FORTHCOMING CONFERENCES

1984
August 6-10 IFORS X (Washington DC)

September 4-7 UK Annual OR Conference (Lancaster)
10-14 5th International Conference on Cybernetics & Systems (Paris)
23-28 AGIFORS Symposium (Strasbourg, France)

October 10-13 'Identifying Strategic Formulation and Implementation - 7th Annual Strategic Mgmt Society Conference (Philadelphia, USA)

November 21-22 UK ORS: 'OR Software & the Micro'

1985
March 12-14 IFAC Workshop on AI & Pattern Recognition in Economics & Mgmt (Zurich)
April 19 - May 1 TIMS/ORS Conference on Computer Aided Design in Control & Engineering Systems (Denmark)
June 17-20 EURO VII: Annual European Congress (Bologna, Italy)
July 1-7 IFAC/IFORS Symposium: 'Identification & System Parameter Estimation' (Tokyo, Japan)
July 3-7 IFAC/IFORS Symposium: 'Theory & Practice of Automatic Control' (Cambridge, UK)
July 31 - Aug 2 3rd IFAC Symposium on Computer Aided Design in Control & Engineering Systems (Oslo, Norway)

August 5-9 IMACS 11th World Congress: 'Systems Simulation and Scientific Computation' (Budapest, Hungary)
20-22 IFAC Regional Conference on Control & Technology for Development (Beijing, China)
27-30 Advances & Computer Applications in Production Management (Varase, Italy)

September 10-12 NZIE/ORS Conference: 'Analysis, Design & Evaluation of Man-Machine Systems' (Varase, Italy)

Further details are available from Vicky van den Broek - Mabin, P O Box 904, Wellington.
OR/STATS: Real-World Developments and Applications

The European Journal of Operational Research is now preparing a special issue devoted to real-world developments and applications of the OR/STATISTICS interface.

Original papers are sought that address new developments, or intelligent applications of existing methodologies, such as OR/STATS and O.R. techniques. A real-world application in an industrial, service or governmental environment is required; priority will be given to topics demonstrating implementation results. All submitted papers will be subject to a refereeing process as that of the EJOR; their suitability for the special issue will be assessed.

Authors wishing to contribute papers for this special issue, should submit four (4) copies of the completed manuscript, in double spaced pages, including appendices, typed according to EJOR guidelines by December 31, 1984 to:

Prof. S. H. Zenakis
Chairman, Decision Sciences
College of Business Administration
Florida International University
Miami, Florida 33199, USA

EDITORIAL

This will be the last newsletter before our Annual Conference and hence my last chance to remind you to register. The Auckland organising committee has been busy preparing for the conference this year and has managed to secure an overseas keynote speaker, namely Professor Harvey Wagner. The conference, entitled "Decision Making: The Challenges of the Future", will be held on 21-24 July, 1985 at Auckland University. The keynote address will be given by Professor Wagner on "The Use of Computer Models in Health Care Planning".

Research to this end should not be lost sight of. Our quality of life is more important than inventing a juicier kiwi fruit.

Planning, as we have practised it in New Zealand has been to accent the trendy, and short-term, to centralise control, the question too many water and integration of private and public science is one that will take time and effort to sort out. We have the talent. Do we have the resolve?

Hugh Barr

One of the strategic issues facing the public health services is how to allocate funds or resources between competing needs. The fundamental issues here are that it is difficult to measure the value of health service outputs and the relationships between inputs and outputs. This is a problem that many textbooks say little about how to deal with such intractable problems. One way in which the resource allocation issues manifest themselves is in the distribution of funds among the 29 hospital boards, the over $1 billion annually in operating grants. The major issue of the OR team over the last few years has been to develop a model for dealing with this problem. Basically the model allocates funds to boards according to the size and population served. However, factors such as age structures and the activities and staff of private hospitals are, however, taken into account. Overall the model is quite large, handling, for instance, some 10 million items of data. The model is now used each year in assigning grants to the boards and has undoubtedly had a significant impact on the health services.

A study recently taken on by the team is looking at the question of immunisation for hepatitis B. At considerable cost people can be immunised. This reduces chances of contracting the disease, of being treated for the disease or passing it on to others. A cost-benefit analysis framework has been established. However, some careful analysis is needed to predict the cumulative effects of the disease on the population. This study looks at the effect of the disease on the community and is particularly exciting.

In the team we consciously tried to balance our time between small tactical studies and larger ones attempting to grapple with some of the strategic issues facing the health services. The smaller studies, generally taking no more than a week or two, provided advice, for example on how to schedule clinic appointments. Another example was preparing and using some simple personnel models to examine the future of the workforce. But while these small studies could bring quick rewards we did not want to become entirely bogged down in things like bedpan scheduling.

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