad Al Ghefely, and Hella Al Othman.
- New Members recruitment to formulate the new team by May 2021.

PALESTINE

- Gathering up: to gather young family doctors from the West Bank and Gaza.
- Create a list of young Al-Razi family doctors in Palestine.
- Active team members: Beesan Maraqa (rep), Salam Khashan (Gaza focal point), Tasneem Yahia, Layali Qaddoim, Kholoud Ayesh, and Tariq Deres.
- First online workshop, discussing COVID-19 truth and worries, to be organized in 24 April 2021.

YOUNG DOCTORS' MOVEMENT NEWS



POLARIS- NORTH AMERICA

COVID, EQUITY AND NCDS

Family Medicine Early Career Physicians, Residents and Medical Students, have been immersed in the response to COVID, caring for our patients, caring for our colleagues and caring for our communities as well as looking to the future. To this end Polaris has supported the Caribbean College of Family Physicians in establishing a BALINT group and webinar. We have also been active planning the Global Health Summit for the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) and we have been chosen to be founding members in the inaugural Global Equity Task Force of the AAFP, and on the Border Health Initiative.

Global injustice and systemic racism are reaching headlines in the USA and Polaris has been active in the movement to address inequalities which undermine the health of our patients and providers. Dr. Shawnecca Burke writes an excellent piece addressing a resident's role in addressing racism (see our newsletter).

We have also hosted a Webinar series on the Ethics of Global Health hosting panels of speakers discussing the Ethics of Short Term Mission Trips and another on Global Partnerships.

People suffering from Non-communicable disease have been hit hardest by the COVID pandemic and our members have focused on local as well as global efforts to address the underlying factors through Lifestyle Medicine and partnering with the American College of Lifestyle Medicine.

THANK YOU TO DR. CHEYANNE VETTER

At our last executive meeting Dr. Vetter stepped down from her role as Chair. We will be sad to see her go, and we offer our heartfelt thanks for all that she has contributed. She has assisted in the establishment of Family Medicine 360 – a global exchange program for trainees from all over the world to come to North America for a four week elective, she has established a firm constitutional foundation and structure for Polaris, and she has been active in strengthening international networks for new family doctors. We wish her the best in her future endeavors.

WONCA CONFERENCES

WONCA EUROPE 2021: YOU CAN ALREADY SAVE A SPOT

The WONCA Europe 2021 Conference, originally planned to take place in Amsterdam, is now coming to you, virtually!

We are pleased to invite you to the [Virtual WONCA Europe 2021 Conference](#), hosted by the Dutch College of General Practitioners, which will take place between 6-10 July 2021, online.

We are still facing the challenges stemmed from the global pandemic, including many uncertainties regarding travelling and gatherings worldwide. We are adapting to these challenges and preparing for the WONCA Europe 2021 Conference accordingly.



WONCA Europe 2021 will enable us to continue exchanging knowledge and advancing science, despite the circumstances.

Check the registration rates [here](#) and mark your calendar now and join the WONCA Europe community online!

WONCA CIMF - 7º CONGRESO IBEROAMERICANO

On February 4, the [7th Ibero-American Congress of Family Medicine](#) was officially announced during a digital session led by Prof Jacqueline Ponzo, President of WONCA Iberoamericana-CIMF.

The congress will be held on August 18 to 21, 2021, in Vitoria, Espírito Santo, Brazil. The event will be held in a hybrid way (face-to-face and online), enabling greater participation due to possible mobility restrictions concerning the COVID-19 pandemic for some Latin America countries.

The event program will integrate the members' suggestions of the SBMFC and CIMF, following guidelines previously defined by the organizing committee, aligned with this year's theme Health and Sustainability: From the Environment to Health Systems.



ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPDATES

HONG KONG PRIMARY CARE CONFERENCE 2021

The Hong Kong College of Family Physicians is delighted to invite you to the Hong Kong Primary Care Conference 2021, to be held online on 30 July – 1 August 2021 (Friday – Sunday).

