EuroDURG bulletin

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NEWSLETTER OF THE EUROPEAN CHAPTER OF THE SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP OF DRUG UTILSATION RESEARCH (SIGDUR) OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY OF PHARMACOEPIDEMIOLOGY (ISPE)

Editors. *This issue was prepared by the following members of the Executive Committee of EuroDURG: Monique Elseviers, Robert Vander Stichele, Bjørn Wettermark, Elisabetta Poluzzi, Brian Godman, Ria Benko. See also contributors. on behalf of national groups.*
Send reactions to:benko@clph.szote.u-szeged.hu OR benkoria@gmail.com

The Chair's message

Dear Drug Utilization colleagues across Europe,

Time for a new bulletin means time for a new year. I hope this year will be a good for all of you!

Let me first emphasize that any rumours that EuroDURG has passed away are strongly exaggerated! In the past years, EuroDURG gradually merged into ISPE. This means that EuroDURG ceased to be an independent organization and now constitutes the Regional European network of ISPE special interest group for drug utilization (SIG DUR). However, it doesn't mean that European Drug Utilization research has become less active or less important. DU data are increasingly made available and used to support decision making. An ever increasing number of scientific publications are coming in the field and European drug utilization researchers are active at the annual ISPE conference as well as on many other conferences. Some areas where European DU research plays an important role for the development include:

- understanding the role of the prescriber and factors influencing him/her
- development of classification system and measurement units
- development of models for monitoring of drug utilisation and expenditure in ambulatory care and in hospitals
- development and use of prescribing quality indicators
- quasi-experimental studies to assess the impact of inter-ventions
- describing and understanding regional and national variation of drug use

All these areas contribute to the principal aim of drug utilization research to facilitate rational use of drugs in the population.

On ISPE in Brighton the new board was elected. I am happy that I got the confidence to be the chair and I am equally grateful that Monique Elsevier still is a member of the board. I really appreciate all her enthusiasm and hard work during the last years and look forward to still collaborate in DU. New members are Brian Godman from UK and Begler Begovic from Bosnia and Herzegovina. The new committee thus consists of the following people:

Björn Wettermark (Sweden) – chair

Ria Benko (Hungary) – secretary

Brian Godman (UK) – treasurer

Monique Elseviers (Belgium)

Robert Vander Stichele (Belgium)

Peter Mol (The Netherlands) – Liaison with SIG/ISPE

Vera Vlahović-Palčevski (Croatia)

Elisabetta Poluzzi (Italy) webmaster

Begler Begovic (Bosnia and Herzegovina)

During 2010, the board has communicated through telephone conferences. Practically, as a consequence of the merge with ISPE, national chairs have not been directly targeted in our communication and we set up a list with individual members for communication instead. A web-based questionnaire was sent out and today around 140 persons from 40 different countries are registered as active drug

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utilization researchers. Part of the communication has also been through the EuroDURG webpage which has been transferred to the ISPE webpage. Presently it is available through two addresses: **www.eurodurg.com** and **www.pharmacoepi.org/eurodurg.**

We have also participated in the abstract review process of the ICPE mid-year meeting in Stockholm and we were actively involved in the ICPE conference in Brighton (see below).

Have not joined our group yet?
Please register as a DU researcher at:

http://spreadsheets.google.com/viewform?formkey=dE9oeG94dHFwODFDUVhmUmlmakh1M2c6MA

It takes only 5 minutes!

Some other activities that took place during 2010 include the cross national comparisons of drug utilization and contacts/advice to the Aritmo and Protect projects (see under the EU projects section).

The main happenings this year will be the Health Insurer Meeting and a EuroDURG meeting in Belgium from 30th of November (see details on page 4-5) on which I hope to see you all! Looking forward to an exciting year for European Drug utilization research!

Björn Wettermark
Chair of EuroDURG

Conferences meetings

…Previous events

26th ICPE Brighton, UK, 2010

The annual ISPE conference was held on Hilton Metropole in Brighton. Many hundred researchers from various countries gathered for four days intensive discussions. The keynote address this year was given by Dr. Thomas Lönngren from EMA and titled "The Future of Medicines Regulation: Where Does Pharmacoepidemiology Fit into Risk Management and Comparative Effectiveness Measurement?" This symbolised well the recent move of ISPE to be more oriented to effectiveness and increase the collaboration with health policy and regulators. In his speech, Thomas Lönngren addressed the challenges of drug development today and it is obvious that pharmacoepidemiolgy and drug utilization research can play an important role to improve the introduction of medicines in the future.

