November 25, 2015

Dear Perry,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the SIOP Congress Handbook. This is clearly a very useful tool, not only for the local organizing team, but it also helps other stakeholders like ourselves get a perspective of the bigger picture and how our program ties up with the rest of the event. So this draft version has already been very informative for Raman and me.

From a PODC perspective, we have several issues to address and have listed them below with the appropriate section numbers.

In general, we are recommending that like the IPSO, PROS and Nursing Committee a PODC representative (one of the two current PODC co-Chairs) be assigned to the **Scientific Committee**.

We also recommend that at least 2 PODC members be assigned to the **SPAC** (we believe that the most recent 2 PODC co-Chairs who have left this position be assigned and are rotated out in sequence as current PODC co-chairs leave office). This will ensure that an expert from PODC is available to all and since SPAC members are entitled to registration at early rate, at all times, this would also be beneficial for a PODC SPAC representative. If SIOP membership is a criterion for being on the Scientific Committee, LOC and SPAC we can ensure that the PODC representatives for these groups is also members of SIOP.

It is critical that there is **support for PODC Working Group co-Chairs** (who are members of SIOP) from LMIC to attend SIOP Annual Congresses. These volunteers work hard throughout the year to promote SIOP’s mission and vision. We recommend that the wording below (see \*Abstracts) be added to the Congress Handbook.

Currently, the following groups have Key Note Lectures - IPSO, PROS, Nursing, PPO and the following have symposia - IPSO, PROS. We request that **PODC be given one keynote lecture and one symposia** so PODC has a larger input for the programme, increased visibility within the programme, and PODC speakers can receive funding support - something which we have struggled to identify for a group which is most deserving.

The SIOP Executive Board has granted the YIs EUR 4000 to cover the travel expenses for the four chairs and to pay other items. It seems appropriate that the **same level of funding could be applied for two PODC representatives from LMIC to** attend the Annual Congress since their financial status is even below YIs from HIC.

It is our understanding that the LOC must raise a minimum of EUR20K each year for Nursing and **PODC scholarships**. We believe that for PODC attendees, EUR1000 is inadequate to ensure attendance as it is unlikely that it would even cover airfare, much less accommodation even if shared. Therefore, we recommend that the scholarship be a more realistic EUR1500 as it has been in the past. That would ensure that minimally, Nursing receives 5 scholarships and PODC 8. We understand that the Irish LOC has already raised EUR30K to date. If so, and if 5 are designated for Nursing that would leave approximately 15 for PODC at EUR1500/each, correct?

We recommend that the **age limit** for a PODC scholarship be removed. There are many key stakeholders in LMIC who are above 45 but who are critical to the promotion and execution of improved childhood cancer care in their countries. Age is irrelevant; scientific rigor of the abstracts submitted and pertinence of topic for PODC presentation audiences should be the most important criteria.

There is no separate **registration rate** for LMIC attendees, which is sorely needed. We realise that this has been the case at least from 2013 onwards. Therefore, we recommend that LIMC/PODC attendees be charged EUR200 to attend. Since most nurses in LIC earn $120/month and many physicians earn $300/month this rate is still a challenge, but much easier to meet than even EUR315 that the residents and fellows pay from HIC.

We do recognize that there is now an option on the membership renewal webpage (we do not know if this is available for new memberships since we can’t see that page) to make a **donation** of €70 for a person from an LMIC. However, it is not clear to us how this money is distributed even though the page says, “The SIOP Board of Directors together with the PODC committee will ensure a fair distribution of funds received.” Is this money used to support LMIC membership fees? Is it used to support registration for LMIC speakers? Is it used to support the PODC scholarships? We believe this wording should be clear about how the funds are distributed. For example, it seems appropriate that a slightly higher donation of €80 (which would cover the membership fee for a person from an LMIC) would be an easier option on this page. These funds could be prioritized for PODC Working Group co-chairs who are from LMIC and volunteer substantial amount of time in activities directly related to SIOP priorities. If there was additional funding after covering those eligible co-chairs, the funding could be prioritized to go toward supporting the Working Group co-chairs’ conference registration fees assuming they had an accepted abstract for presentation.

