EURO DURG bulletin

No. 9 **July 2000**

EUROPEAN DRUG UTILIZATION RESEARCH GROUP

Editors. *This issue was prepared by the following members of the Executive Committee of EURO DURG: Morten Andersen.*

EURO DURG and the 16th ICPE in Barcelona

Events particularly important for EURO DURG members are on the 20-21 August. The joint ISPE-EURO DURG meeting on Monday 21 August will concentrate on drug prescribing and utilisation in two podium sessions and the poster presentations.

Sunday 20 August
11:00-14:00 EURO DURG General Assembly
14:00-18:00 Introduction to pharmacoepidemiology
In the evening, after the ISPE Welcome Reception, a special EURO DURG social event will be arranged.

Monday 21 August
08:30-10:30 Opening session
Keynote address: Pharmacoepidemiology: A tool for Public Health (P. Waller)
Presidential address (E. Andrews)
11:00-12:30 Drug use and prescribing I
12:30-14:30 Poster session on drug utilisation
14:30-16:30 Drug use and prescribing II

Morten Andersen

Agenda for the EURO DURG General Assembly

The General Assembly will be held on Sunday 20 August 2000 from 11:00-14:00 at the Princess Sofia Intercontinental Hotel (the venue of the 16th ICPE).

1. Welcome
2. Report of the activities of EURO DURG 1998-2000:
   a. Executive Committee.
   b. Working groups.
   c. Financial report.
3. Reports of national DURGs.
4. Proposal 'The way ahead'.
5. Future meetings.
6. Proposal for abstract study.
7. Elections.
8. Executive Committee 2000-2002.

Flora Haaijer-Ruskamp

16th ICPE
Barcelona, 20-23 August 2000
One-day registration:
Member $195
Non-member $235
Information at the ISPE website
http://www.pharmacoepi.org

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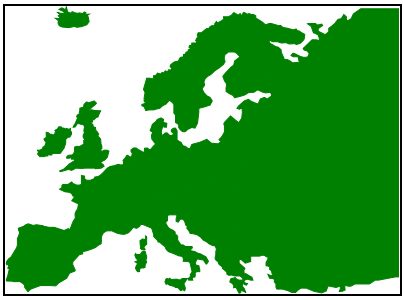

The way ahead - a discussion document for general policy

EURO DURG has been incorporate now for 4 years as an independent scientific association, after functioning as an informal think tank within the framework of WHO for more than 10 years.

In the 4 last years, the activities have concentrated on annual meetings. We have collaborated intensely with two other scientific organisations that are close to us in terms of mission, ISPE (the International Society of Pharmacoepidemiology) and EACPT (the European Association of Clinical Pharmacology and Therapeutics.

It is now time to have a look forward and discuss with each other how to continue. In order to be able to discuss the issue at the general assembly, we urge the national DURGs to develop their national points of view.

In order to facilitate the discussion, the executive committee elaborated on different options.

A number of professional organisations exist with a mission statement close to EURO DURG. The first question to address is then should EURO DURG continue as a separate organisation or should it merge with an other organisation? Organisations to consider are ISPE, EACPT, ISPOR (International Society of Patient and Outcome Research), ISTACH (The International Society of Technology Assessment in Health Care), ISOP (the International Society of Pharmacovigilance), DIA (Drug Information Association), The Cochrane Collaboration.

We should question the rationale to continue as a separate organisation and whether our mission is different from the other organisations. Does the focus on the public health perspective, on methodology of measuring drug utilization in combination with rational drug use makes EURO DURG a unique network of professionals ?

In principle we have three options for the future:

1. **Merger**: With or without other societies, we could merge (or evaporate into) a bigger organisation. The question is which (Cochrane, ISPE, ISPOR, DIA, ISTACH, ISOP, EACPT)? This option has as an objective to decrease the (too) many societies in related subjects, many of them lacking critical mass.

2. Continuation of our **symbiontic life** with two other organisations (ISPE and EACPT).

3. Engage in a **European Union funded process of society building** (similar to the EUR-ASSESS movement), based on strong academic foothold in the member states (See: Franco Sassi. The European way to health thechnology assessment. Lessons from an evaluation of EUR-ASSESS. Int J Tech Assess Health Care 2000;16:282-290).

EURO DURG could take the to play a central role in the emerging European network in monitoring drug use, providing objective information about medicines to doctors and patients and developing methods to optimise use of medicines, by developping also expertise in the evaluation of interventions to promote rational use of medicines.

Whatever the options take, concrete projects should be undertaken in the near future.