The 2021 theme is "Our Finest Hour: Stride through the Storm" to highlight the need for resilient and strong primary health care systems to safeguard the health of people and communities worldwide.

After the HKPCC 2020 digital conference success, with over 700 participants from the primary care community, the 2021 edition will continue to provide an educational and inspiring experience for its delegates with a range of live and on-demand sessions with plenary and seminar speakers, including evaluation of the challenges of COVID-19, clinical updates, research education and more.

Find more information at the [Hong Kong Primary Care Conference 2021](#) website and register [here](#).



CALL FOR ABSTRACTS IHF BARCELONA & LA UNIÓ CATALANA D'HOSPITALS

Share your work with the international healthcare community at the IHF World Hospital Congress!

The [44th World Hospital Congress](#) of the [International Hospital Federation](#) will be held in Barcelona on 8-11th November 2021 as a hybrid event: mixing in-person and digital program elements. The Congress is hosted by [La Unió Catalana d'Hospitals](#) (The Catalan Union of Hospitals) with the overarching theme: "People on board: Transforming healthcare by blending agility, responsiveness, and resilience."

The Congress is a unique forum that brings together IHF members, executive leaders of hospitals, health services, and healthcare organizations from more than 50 countries.

2021 IHF BARCELONA 44th World Hospital Congress

As the COVID-19 crisis has challenged healthcare globally, it is vital to discuss how transformations contribute to the enhancement of responsiveness, flexibility, and resilience of healthcare systems and hospitals. If you have a compelling story to share with healthcare leaders from around the world, [submit your abstract now](#).

Deadline for submission is on 16th April 2021.



[Submit Abstract](#)

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPDATES

VIRTUAL TORONTO INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM TO STRENGTHEN FAMILY MEDICINE

In these challenging times, coming together as a global community committed to high-quality family medicine and primary care is more important than ever.

The Department of Family and Community Medicine (DFCM) at the University of Toronto is excited to announce the launch of the VTIPs-FM, the first virtual edition of the longstanding Toronto International Program to strengthen Family Medicine. This year's edition will be delivered online from April 7 to June 23, 2021, with an orientation session on March 31, 2021.



This 12-week course, taught by faculty leaders from the Department of Family and Community Medicine (DFCM) and international guest faculty, provides an overview of how to leverage excellence in education, research, clinical services and leadership to deliver high quality family medicine globally, by sharing experience and building on lessons learned at the DFCM, in Canada and around the world.

Registration is now open [here](#). Details of the program can be found on the [DFCM website](#) or dfcm.globalhealth@utoronto.ca.

Join to learn together and support progress towards Health and Well-Being for All. Please share widely with your networks!

EACH: INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON COMMUNICATION IN HEALTHCARE PART 2

EACH: International Association for Communication in Healthcare is delighted to invite you to participate in the [International Conference on Communication in Healthcare 2020 Part 2: Online from 15 - 16 April 2021](#).

This online conference offers the opportunity to participate in the second part of the 2020 ICCH programme, bringing together the community of healthcare researchers, teachers, practitioners and policy makers from around the globe.



In addition to a variety of engaging oral presentations, the conference includes interactive workshops, roundtable discussions and networking sessions on many topics such as clinician-patient interaction, shared decision making, health equity & health disparities, communication technology, and many more.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPDATES

JOIN THE 5TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BESROUR FORUM POSTER PRESENTATIONS

The Besroure Centre for Global Family Medicine (Besroure Centre) is pleased to announce the call for abstracts for posters that will be presented at the 2021 Besroure Forum as part of the College of Family Physicians of Canada's Family Medicine Forum (FMF) from November 10 to 13, 2021.

The CFPC is currently planning for FMF to be either a hybrid or fully virtual event. A hybrid event would include some virtual sessions and some in-person sessions. It is important to note that in person sessions will take place only if health guidelines allow for them in November.