**Suggested changes in Congress Handbook wording...**

**Item#4 - Scientific programme**

*In "Other Tracks" we suggest an entire section on PODC in addition to the five already mentioned there (IPSO, PROS, Nursing, PPO, YI)*

**4.4.6 Pediatric Oncology in Developing Countries (PODC)**

Focus on PODC has been integral to SIOP for many decades and this is reflected in the program of the Annual SIOP Congress. The creation of the program for PODC is primarily the responsibility of the PODC Co-Chairs and is developed in consultation with the LOC and the Scientific Committee. It consists of a mixture of educational (over 1.5 days) and business sessions (over two half days), all of which are open to all the Congress delegates as well as informal social events to promote interaction. In addition there may be PODC relevant sessions developed by other streams e.g. Nurses, PPO, CCI, IPSO, etc. or indeed by the LOC and scientific committee. These are welcome and give further opportunity to delegates to understand the issues relevant to PODC.

In chronological order, the SIOP PODC program consists of the following

1. **SIOP PODC Working Group Business Meeting**

*When* – In the afternoon (2-5 pm) two days before the start of the Annual SIOP Congress, which is the same as the afternoon of the day before the SIOP Pre Congress education day.

*Who can attend* – The meeting is open to all. There is no separate registration fee in addition to that paid for the Annual Congress.

*What* – The meeting provides an opportunity to summarise the progress made over the last one year. The Chairs of each of the Working Group give presentations. It is a great window to display the work being done by SIOP PODC Working Groups.

*Other* - Along with this, often individual SIOP PODC Working Group often use the time before this meeting i.e. 12-2 pm to organize their own meetings at the same venue

*Requirements* *and support* - A room of at least 100 seats should be reserved and AV and rental costs are to be covered by SIOP. In addition, SIOP will provide support for a coffee break.

1. **SIOP PODC Social Networking**

*When* – In the evening (5 pm onwards) after the end of the SIOP PODC Working Group Business Meeting. Usually at a bar or pub in the conference venue or nearby.

*Who can attend* – This is open to all.

*What* – A great time to meet old friends and make new ones.

*Requirements* *and support* – None needed.

1. **SIOP PODC Pre-Congress Day**

*When* – All day (usually 8 or 8:30 am to 5 pm) on the day before the start of the Annual SIOP Congress, which is the same as the SIOP Pre Congress education day.

*Who* *can attend* – The meeting is open to all. There is no separate registration fee in addition to that paid for the Annual Congress.

*What* – The day is divided into 4 sessions of 90-120 minutes each. Two of these sessions are Free Papers relevant to PODC and selected based on scientific scores from the pool of the abstracts submitted to SIOP. The other two sessions are proposed and developed by the PODC co-chairs with invited speakers. Often some of these sessions may be held jointly with CCI, Nursing, and others where appropriate. No funding support is provided to these speakers.

*Requirements* *and support* - A room of at least 200 seats should be reserved. In addition, SIOP will provide support for coffee breaks. Support for lunch depends on whether this is included in the delegate fee.

1. **SIOP PODC Keynote**

*When* – As part of the main congress

*Who* *can attend* – The meeting is open to all delegates.

*What* –The keynote is proposed and developed by the LOC, scientific committee and the PODC co-chairs.

*Requirements* *and support* - A room of at least 200 seats should be reserved. In addition, SIOP will provide support for coffee breaks. Support for keynote in line with their guidelines for keynote speakers.

1. **SIOP PODC Day +3 Symposia**

*When* – The morning of the last day of the Annual SIOP Congress.

*Who* *can attend* – The meeting is open to all delegates.

*What* – The symposia is divided into 2 sessions of 90-120 minutes each with a coffee break in between. The symposia are proposed and developed by the PODC co-chairs with invited speakers.

*Requirements* *and support* - A room of at least 200 seats should be reserved. In addition, SIOP will provide support for coffee breaks. Support for lunch depends on whether this is included in the delegate fee. It is proposed that SIOP provides support for two participants of these symposia in line with their guidelines for symposia speakers. PODC Symposia Chairs will be eligible for the early bird registration rates but will not receive any direct reimbursement.