We propose to focus on:

1. The completion of the gathering of data on antibiotics use, coordinated by the Oslo Collaborating Centre.

2. A bibliographical study of abstracts on drug utilization research. from the abstract books of annual congresses of the major relevant societies (a protocol proposal will be presented at the general assembly).

3. Collaboration with the EURO-medicines project, coordinated by Prof. Pietro Folino. In this project, Euro-DURG could develop into an European funded network of experts on drug monitioring and implementation research. The project will apply for new grants from BIOMED/EU 5th framework.

4. A European project in which IT is applied to develop a European system for correct application of ATC/DDD methodology, a web site with objective information on medicines for physicians and one for patients.

5. Become the review group in the Cochrane EPOC for a systematic review on the effect of different interventions to implement research findings into practice. EURO DURG members should provide/ function as a network of experts in these fields.

The questions to you, our members are:

What option do you prefer ?

Which project would your members participate in actively?

The discussion in Barcelona will be much more fruitful and focused if these issues are dicussed at the national level

Flora Haaijer-Ruskamp
Robert Vander Stichele

From the Nominating Committee: Candidates for the Executive Committee

The Nominating Committee has received the following candidates for the election of the EURO DURG Executive Committee at the General Assembly in Barcelona:

Armenia	Irina Kazarian
Belgium	Monique Elseviers
Czech Republic	Karel Nemecek
Denmark	Morten Andersen
Germany	Joerg Hasford
Hungary	Gyöngyvér Soós
Iceland	Almar Grimsson
Italy	Alberto Vaccheri
Norway	Marit Rønning
Spain	Alfonso Carvajal
Sweden	Christer Luthman
The Netherlands	Lolkje TW de Jong-van den Berg
United Kingdom	John Ferguson

The candidate for the chair will be announced later.

The election will take place at the general assembly in Barcelona, by delegates appointed by each country and by secret ballot (see EURO DURG bulletin no. 8).

Annemarie Hoffmann
Morten Andersen

Reports from the EURO DURG working groups

TUPP
The User Perspective Project

Coordinator: Professor Ebba Holme Hansen

At the 1st EURO DURG conference 1996 in Balaton it was recommended to research the user perspective. At the following EURO DURG workshops in Berlin (1997 and 1998) it was concluded that a project should be developed, with a special focus on antidepressants and tranquillisers. Several EURO DURGers declared their interest as project participants. The project has been further developed with support from WHO EURO Pharmaceuticals Unit. Since the Berlin workshop 1998 the project group has met twice: at the premises of WHO EURO, Copenhagen, 4-6 February 1999 and at the premises of the University of the Aegean, Mytilini, 24-28 November 1999. Next meeting is planned in Kuopio 17-19 June 2000.

Background
The TUPP group has decided to focus on mood-modifying medicines as the use of these drugs may create problems for the individual user (side effects, dependence, abuse, accidents etc.) as well as problems at the societal level (costs due to dependence and related treatments, reimbursement expenses etc.). Another reason to choose this group is the wide discrepancies in consumption levels and usage patterns between countries. These variations cannot be explained at the systems level by e.g. differences in regulatory approaches, it rather seems that explanations should be sought in variations in culture and local preferences (among health care professionals and among users).

Objective and research questions
The overall objective is to uncover the social meanings attached to mood-modifying medicines in different locations in Europe. The research questions relate to the users' perceptions, experiences, values, choices and strategies re. the use of mood-modifying medicines as well as communication about medicine use with health professionals and the social network.

Methods and material
The empirical methods are primarily qualitative. The project consists of a common core, with individual research groups being free to do extra components if they choose. The focus is on medicines rather than on diagnoses. Inclusion of users of SSRIs is compulsory. Informants are primarily recruited from primary health care via community pharmacies. Each research group conducts a minimum of 20 qualitative interviews.

Participating scientists
At present, 12 research groups from 10 European countries are actively contributing to the project. The project is carried out in collaboration with the WHO European Office, Pharmaceuticals Unit. The scientists represent a multidisciplinary group, including anthropology, clinical pharmacology, clinical pharmacy, family medicine, psychiatry, psychology, social pharmacy and sociology.