At the conference, EuroDURG jointly together with SIG-DUR contributed to the organisation of two preconference educational sessions on drug utilization, i.e. the traditional introductory course and a new course with the title "Using Drug Data to Guide Planning and Evaluation of Quality Use of Medicines Interventions".

We also arranged a workshop with the aim to explore and analyse various methodological issues in performing cross national comparisons of drug utilization. The discussions focused on database content and validity, classification and measurement units of utilization, measurements units of expenditures, and prescribing quality indicators in CNC. There were also other oral sessions at the conference dedicated to different drug utilization topics such as compliance. The final hot topic session was dedicated to the influenza pandemic and what we have learned from it.

The memories from Brighton also include the special EuroDURG party at a nice pub close to the pier and the conference evening at the Corn Exchange where we all had a great time dancing to Abba's hits brought to us by Abba's Angels,

Björn Wettermark

Posterprice winners

As usual, during conference in Brighton, a separate DU poster session was organised. From various good quality works the followings were found by our ExCO to be the best:

ISPE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR PHARMACOEPIDEMIOLOGY

ICPE CONFERENCE **Chicago, ILLINOIS, USA**
14-17 AUGUST 2011
Do not miss the opportunity to present the results of your DUR projects during the next ISPE meeting in Chicago!
Submit your abstract at: http://www.call4abstracts.com/ispe11/ before **February 16, 2011**

1.

Christian Hampp, Almut G. Winterstein (University of Florida, Gainesville, United States): *Timing of Prophylaxis Relative to Respiratory Syncytial Virus Seasons*

2.

V Valkhoff, E van Soest, J Dieleman, R Schade, G Mazzaglia, M Molokhia, E Kuipers, M Sturkenboom (ErasmusMC, Rotterdam, the Netherlands): *Trends in Use of Gastroprotective Strategies with NSAID Treatment in the United Kingdom, Italy, and the Netherlands*

3.

Bernie McGowan, Miriam C Casey, Joe Marry, Kathleen Bennett (Dublin, Ireland) *Primary Care Prescribing of Anti-Osteoporotic Type Medications Following Hospitalisation for Fractures*

Congratulation to the winners!

Despite the successfulness of the session we might issue some critics as well: however a lot of DU works were submitted and presented at the ISPE meeting they were mounted at different places at different times (not during the DU poster session), so it was very hard to get an overview. Our ExCO will try making efforts in the future to avoid similar organisational problems.

Monique Elseviers
Ria Benko

Report of the SIG-DUR meeting in Brighton, 2010

During the ISPE meeting in Brighton, on August 21, a meeting of the Special Interest Group on Drug Utilisation (SIG-DUR) was held.
The past chair of the SIG-DUR, Robert Vander Stichele listed the achievements of the past years.
The merge between ISPE and EuroDURG was completed after a 5 year process. Introductory and advanced courses on Drug Utilisation Research are now a fixed part of the IPSE pre conference educational courses. DU researchers keep sending their abstracts to the ISPE meetings, with 1 in 4 ISPE abstract pertaining to the field of DUR. During the conference, the subject of drug Utilisation is well represented in symposia, workshops, plenary sessions and poster walks. Coordination between active regional groups in Europe, in Australia, with the CERT network in the US, and several national DUR groups in Asian countries is on its way. A corner in the ISPE website is reserved for SIGDUR activities, and the EuroDURG web site was reinstalled there.
The most active regional group remains EuroDURG with the following achievements:

- continuing support to the cross national comparison project
- cooperation with several European projects (ESAC, Happy Audit, Aritmo, Protect),
- activities in the European Medicine Agency ENCEPP initiative (European Network of Centres of Excellence in Pharmaco-epidemiology and Pharmacovigilance), more specifically insertion of the DURQUIM (**DUR**-**Qu**ality **I**ndicator **M**eeting) meeting on Prescribing Quality Indicators in the methodology standards.
- Successful meeting at ICPE 26th with election of Björn Wettermark as new EuroDURG chair, and a new Executive Committee