The Submission deadline is Friday, April 30, 2021. Please read the [poster guidelines](#) here and submit to Besrourecentre@cfpc.ca

PANDEMIC-RELATED RESEARCH

While clinical research, program evaluation, quality improvement, and medical education projects are encouraged (provided a scholarly approach is taken), the committee is especially interested in work focused on family medicine concerns in the later phases of the COVID-19 pandemic. Areas such as chronic disease, mental well-being, and collaboration with public health efforts are of particular interest.

ABSTRACT MENTORSHIP

The Besroure Centre encourage novice and experienced researchers to submit abstracts. If you are interested in mentorship in this regard, the Besroure Scientific Committee is available to provide support. Please reach out to us and a committee member will be pleased to connect with you to offer advice, answer questions, or provide constructive feedback.



KEEP IN MIND

- If your work has not been completed, you may submit it with “In progress” in the title.
- If you submitted an abstract to WONCA World Conference 2021, consider submitting this abstract to the Besroure Forum, as well.
- Once your abstract is accepted, at least one author must register for at least one day of the conference, whether it is virtual or in-person. Registration information will follow at a later date.

BEST POSTER AWARD

Posters are judged by a panel of peers. Please see the [poster guidelines](#) for more details about the award.

For more information please click [here](#) or If you have any questions about how to write an abstract or poster presentation, please contact Dr. Sumeet Sodhi (ssodhi@cfpc.ca) and Dr. Innocent Besigye (ibesigye@gmail.com), Co-chairs, Besroure Centre Scientific Committee.

FEATURED STORIES

LIBERTY AND FREEDOM

I decided to post out a selection of poems based on the idea of Freedom and Liberty. The 60s folksinger Donovan in his song "Colours" sings the lines "Freedom is a word I rarely use without thinking". This begs the question, what does it mean to each of us individually and more importantly to society in general.

We are a gregarious species and at this moment in time with a pandemic ravaging our lives, freedom and liberty may be about being able to spend time with friends, family and meet together with like minded people. However, in what we believe to be an enlightened and civilised world, human beings are still held in modern slavery, people are judged by race, women are still oppressed and people who try to express their views and beliefs are decried, tortured and imprisoned. Freedom and liberty may be a personal goal, but it must also be a humanitarian goal to free all those around the world who's voices, and lives are constrained against their will. The pursuit of freedom and liberty also comes with responsibilities, to those around us and society in general, as we all have a responsibility to pursue justice and fairness for all. Perhaps the sharing of vaccines around the world may be one of those humanitarian goals that we should think about?

To quote the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights *"All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood"*

Enjoy!

Dr John Wynn-Jones

GUEST FEATURE BY JOHN WYNN-JONES: THE GARDEN



Dr John Wynn-Jones is well known in WONCA circles and immediate past chair of the WONCA Working Party on Rural Practice. During the COVID-19 crisis, he has been writing a 'Rural Miscellany' email with poems and resource ideas to help and divert us in this difficult time. In this, the third item of 2021, we publish "Liberty and Freedom" - written by John this month.



Victor Marie Hugo (1802-1805)

Victor-Marie Hugo was a French poet, novelist, and dramatist of the Romantic movement. During a literary career that spanned more than sixty years, he wrote abundantly in an exceptional variety of genres: lyrics, satires, epics, philosophical poems, epigrams, novels, history, critical essays, political speeches, funeral orations, diaries, letters public and private, as well as dramas in verse and prose. Hugo is considered to be one of the greatest and best-known French writers. Outside France, his most famous works are the novels *Les Misérables*, and *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame*. In France, Hugo is renowned for his poetry collections, such as *Les Contemplations* (The Contemplations) and *La Légende des siècles* (The Legend of the Ages). Many of his works have inspired music, both during his lifetime and after his death, including the musicals *Les Misérables* and *Notre-Dame de Paris*. He produced more than 4,000 drawings in his lifetime and campaigned for social causes such as the abolition of capital punishment. Though a committed royalist when he was young, Hugo's views changed as the decades passed, and he became a passionate supporter of republicanism serving as a politician as both a deputy and a senator. His work touched upon most of the political and social issues and the artistic trends of his time. His opposition to absolutism and his colossal literary achievement established him as a national hero. He was honoured by interment in the Panthéon.