Further information
Project coordinator:
Ebba Holme Hansen
Scientific secretary:
Søren Troels Christensen
Secretarial: Anne Blem Jensen
Department of Social Pharmacy
The Royal Danish School of Pharmacy
Universitetsparken 2
DK-2100 Copenhagen
Denmark
E-mail: abj@dfh.dk
Tel.: +45 3530 6350
Fax: +45 3530 6050

CHILDURG
Childrens use of Medications Study

Coordinator: Dr. Emilio J. Sanz

The CHILDURG is composed of 9 participants from 6 countries (Spain, Russia, Czeck Republic, Slovakian Republic, Bulgaria, and Germany. People from other locations are welcome to join the group.The group is organizing a comparative multinational study on drug prescription for children in general practice. In each location the same cross-sectional study on prescription issued to children by GPs and pediatricians working in Primary Health Care are selected in a random and representative manner. Those child-physician contacts are recorded in a pre-coded formulary containing personal data, diagnosis, all drugs prescribed (with their indications, route and dosages) and other relevant information. A limited, but representative sample of children is gathered in each location and coded using ATC and ICD-9. A computer program is available for the collection of data and their analysis. Comparative analysis are to be made at the coordinating centre in Tenerife, Spain. Preliminary results will be presented at the DURG-ISPE Meeting in Barcelona. Any interested person can get more information contacting with:

Project coordinator:
Dr. Emilio J. Sanz
University of La Laguna
Tenerife. Spain
E-mail: esanz@ull.es
Tel.: +34 922 319 347
Fax: +34 922 655 995

Mapping Europe

Coordinator: Dr. R. Vander Stichele

The activities in the working group has been limited to platform creating contacts with European officials. A pilot project on multinational data collection for antibiotics was initiated (reported elsewhere in the bulletin).

EURO DURG was one of the partners of a project submitted in the first call for the Vth Framework European Research program. This project aimed at facilitating co-operation of member states in the creation of an European Database of Medicines. It also aimed at standardising the link to the ATC classification in the various national lists of medicines, used in the different countries by organisations monitoring drug utilisation. The project was not accepted in the first round of review. It will be resubmitted in July, 2000, in revised form, after consultation with official bodies in Europe.

There have been preliminary discussions to co-opreate with the project "EURO-medicines" to create a European network of experts in drug monitoring and drug classification.

Project coordinator:
Dr. Robert Vander Stichele
Tel.: +32 9 240 33 36
Fax: +32 9 240 49 88
e-mail:
Robert.VanderStichele@rug.ac.be

Antibacterial drug utilisation

At the EURO DURG meeting in Jerusalem last year it was agreed to collect drug utilisation data on antibacterials. A number of members signed up on a list as possible providers of such data.

The WHO Collaborating Centre for Drug Statistics Methodology in Oslo had then already started a small international survey on antibacterial drug consumption in collaboration with the WHO Working Group for Drug Statistics Methodology and it was decided that the WHO Centre also should coordinate the EURO DURG survey.

A spreadsheet was circulated to EURO DURG members on the list as well as to the National DURG groups.

Data have been received from the following countries; Denmark, Czech Republic, Croatia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Israel, Lithuania, Norway, Russia, Slovenia and Sweden. Data from Belgium and UK are promised, but not yet received by the Centre.

Countries from the WHO survey that can be included in the comparison are Australia, Ghana, India, the Netherlands and USA.

Problems when comparing the data

The different data are not directly comparable, because they are collected from different settings i.e. hospital data, outpatient settings and total data.

Different ATC/DDD versions. Most of the countries have used the 1999 version of the ATC/DDD index or older when presenting the data. Two countries have used the 2000 version, which create problems concerning the cephalosporins. The DDD for some important cephalosporins was lowered in the ATC/DDD index 2000, which makes the values for DDD/1000 inhabitants/day higher than if they had used earlier versions of the ATC/DDD index. This survey therefore clearly shows the problems related to changes in DDDs.

The Centre received several questions regarding antibacterials not having DDDs. For some substances a DDD had never been requested and therefore never been assigned. Some were combination products e.g. trimethoprim/sulfamethoxasole and some had only DDD for one formulation e.g. oral, but not parenteral. Some DDDs for combination products have been assigned, but is not published in the index. Improved guidelines on the assignment of DDDs for combination products are needed.

Hege Salvesen Blix, WHO-Oslo

News from the Russian Society for Pharmacoepidemiology

The symposium on pharmacoepidemiology took place on April 14 at the 7th Russian National Congress "Human and Medicine". It was organized by the Russian Society for Pharmacoepidemiology (RSPE) and the Organizing Committee of the Congress.

The aim of the symposium was to discuss the data of the first Russian research on pharmacoepidemiology and drug utilization and to define directions of further pharmacoepidemiological studies.

