



Association NER21, Impasse Aurore 3, 3960 Sierre/Suisse
www.ner21.org - mail ner21@bluemail.ch

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President's Report

2021 – 2022: The hope of seeing the pandemic mover away and then... war in Europe! Decidedly, this period is very complex. More than ever before, **“Resilience”** is not an empty word. If it has been defined as “the art of navigating torrents”, it is also the ability to bounce back. But, if this word is used too frequently, it becomes a matter of course for so many of our members who are confronted day after day with a radical change both in their own lives and in that of those around them.

Yes, a stroke, head trauma or any other CNS disorder requires a time of mourning. Dr Ursula K. Imhof and myself have described this as the set of responses of adjustment, adaptation and transformation necessary for the process of acceptance of a new functional situation, inspired by the examples quoted by a Canadian therapist, Suzanne Pinard. Let me quote some encounters marked by their strength and courage. I call them my little fireflies of 2022 :

- **R** is facing a stroke and post-covid syndrome and hopes to “go back to the way it was before”. What work he has, himself, done now to be able to rejoice and be proud of achieving every “little extra”.
- **E.** set her life aside to be a “caregiver”. Now she has to learn to “let it go”, to recharge her batteries and to think about herself with a clear conscience.
- **S.** is a trainer in a company and, following a stroke, must not only regain her cognitive and physical abilities but also project herself into a redefined professional life.
- **I.** is passionate about mountains and about endurance sports. Following a brainstem stroke he is unable to move, speak or swallow. I shall not forget his intense look, where each effort is more difficult than the ascent of summits achieved before this blow of fate.
- **L.** suffered a traumatic brain injury at the age of 19 following a fall with her favourite horse. As she says, her desire to live, and not just exist, pushes her to return to horseback riding and she also developed a passion for mountains. She has now become a naturopath and writer.
- **I.** and his wife grew as a couple and built a family despite significant challenges due to their respective disabilities. Their strength has allowed so many other people see their own little daily misfortunes in a different light.
- **E.** has, by sheer will and her extraordinary personality, become a physiatrist recognised by her peers and her patients – despite an ataxia which is still very evident.

- N. has chosen, after a stroke and traumatic brain injury, to enjoy every moment of life, friends and support organisations which are close to her heart.
- C. having held important responsibilities in the field of health, is now engaged in an associated field and continues to say to herself that as long as it is possible to give, we should not hesitate.
- E. embodies all the commitment which therapy personnel demonstrate all day long – competent and ready to question and improve themselves; sometimes exhausted too but looking to recharge their batteries for the next day.

Thank you to all these little fireflies which illuminate the life of the president of an association!

Activities of the Committee

The past year allowed us to meet more often without a technological intermediary, to manage the various activities and to plan the future of our association, even if it required many changes.

NER21 Congress

Unfortunately, like many other congresses, courses and events requiring budget demands several months in advance, our congress had to be cancelled due to lack of participants. We would especially like to thank once again the great collaboration with ANFE (the French National Association of Occupational Therapists) and its management Catherine Laks and Nicolas Biard. Thanks also to all the people who had agreed to be speakers: Prof. Dr. Pascale Pradat-Diehl, Nicole Sève-Ferrieu, Marie Julien, Isabelle Marchalot, Pascale Derlon, Jean-Pierre Maes, Dsc. Susan Ryerson and Dr. Ursula Imhof. We are not discouraged about organising another congress in the future, perhaps by joining another association in order to plan such an event together.

New structure of NER21 training courses

The new form, allowing participants to follow the 3 levels of 5 days' duration at their own pace, is a popular format and its flexibility seems to be needed for the allocation of budgets for training.

Other training courses, also recognised by the NER21 association, are offered on site, of various durations. They are open to physiotherapists, occupational, nurses and speech therapists.

Health professionals from France, Canada, USA, Switzerland, Germany, Belgium, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Luxembourg, Poland, Ukraine, Brazil, Argentina and South Africa have received an NER21 certificate of competency for the number of hours undertaken.

NER21 Instructor Training

The two assistants, Virginie Duplay (physiotherapist) and Jérôme Sciquot (occupational therapist) are very successfully continuing their training and we hope to be able to announce their level 1 instructorship in 2023.

Individual members (therapists, patients and their entourage, rehabilitation hospital, community associations or university professors or lecturers in basic and postgraduate training around the world.

We have had the pleasure of welcoming new members, whether persons with disabilities, their entourage, therapists or rehabilitation centres. They join the other members from Switzerland, France, Canada, USA, South Africa, Brazil, Argentina, Togo, Ghana, Benin, Luxemburg, Belgium, Germany, Spain, New Zealand and England.

Expert Clinicians and Senior Instructors NER21

The expert-clinicians NER21 are: Lynn Fearnhead, Anne Greenblatt, Michèle H. Gerber, Sheena Irwin-Carruthers, Marie Julien, Carole Lavallée, Mary Riley, Lynda Rondeau, Susan Ryerson and Nicole Sève-Ferrieu.
The seniors instructors NER21 are: Sheena Irwin-Carruthers (South Africa), DSc. Susan Ryerson (USA) and Michèle H. Gerber (Switzerland)

The contact persons for each category

- Lucie Moisan (patients and relatives)
- Marie Julien (speech therapists)
- Lynda Rondeau (physiotherapists)
- Anna Greenblatt (occupational therapists)
- Dr. Ursula K. Imhof (medical doctors, rehabilitations centers)
- Michèle H. Gerber (associations, public relations)

The “Newsletters”

The newsletters, written by our Vice-President Dr. Ursula K. Imhof, provide a valued connection between the members and the committee. They include news about actual developments and present the members, their research and their specific fields of interest. Please feel free to distribute them and to offer contributions.

Thanks

Many thanks again to my wonderful committee: Marie-Claire Morel (Secretary), Nicole Piaget (Treasurer) and Ursula Imhof (Vice-President). The moments of sharing and reflection for the development of the NER21 concept and the association are very motivating.
Finally, thank you all for the trust which you continue to place in me.
Michèle H. Gerber, President NER21.