



## What is Wonca?

*Wonca* is an unusual, yet convenient acronym comprising the first five initials of the *World Organization of National Colleges, Academies and Academic Associations of General Practitioners/Family Physicians*. *Wonca's* short name is *World Organization of Family Doctors*.

## Constitution of Wonca

*Wonca* is made up of national colleges, academies or organizations concerned with the academic aspects of general family practice. Beginning with 18 members in 1972, there are now 118 member organizations in 102 countries. This includes 8 organizations in collaborative relations with *Wonca*. In all, the total membership of the member organizations of *Wonca* is over 250,000 general practitioners/family physicians.

*Wonca* represents and acts as an advocate for its constituent members at an international level where it interacts with world bodies such as the World Health Organization.

## Wonca's mission

The mission of *Wonca* is to improve the quality of life of the peoples of the world through defining and promoting its values, and by fostering and maintaining high standards of care in general practice/family medicine by promoting personal, comprehensive and continuing care for the individual in the context of the family and the community, encouraging and supporting the development of academic organizations of general practitioners/family physicians, providing a forum for exchange of knowledge and information between member organizations of general practitioners/family physicians, and representing the educational, research and service provision activities of general practitioners/family physicians before other world organizations and forums concerned with health and medical care.

## Who runs Wonca?

A Council comprising the representatives of member organizations and the officers of *Wonca* governs *Wonca*. It meets every three years at the time of *Wonca* world conferences. A small Executive Committee meets twice yearly to conduct the business of the organization between Council meetings. The members of Executive include the World President, President Elect, Immediate Past President, three Members at Large and Regional Presidents from each of the seven *Wonca* regions: Africa, North America, Asia Pacific, Europe, South Asia, Iberoamericana-CIMF and the East Mediterranean Region. The *Wonca* World Secretariat has been located in Singapore since 1 May 2001\*.

## What does Wonca do?

*Wonca* has an impact on the world of general practice/family medicine through its World Council and its Regional Councils in the seven regions. It has committees on membership, finance, bylaws, publications and communications, and working groups on the classification of problems encountered in general family practice, rural practice, quality assurance, informatics, education, communications and publications, research, health behaviour change, tobacco cessation, women and family medicine, mental health, and respiratory diseases. There are special interest groups on ethical issues in general practice and travel medicine, elderly care. These groups comprise hundreds of family doctors who meet three yearly, sometimes more often, and in between work by correspondence. Over the years they have carried out groundbreaking studies and research, and have produced a variety of important publications.

## Relations with Other Bodies

*Wonca* has official relations with the *World Health Organization* as a non-governmental organization and is engaged in a number of collaborative projects.

## World and Regional Conferences

*Wonca* World Conferences take place once every three years. These are major occasions for family doctors to present papers, discuss issues and enhance their professional networks. More recent world conferences were held in 2001 in Durban, South Africa; 2004 in Orlando, USA; 2007 in Singapore; 2010 in Cancun, Mexico. The 2013, the 20<sup>th</sup> *Wonca* World Conference will be in Prague, Czech Republic.

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**Regional conferences have been held for many years, and more recently at the following venues:**

2005 - Kos, Greece; Kyoto, Japan; Colombo, Sri Lanka; and Vancouver, Canada.  
2006 - Florence, Italy; Buenos Aires, Argentina; and Bangkok, Thailand.  
2007 - Paris, France  
2008 - Melbourne, Australia, and Istanbul, Turkey.  
2009 – San Juan, Puerto Rico; Hong Kong, China; Basel, Switzerland; Rustenburg, South Africa.  
2010 – Malaga, Spain; Kathmandu, Nepal

**Future regional conferences have been confirmed at the following venues:**

2011 - Cebu, Philippines (Asia Pacific); Warsaw, Poland (Europe); Dubai, UAE (East Mediterranean) ;  
Mumbai, India (South Asia)  
2012 – Jeju, Korea (Asia Pacific); Vienna, Austria(Europe); Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe (Africa).

### **Wonca's More Recent Publications**

2008 *Integrating Mental Health into Primary Care, A Global Perspective* (Joint collaboration with WHO)  
2005 *International Classification of Primary Care ICPC-2-R* (revised 2<sup>nd</sup> edition)  
2003 *Wonca Dictionary of General/Family Practice*  
2002 *Improving Health Systems: the Contribution of Family Medicine – A Guidebook.*  
(Joint collaboration with WHO)

*Wonca New* (Electronic), 6 times a year

**Wonca Website** [www.GlobalFamilyDoctor.com](http://www.GlobalFamilyDoctor.com)

The website contains useful information on Wonca, working groups, membership, excellent interactive education, conferences, publications, research, internet resources and the Wonca shop.

### **Wonca Membership \*\***

There are several types of Wonca Membership:

#### **1) Membership for Organizations:**

- a) Full Membership is for National organizations or a group of national organizations which are representative of general practitioners/family physicians of that country and a majority of whose constituent voting membership consists of general practitioners/family physicians who are legally registered to practise within that country or those countries.
- b) Associate Membership is for National Organizations or a group of national organizations which are representative of general practitioners/family physicians of that country or those countries not seeking Wonca Full Membership, or which are deemed by the Wonca Council not to fulfill the requirements for Full Membership.

#### **2) Academic Membership**

Academic Departments and Training Programs of General Practice/Family Medicine which are actively involved in teaching and research and which support the Wonca's mission and desire affiliation may apply for Wonca Academic Membership.

#### **3) Wonca Direct Membership**

Since **Wonca** first began, many family doctors have expressed a desire to belong to **Wonca** *individually*, although they were already indirect members through their national college or academy. The category of Direct Membership was created to enable individual family doctors to associate directly with **Wonca**.

### **The Future**

**Wonca's** global plan is to further its prime objective of improving the health of the peoples of the world, through fostering and maintaining high standards of care in general practice/ family medicine. **Wonca** recognizes though that many developing nations cannot afford a full complement of well-trained family physicians. However, all nations can afford to adopt the concept of family medicine for all its primary health care workers. By so doing, the quality of health care can be improved substantially.

In particular, **Wonca** wishes to encourage and support the development of academic organizations of general practitioners/family physicians. **Wonca** has made steady progress in this regard since its inception in 1972, but this has accelerated in the last few years. There are now some 120 organizations in 100 countries.

When all that is planned by **Wonca** is added to that which has been accomplished already, continuing improvement of the health of the peoples of the world, **Wonca's** prime mission, can be anticipated in the years ahead.

**\*\* FOR MORE INFORMATION ON MEMBERSHIP, CONTACT THE WONCA SECRETARIAT by email: [admin@wonca.com.sg](mailto:admin@wonca.com.sg)**