The cochairmen of the symposium Prof. Leonid Stratchounski (Smolensk State Medical Academy), and Prof. Lilia Ziganshina (Kazan State Medical University) gave welcome address to the participants and presented the objectives of the conference.

A brief overview on essential pharmacoepidemiological definitions, types of investigations and the perspectives of pharmacoepidemiology in Russia was made by Prof. Leonid Stratchounski. Of much interest was a presentation of Prof. Sergey Fitilev (Russian University of People Friendship) regarding adverse drug reactions as a focus of pharmacoepidemiology and ADR monitoring system in Russia. Prof. Lilia Ziganshina surveyed the pharmacoepidemiological studies conducted in the Republic of Tatarstan during last two years.

It was followed by the overview and discussion of the results of local and multicenter pharmacoepidemiological research:

- Pharmacoepidemiological assesment of drug prescribing in children with bronchial asthma (Prof. Igor Smolenov, Volgograd State Medical Academy),

- Antimicrobial prescriptions in outpatients with acute sinusitis (Docent Oleg Karpov, St-Petersburg State Medical University under Pavlov),

- Pharmacotherapy of arterial hypertension in pregnant women (Prof. Oleg Supryaga, Russian University of People Friendship),

- Patterns of drug prescription in outpatient adults with low respiratory tract infections (Dr Svetlana Ratchina, Smolensk State Medical Academy).

Dr Alexander Bedenkov (Smolensk State Medical Academy) and Dr Andrey Perkov (Tula Regional Hospital) presented the examples of practical application of ATC/DDD methodology for the assessment of drug utilisation.

The meeting of the Russian Society for Pharmacoepidemiology took place just after the end of the symposium. As the result of it the decisions were taken to organize a School on Pharmacoepidemiology with ATC/DDD course during the next Congress "Human and Medicine", to establish an official publication and a web-site of the RSPE, and to organise working groups on specific aspects of pharmacoepidemiology.

L. Stratchounski, S. Ratchina

Visit the EURO DURG website http://www.eurodurg.org/

- **Read our constitution**
- **Read the back issues of the bulletins**
- **Read our mission statement**
- **Find updated adresses of board members**
- **Find out the latest about upcoming congresses**

Congresses & meetings

The United Kingdom Drug Utilisation Research Group

12th Annual Scientific Meeting and AGM
on
Friday 15 December 2000
at
The Royal Society of Medicine
London

"Prescribing in the Consumer Age"

SPEAKERS:

- **Mr Michael Bailey, Past President, ABPI**
- **Professor Mike Drummond, University of York**
- **Mr Peter Cardy, The Multiple Sclerosis Society**
- **Mr Christopher Newdick, University of Reading**
- **Mr Andy McKeon, Department of Health**

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

Dr John Ferguson, Medical Directorate,
Prescription Pricing Authority, Bridge House,
152 Pilgrim Street, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 6SN, UK.
Tel: (0191) 203 5351 Fax: (0191) 203 5499
e-mail: john.ferguson@ppa.nhs.uk *or*
lynne.davies@ppa.nhs.uk
web site: www.ukdurg.org

PGEA, CME and CPP approval sought

EURO DURG meeting

Prague, Czech Republic

7-10 June 2001

Integrating drug utilization studies in a wider Europe

The meeting is planned to take place at the State Institute of Drug Control and the Medical Faculty nearby

Further information will be available in Barcelona and later announced on the EURO DURG website

http://www.eurodurg.org

5th Congress of the EACPT

Odense, Denmark

12-15 September 2001

EURO DURG joint session proposals

Quality indicators in drug use

Drug use in the pediatric population in Europe

Further information on

http://www.sdu.dk/med/homepages/eacpt/eacpt5.html

An update of National DURGs in Europe

Chairs and/or contact persons also to be found on our web page: http://www.eurodurg.org

ARMENIA: DURG-Armenia
Dr. Irina Kazarian
Department of Pharmacy, National Institute of Health
49/4 Komitas Avenue
Yerevan, 375051, Republic of Armenia
Tel.: +374 2 227247; fax: +374 3907216
e-mail: ioannis@1x2.yerphi.am

BELGIUM: B-DURG
Denise Walckiers, pharmacist
Scientific Institute of Public Health – Louis Pasteur
Rue Wytsman, 14
B-1050 Bruxelles, Belgium
Tel.: +32 2 642 5035; fax: +32 2 642 5410
e-mail: denise.walckiers@iph.fgov.be

BULGARIA: DURG-Bulgaria
Dr. Zlatka Dimitrova
Medical University – Sofia, Faculty of Pharmacy
2 Dunav Street
Sofia 1000, Bulgaria
Tel.: +359 2 98026; fax: +359 2 9874
e-mail: zdimitrova@mbox.pharmfac.acad.bg