There was a report on the different projects:

- Cross national comparison
- After the successful and innovative poster session (one DUR poster per country) in Copenhagen in 2008, a meeting was held in 2009 in Mechelen with Data Providers from 15 European Countries. In 2010 a symposium on this issue was held at ICPE 26, in Brighton. Since then, an active research program in Sweden and Italy trusts this project forward.
- The collaboration with WHO Collaboration Centre in OSLO on ATC /DDD methodology and its promotion in Cross national comparisons was continued. The ATC/DDD browser project was continued, to support correct and transparent linking of national drug registers to the ATC classification.

The past chair concluded: our discipline needs to be organised by big countries and regions, as our work is very dependent on local context (drugs available, medical culture, public health policy, reimbursement system) Hence, in order to get the global level going, dynamic groups must exist, not only in Europe, but also in other regions.

Finally, a new chair and a new Steering Committee was elected for the SIGDUR :

Chair: Morten Andersen, Sweden

Steering committee:

Europe : Peter Mol

Africa: Ilse Truter

Australia : Lisa Pont

US: Julie Zito

Canada : Jean-Pierre Grégoire

Robert Vander Stichele

Upcoming conferences…

ISPE 2011 Mid-Year Meeting

The 2011 Mid-Year meeting of the International Society for Pharmacoepidemiology (ISPE) will be held in Florence, Italy between the 9th and 11th of April at the Grand Hotel Baglioni. The agenda includes a symposium on new strategies for the post-marketing monitoring of medical products; representatives of the regulatory agencies, industry, and academia will speak about expectations and future directions. Drug safety signal detection and other hot topics are covered in the programme as well.

The preliminary programme is available at: http://www.pharmacoepi.org/meetings/midyear11/2011_brochure.pdf

Ria Benko

ISPE 2011 Annual conference

EuroDURGers and all people interested in pharmaco-epidemiology are cordially invited to attend the 27th International Conference on Pharmaco-epidemiology and Therapeutic Risk Management. The meeting will be held August 14-17, 2011 at Hyatt Regency Chicago, in Chicago, Illinois, a wonderful city at the coast of the Michigan-Lake in the United States.

Information about the scientific program soon will be uploaded to the following website: http://www.pharmacoepi.org/meetings/27thconf/index.cfm

Deadline for abstract submission for the **ICPE** is **February 16!**

EACPT 2011

The European Association for Clinical Pharmacology and Therapeutics (EACPT) and the Hungarian Society for Experi-mental and Clinical Pharmacology invite you to join the 10th EACPT Congress in Budapest, Hungary. The largest scientific event in Clinical Pharmacology in Europe in 2011 will take place between 26-29 June, at Budapest Congress & World Trade Center.

The logo of the congress "From Drug Research to Therapy for the Benefit of Patients" indicate the wide range of topics that will be touched. The congress will focus on key research and therapeutic areas and their related problems and latest achievements with the help of distinguished invited speakers, opinion leaders, experts and the upcoming future generation of clinical pharmacologists.

Online abstract submission, registration and hotel booking are available at the following link: http://www.eacpt2011.org/

Deadline for abstract submission for the EACPT is February 28!

The final programme will be available on the website as of May 2011: http://www.eacpt2011.org/

Ria Benko

Health Policy Meeting Antwerp, Winter 2011 First Announcement

Three years ago, the DUR Special Interest Group of ISPE, launched the idea to organize an educational meeting for health policy makers and data providers, focusing on drug utilization research to support decision making. As European chapter of the SIG-DUR, it was particularly EuroDURG who showed interest in the organization of this meeting. It took several years however, to develop a more concrete proposal.
The target audience will be enlarged and also European DU scientists will be invited to attend the meeting. Basic as well as advanced topics of DU research related to policy making will be handled.

Concretely the meeting aims:

- To offer public servants and researchers basic and advanced methodological and statistical tools for handling drug utilization (DU) data
- To discus advantages and limitations of DU data derived from different sources (e.g. medical records, reimburse-ment databases, questionnaires)
- To deepen the knowledge about the suitability of DU research to support decision making including the design and evaluation of health policy interventions as well as the assessment of the quality of prescribing.