The poem "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity" is an anti-war poem but he also he tells us that mankind is preoccupied with war and destined to fight to destruction. He compares man's folly with beauty and serenity of nature. While "Each man's hand is raised 'gainst his neighbour" "God takes but heed of the flower and that sun, moon, and stars keep their place" The poem finishes with the despair that "Can brother for brother feel hatred as he hears the lark's musical song?"

Some have interpreted it t as a response to the original biblical garden, Eden, while other commentators have understood the poem as a meditation about sex, political ambition, and various other themes. Its celebrated lines about 'Annihilating all that's made / To a green thought in a green shade' are especially memorable.

Marvell depicts the garden as a retreat, as a place of repose and restfulness – an escape from the more frenetic world of public life that lies beyond the boundaries of the garden. We've probably all dreamed of chucking it all in and retreating to some quiet and tranquil place where our soul or mind will know some rest. When our passions have run their course, love can blossom in the space of the garden.

Liberty, Equality, Fraternity

*For centuries past this war-madness
Has laid hold of each combative race,
While our God takes but heed of the flower,
And that sun, moon, and stars keep their place.*

*The sight of the heavens above us,
The bird's nest and lily-like snow,
Drive not from the brain of us mortals
The war-thirst, with its feverish flow.*

*We love but the field with its carnage,
And the strife which turns earth into hell;
And eager for glory, the people
Would not change the fierce drum for church-bell.*

*The vain aspirations of glory,
With banners and cars of bright gold,
Draw tears from the widows and orphans,
As often has happened of old.*

*Our natures have changed to brute fierceness;
'Forward! -- Die!' bursts from each angry throat,
While our lips seem to mimic the music
Of the echoing war-trumpet's note.*



*Steel flashes, the bivouacs are smoking,
As with pale brows we eagerly run.
The thoughtful are driven to madness
By the flash and the roar of the gun.*

*Our lives are but spent for the glory
Of the kings who smile over our grave,
And build up a fabric of friendship
With cement from the blood of the brave;*

*While the beats of the field and the vultures
Come in search of their banquet of hell,
And they strip the red flesh from the bodies
That lie stiff and stark where they fell.*

*Each man's hand is raised 'gainst his neighbour,
While he strives all his wrath to excite,
And trades on our natural weakness
To inveigle us into the fight.*

*'A Russian! Quick! Cut down the villain!
Put your sword through that murderous Croat!
How dare they from our men to differ,
Or venture to wear a white coat!'*

*'I slay fellow-creatures, and go on
My life's path. What glory like mine?
Their crime is most black and most heinous,—
They live on the right of the Rhine.'*

*'For Rosbach and Waterloo, vengeance!
The cry maddens the heart and the brain;
Men long for the fierce glow of battle
And the blood that is poured forth like rain.*

*In peace we could drink from the fountains,
Or calmly repose in the shade,
But our brethren in battle to slaughter
Is a pleasure which never will fade.*

*The lust for blood-spilling incites us
To rush madly o'er valleys and plains;
The vanquished are crying in terror,
And are clasping our swift horses' manes.*

*And yet I ask sometimes in wonder,
As I wander the meadows among,
Can brother for brother feel hatred
As he hears the lark's musical song?*

Alfred Lord Tennyson (1809-1892)

Alfred Tennyson, 1st Baron Tennyson was a British poet. He was the Poet Laureate during much of Queen Victoria's reign and remains one of the most popular British poets. Although decried by some critics as overly sentimental, his verse soon proved popular and brought Tennyson to the attention of well-known writers of the day, including Samuel Taylor Coleridge. More than any other Victorian-era writer, Tennyson has seemed the embodiment of his age, both to his contemporaries and to modern readers. In his own day he was said to be—with Queen Victoria and Prime Minister William Gladstone—one of the three most famous living persons, a reputation no other poet writing in English has ever had. As official poetic spokesman for the reign of Victoria, he felt called upon to celebrate a quickly changing industrial and mercantile world with which he felt little in common, for his deepest sympathies were called forth by an unaltered rural England; the conflict between what he thought of as his duty to society and his allegiance to the eternal beauty of nature seems peculiarly Victorian. Even his most severe critics have always recognized his gift, probably unequalled in the history of English poetry.