1. **SIOP PODC Working Group Business Meeting**

*When* – In the afternoon on the last day of the Annual SIOP Congress which usually lasts one hour.

*Who can attend* – The meeting is open to all. There is no separate registration fee in addition to that paid for the Annual Congress.

*What* – The meeting provides an opportunity to summarise the progress made over the course of the meeting and to plan ahead. The Chairs of each of the Working Group give presentations.

*Other* - Along with this, often individual SIOP PODC Working Group often use the time after this meeting to organize their own business and/or educational meetings at the same venue.

*Requirements* *and support* - A room of at least 100 seats should be reserved and AV and rental costs are to be covered by SIOP. Although the meeting happens after the “end” of the Annual Congress, the venue and facilities are available for use.

**Section 5.5.2**

\* Abstract Selection - General:

* The SIOP abstracts and the posters are selected by the SIOP Scientific Committee and the Local Organizing Committee chair during the traditional SIOP “Spring Meeting” which is usually held during the month of May in Amsterdam (might be subject to change). The SIOP Scientific Committee PODC representative is requested to attend this meeting. All costs for his/her travel are to be covered by SIOP.

Abstract Selection - PODC

The PODC abstracts for presentation during the educational day PODC meeting will be chosen by the PODC co-chairs and assigned to oral or poster presentations based on score. PODC track organizers should receive all PODC related abstracts which were not selected for presentation for the above tracks, for building of their program. These will include those where submitters indicated that the abstract relates to PODC issues as well as those where they did not. This is because in the past, the PODC co-chairs have identified relevant abstracts with PODC content even though the submitter may not have indicated this at the time of submission. Final selection will only be made **after** the Scientific Committee, Nursing Committee, IPSO, PROS, CCI and PPO have selected their abstracts.

**Section 6- Scholarships/Grants/Prizes**

Comment to Kenes/SIOP

*It is not clear if SIOP scholarships are the same as SIOP PODC scholarships and how do they relate to SIOP nursing scholarships. Are they the same or distinct? What is the number of each scholarships? There is also no mention on the minimum funding support to be raised and provided by the LOC for supporting SIOP scholarships which we believe is equivalent to 30,000 Euros.*

SIOP PODC Scholarship

There are 15 SIOP PODC Scholarships allocated each year of EUR1500 each. If additional scholarships can be offered by individuals or organizations, these will be in addition to the 15 allocated scholarships.

PODC Scholarships for Working Group or Task Force Chairs:

PODC proposes to provide two scholarships to support travel and accommodation to assist two PODC Working Group or Task Force co-chairs from LMIC (potential pool is 18 – 10 Working Groups and 4 Task Forces) to attend the SIOP Annual Congress. The successful applicants must have his/her abstract accepted for oral presentation at the SIOP Annual Congress. The PODC requests SIOP to grant these two scholarship awardees free registration.

Item#**9.3 PRESIDENTIAL DINNER**

* List of invitees to be provided by SIOP secretariat. List includes Board members (including President elect and officers elect), Past presidents, Board of directors, Scientific committee, LOC, Chairs of IPSO, PROS, CCI, **PODC**, Continental presidents, Keynote speakers, PBC president, UICC president. (See Appendix # 11)

**Item#10 - Registration**

* A range of fees are offered to the following categories:

o SIOP/IPSO/PROS member
o Non-Member/regular
o Nurse / Psychosocial professionals / Allied health professional.

o Parents/ Survivors

o Resident/ Fellow / Student.

o Attendee from LMIC as defined by World Bank

* The fees of nurses, LMIC attendees and students are quoted lower than actual costs in order to encourage attendance of these groups whose salaries are lower than physicians.

**Appendix #7** PODC should be added to discussion under #7

**Appendix #13** – Werecommend that the PODC co-Chair’s meeting with the SIOP Board be scheduled, but NOT on our Pre-conference Education Day. Perhaps we share with POEMS on Day 1? Or a slot could be found on Day 2?

Respectfully submitted by

Julia Challinor and Ramandeep Arora

PODC co-Chairs