CZECH REPUBLIC: Czech-DURG
Dr. Vladimir Biba
State Institute for Drug Control - SUKL,
Srobárova 48
100 41 Prague 10, Czech Republic
Tel.: +420 2 6708 2890; fax: +420 2 744 977
e-mail: stika@sukl.cz

DENMARK: The Danish Society for Pharmacoepidemiology
Dr. Morten Andersen
Clinical Pharmacology, University of Southern Denmark
Winsløwparken 19
DK-5000 Odense C, Denmark
Tel.: +45 6550 3791; fax: +45 6591 6089
e-mail: m-andersen@cekfo.sdu.dk

GERMANY: Gesellschaft für Arzneimittelnwendungsforschung und Arzneimittel-epidemiologie (GAA) e.V.
Prof. Joerg Hasford
Pharmacoepidemiology Research Group, Department of IBE
Ludwig-Maximilians-University
D-81377 Munich, Germany
Tel.: +49 89 709 57480 fax: +49 89 709 57482
e-mail: has@ibe.med.uni-muenchen.de

GREECE: DURG GR
Dr. A. Iliopoulou
Section of Clinical Pharmacology, Dept. of Clinical Therapeutics,
Athens University. Alexandra Hospital
80 Vas Sofias Str.
115 28 Athens, Greece
Tel.+fax: +30 1 7771 731
e-mail: ailiop@atlas.uoa.gr

HUNGARY: DURG-Hungary
Dr. Zsuzsanna Szepezdi
National Institute of Pharmacy
Zrínyi u.3., H-1372 Budapest, Hungary
Tel.: +36 1 317 7113; fax: +36 1 318 1167
e-mail: szepezdi@ogyi.hu

ICELAND: IS DURG
Almar Grimsson
Háahvammi 7
IS-220 Hafnarfjördur, Iceland
Tel.:+354 555 2098; fax:+354 555 3561
e-mail: albas@itn.is

ISRAEL: ISRAEL DURG
Prof. Micha Levy, MD
Dept. of Medicine
Hadassah University Hospital
Jerusalem 91-120, Israel
Tel.: +972 2 6776 449; fax: +972 2 6422 384
e-mail: rach@hassadah.org.il

ITALY: DURG-Italia
Dr. Alberto Vaccheri
University of Bologna
Department of Pharmacology
Via Irnerio 48
I-40126 Bologna, Italy
Tel.: +39 51 248526; fax: +39 51 248862
e-mail: vaccheri@biocfarm.unibo.it

NORWAY: DURG NO
Marit Rønning
WHO Collaborating Centre for Drug Statistics Methodology
PO Box 100, Veivet
N-0518 Oslo 5, Norway
Tel.: +47 22 169810; fax: +47 22 169818
e-mail: marit.ronning@nmd.no

RUSSIA
Dr. Svetlana A. Ratchina
State Medical Academy
P.O. Box 5, Smolensk,
214019 Russia
Tel.: (0812) 553401; fax: (0812) 550624
e-mail: sveta@cliph.keytown.com

SPAIN: DURG-ESPAÑA
Dr. Emilio Sanz
Clinical Pharmacology Unit, School of Medicine
University of La Laguna
E-38071 La Laguna, Tenerife, Spain
Tel.: +34 922 319347; fax: +34 922 655995
e-mail: esanz@ull.es

SWEDEN: The Swedish Society for Pharmacoepidemiology
Dr. Ulf Bergman
Department of Clinical Pharmacology, Karolinska Institutet
Huddinge University Hospital
S-141 86 Huddinge, Sweden
Tel.: +46 8 58 58 1196; fax : +46 8 58 58 1070
e-mail: ulf.bergman@pharmlab.hs.sll.se

THE NETHERLANDS: NL-DURG
Dr. R. M. C. Herings
Dept. of Pharmacoepidemiology, Faculty of Pharmacy
University of Utrecht
PO Box 800082
NL-3508 TB Utrecht, The Netherlands
Tel.: +31 30 253 7325; fax : +31 30 253 9166
e-mail: r.m.c.herings@far.ruu.nl

UNITED KINGDOM: DURG-UK
Dr. John Ferguson
Prescription Pricing Authority
Bridge House, 152 Pilgrim Street
Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 6SN, UK
Tel.: +44 191 2035351; fax: +44 191 2035499
e-mail: john.ferguson@ppa.nhs.uk