In this early poem by Tennyson, he portrays freedom as a goddess that is handed down from the heavens and describes her influence gradually spreading over the world. While freedom was content to rejoice in her own sphere, fragments of her voice were carried by the wind down to mankind. Once her voice has been heard in fragments by man, freedom decided to mingle with mankind and part by part, reveal her face to man. The poem concludes with a call to freedom, asking that she illuminate our lives.



Of Old Sat Freedom on the Heights

*Of old sat Freedom on the heights,
The thunders breaking at her feet:
Above her shook the starry lights:
She heard the torrents meet.*

*There in her place she did rejoice,
Self-gather'd in her prophet-mind,
But fragments of her mighty voice
Came rolling on the wind.*

*Then stept she down thro' town and field
To mingle with the human race,
And part by part to men reveal'd
The fulness of her face—*

*Grave mother of majestic works,
From her isle-altar gazing down,
Who, God-like, grasps the triple forks,
And, King-like, wears the crown:*

*Her open eyes desire the truth.
The wisdom of a thousand years
Is in them. May perpetual youth
Keep dry their light from tears;*

*That her fair form may stand and shine,
Make bright our days and light our dreams,
Turning to scorn with lips divine
The falsehood of extremes! manes.*

Helen Hunt Jackson (1830-1885)

Helen Hunt Jackson was an American poet and writer who became an activist on behalf of improved treatment of Native Americans by the United States government.

She was born in Amherst, Massachusetts, to academic Calvinist parents but was orphaned as a child and raised by her aunt. Jackson was sent to private schools and formed a lasting childhood friendship with Emily Dickinson. At the age of 21, Jackson married Lieutenant Edward Bissell Hunt and together they had two sons. Jackson began writing poetry only after the early deaths of her husband and both sons.

Jackson published five collections of poetry, including “Verses” and “Easter Bells” as well as children’s literature and travel books. Frequently in poor health, she moved to Colorado on her physician’s recommendation and married William Sharpless Jackson there in 1875.

Moved by an 1879 speech given by Chief Standing Bear, Jackson wrote “A Century of Dishonor” an exposé of the rampant crimes against Native Americans, which led to the founding of the Indian Rights Association. In 1884 she published *Ramona*, a fictionalized account of the plight of Southern California’s dispossessed Mission Indians, inspired by Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*.

In “Freedom”, Jackson takes up the abolitionist cause during the American Civil War. She speaks of how freedom is not always free. Its central theme is that freedom even in a free man has to be earned by learning the right and wrong ways of society. As a whole, the poem differentiates youth from age whilst still following the theme of freedom.

Freedom

*What freeman knoweth freedom? Never he
Whose father's father through long lives have
reigned
O'er kingdoms which mere heritage attained.*

*Though from his youth to age he roam as free
As winds, he dreams not freedom's ecstasy.*

*But he whose birth was in a nation chained
For centuries; where every breath was drained
From breasts of slaves which knew not there could be
Such thing as freedom,—he beholds the light
Burst, dazzling; though the glory blind his sight
He knows the joy. Fools laugh because he reels
And weilds confusedly his infant will;
The wise man watching with a heart that feels
Says: "Cure for freedom's harms is freedom still."*



Emily Dickenson (1830-1886)

Emily Dickinson (1830-1886) was an American poet from Amherst, Massachusetts. She led a secluded and quiet life but her poetry reveals her great inner creativity.

She wrote a very large number of poems (over 1,800) but fewer than a dozen of her poems were published while she was alive. Most of her work was discovered after her death and published by her friends. Today her poetry is rightly appreciated for its immense depth and unique style. Emily Dickinson is widely regarded as one of the greatest female poets.

In this poem she tells us that the soul is not constrained by the "mortal Bone," but is instead, like the eagle, a creature of flight and freedom. It can "divest" itself of the body and "gain the Sky." It is the "bolder" of the two Bodies. Unlike your flesh body, it cannot be hurt by saws, scimitars, or even torturers' tools. It cannot even be bound; it can simply fly away. The topic of the separation of the body and the soul was a constant theme in Emily Dickinson's poems.

In this and other poems about consciousness, she demonstrates a tension between liberty and captivity. There was a general feeling at the time that consciousness was a form of captivity but she questions this in the last line of the poem.

No Rack can torture me

*No Rack can torture me-
My Soul-at Liberty-
Behind this mortal Bone
There knits a bolder One-*

*You cannot prick with saw-
Nor pierce with Scimitar-
Two Bodies-therefore be-
Bind One-The Other fly-*

*The Eagle of his Nest
No easier divest-
And gain the Sky
Than mayest Thou-*

*Except Thyself may be
Thine Enemy-
Captivity is Consciousness
So's Liberty.*

Emma Lazarus (1849-1887)

Emma Lazarus was born in New York City to a wealthy family and educated by private tutors. She began writing and translating poetry as a teenager and was publishing translations of German poems by the 1860s. Her father privately printed her first work in 1866 and the next year, her first collection, *Poems and Translations*, appeared from a commercial press. Lazarus was one of the first successful and highly visible Jewish American authors. She advocated for Jewish refugees and argued for the creation of a Jewish homeland before the concept of Zionism was in wide circulation.

The *New Colossus* was written by Emma Lazarus in 1883 to raise funds for the Statue of Liberty (completed in 1886), the poem was later engraved on the lower pedestal of the statue in 1903. The statue written about by Lazarus would become one of the most famous symbols of freedom in America, especially significant to immigrants just arriving at New York Harbour and beholding this "land of the free" for the first time.

After her death, the scope of Lazarus's life and career was obscured by the fame of "The New Colossus." There have been recent attempts to revitalize scholarship and interest in her work, including a volume of selected poems from the Library of America and a biography.

The New Colossus

*Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand
Glows world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.
"Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!" cries she
With silent lips.*

"Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

Langston Hughes (1902-1967)

James Mercer Langston Hughes was an American poet, social activist, novelist, playwright, and columnist from Joplin, Missouri. One of the earliest innovators of the then-new literary art form called jazz poetry, He was a central figure in the Harlem Renaissance, the flowering of black intellectual, literary, and artistic life that took place in the 1920s in a number of American cities, particularly Harlem. He sought to honestly portray the joys and hardships of working-class black lives. As he wrote in his essay "The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain," "We younger shame. If white people are pleased we are glad. If they are not, it doesn't matter. We know Negro artists who create now intend to express our individual dark-skinned selves without fear or we are beautiful. And ugly too."

In "Freedom" he suggests that democracy will never come on this Earth for him. Not today, tomorrow, or ever. He feels that he has as much right as a citizen to own land just as the next person does. ... The author is saying that there is an injustice in democracy and that not everyone gets it.

Freedom

*Freedom will not come
Today, this year
Nor ever
Through compromise and fear.*

*I have as much right
As the other fellow has
To stand
On my two feet
And own the land.*

*I tire so of hearing people say,
Let things take their course.
Tomorrow is another day.*

*I do not need my freedom when I'm dead.
I cannot live on tomorrow's bread.
Freedom
Is a strong seed
Planted
In a great need.
I live here, too.
I want my freedom
Just as you.*

e.e. Cummings (1894-1962)

Edward Estlin Cummings, often styled as e e cummings, as he is attributed in many of his published works, was an American poet, painter, essayist, author, and playwright. He wrote approximately 2,900 poems, two autobiographical novels, four plays, and several essays.

He was born in Cambridge, Massachusetts. As one of the most innovative poets of his time, Cummings experimented with poetic form and language to create a distinct personal style. A typical Cummings poem is spare and precise, employing a few key words. Some of these words were invented by Cummings, often by combining two common words. He also revised grammatical and linguistic rules to suit his own purposes, using such words as "if," "am," and "because" as nouns, for example, or assigning his own private meanings to words. Despite their non-traditional form, Cummings' poems came to be popular with many readers. Cummings decided to become a poet when he was still a child. Between the ages of eight and twenty-two, he wrote a poem a day, exploring many traditional poetic forms. By the time he was in Harvard in 1916 and modern poetry had caught his interest. He began to write avant-garde poems in which conventional punctuation and form were ignored.

"[as freedom is a breakfastfood]" is typical of e e cummings' eccentric style. The meaning appears obscure and each reading gives one a different view. It has been suggested that this poem was triggered by the plight of so many fellow countrymen during the Great Depression.

The poem is full of nonsense lines and is reminiscent of Lewis-Carroll in the way that he flips ideas on their heads.

He presents the world in a topsy-turvy way with “Hatracks grow into peach trees, mountains create molehills, fingers are toes, and courage is fear”. In each verse, he repeats a single thought: “long enough and just so long”. At the end of all the nonsense, he comes up with a wonderful statement, “but love is the sky and i am for you just so long and long enough”

There is a constant theme of the shortness of time. “Tomorrow will not be too late;” the future is coming, coming quick. Perhaps he is telling us that truth really is stranger than fiction. Whatever, the more I read this poem, the more I love it, despite the fact that I don’t fully understand it!

[as freedom is a breakfastfood]

*as freedom is a breakfastfood
or truth can live with right and wrong
or molehills are from mountains made
—long enough and just so long
will being pay the rent of seem
and genius please the talentgang
and water most encourage flame*

*as hatracks into peachtrees grow
or hopes dance best on bald men’s hair
and every finger is a toe
and any courage is a fear
—long enough and just so long
will the impure think all things pure
and hornets wail by children stung*

*or as the seeing are the blind
and robins never welcome spring
nor flatfolk prove their world is round
nor dingsters die at break of dong
and common’s rare and millstones float
—long enough and just so long
tomorrow will not be too late*

*worms are the words but joy’s the voice
down shall go which and up come who
breasts will be breasts thighs will be thighs
deeds cannot dream what dreams can do
—time is a tree(this life one leaf)
but love is the sky and i am for you
just so long and long enough*

Dorothy Parker (1893-1967)

Dorothy Parker was an American poet, writer, critic, and satirist based in New York; she was best known for her wit, wisecracks, and eye for 20th-century urban foibles. Like so many funny folk, ‘Dottie’ Parker was a woman of gloomy depths, and she used her sharp tongue to keep people at a distance, even as she spun comedy from her misadventures. She was also fond of self-dramatisation. A petite, almost fragile figure, her lethal wit marked her out from the start. Her break came when she sent a poem, “Any Porch”, to the charismatic editor of Vanity Fair, Frank Crowninshield. She soon progressed from caption writer at Vogue to staff writer at Vanity Fair, eventually becoming the magazine’s drama critic. In 1920, that same legendary wit got her fired when she couldn’t resist a wisecrack at the expense of actress Billie Burke, wife of one of the magazine’s biggest advertisers. Despite appearing somewhat frivolous and disrespectful, she had a deep social conscience and left her entire estate at her death to Martin Luther King.

Now at Liberty

*Little white love, your way you've taken;
Now I am left alone, alone.
Little white love, my heart's forsaken.
(Whom shall I get by telephone?)
Well do I know there's no returning;
Once you go out, it's done, it's done.
All of my days are gray with yearning.
(Nevertheless, a girl needs fun.)*

*Little white love, perplexed and weary,
Sadly your banner fluttered down.
Sullen the days, and dreary, dreary.
(Which of the boys is still in town?)
Radiant and sure, you came a-flying;
Puzzled, you left on lagging feet.*