The meeting will be organized in Belgium at the University of Antwerp from Wednesday 30 November to Saturday 3 December 2011. The scientific committee is currently working out an exciting program that will attract policy makers, data providers and researchers working with DU data. More concrete information will follow in a special issue of our Bulletin.
Antwerp will be the place to meet your DUR friends and colleagues at the end of this year! Meanwhile, note the date (from 30th November to 3rd December) in your agenda.

Monique Elseviers

ICIUM 2011

The Third International Conference for Improving Use of Medicines will be organized in Alexandria, Egypt; between April 10-14, 2011.

The conference will again be highly interactive. For this purpose, the registration will be limited to about 500 participants. Those with an accepted abstract, policy makers and satellite meeting participants will be given preference.

The conference focus will remain on presenting and summarizing knowledge about ways to improve medicines use and health, especially for vulnerable populations. Participants will help to shape evidence based policy recommendations and a future research agenda on these topics. The sequence of half-day sessions will be organized around different levels of the health care system.

More information about the programme is available at: http://www.inrud.org/ICIUM/Schedule-Overview.cfm

Abstract submission is closed now, but registration is still open for interested individuals

Ria Benko

For future events that might also interest you please see the NATIONAL NEWS SECTION!

European projects

HAPPY AUDIT project

In our last Bulletins we presented the aims and gave an interim report on the Happy Audit project in which EuroDURG was a partner. Shortly, this project has been established to strengthen the surveillance of respiratory tract infections in primary healthcare in Europe, through the development of intervention programmes which target primarily general practitioners (GPs),

"Health Alliance for Prudent Prescribing, Yield And Use of Anti-microbial Drugs In the Treatment of Respiratory Tract Infections"

The audit process consisted of self-registration of all cases of respiratory tract infections (RTI) over three weeks in winter months of 2008 and 2009 in six countries (Denmark; Sweden; Lithuania; Russia; Spain and Argentina.). In between, training courses on appropriate use of antibiotics for RTIs were offered to the GPs. Furthermore, clinical guidelines, posters for waiting rooms, brochures on the appropriate use of antibiotics, handouts to patients and finally access to point-of-care tests (Strep A and C-Reactive Protein) were given to the participating GPs. With all of these steps they tackled the two most ubiquitous issues in antibiotic prescription: supply and demand.
The project has ended in 2010 March, and as reported by Lars Bjerrum, the project coordinator, it was very successful: not only the number of GPs who participated was highly above than expected, but the project – by means of the mentioned implementation activities - has succeeded in reducing the proportion of patients receiving antibiotics for RTIs from 33 % to 24 % considering all countries. The project had the highest impact in Argentina and Russia with decreasing the proportion of antibiotic prescriptions from 43% to 24% and from 33% to 15%, respectively. The detailed results of the project are continuously published in international and national journals.

Ria Benko

ESAC project

The European Surveillance of Antimicrobial Consumption (ESAC) project aims to maintain a continuous, comprehensive and comparable database on antibiotic use in Europe. The project was launched by DG Sanco in 2001 and has been funded by the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) since 2007.

Initially the take-over of ESAC by ECDC was planned by the end of August 2010. Consensus was reached by the ESAC Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) on take-over by ECDC of the core data collection, the regional data collection, the online interactive database, the Ambulatory Care Protocol A (outpatient antibiotic use by age and gender), the Hospital Care Point Prevalence Study (PPS, ECDC already decided to combine this with health care associated infections), and the economics database (determinants of outpatient antibiotic use).

ESAC "European Surveillance of Antimicrobial Consumption"

Recently however, ECDC decided to postpone the take-over and to continue ESAC until June 30, 2011 at the University of Antwerp. The major deliverables of the new ESAC-4 contract will be the dissemination of the ESAC results, including an ESAC report as well as scientific publications on over a decade of antimicrobial consumption data (1997-2009). Also, transfer of the ESAC project, including databases and protocols to ECDC is an important deliverable of ESAC-4.

(Extracted from Vanessa Vankerckhoven: The future of ESAC in GRACE News, October 2010, Volume 5 (3))

Monique Elseviers

PROTECT project

During the summer, EuroDURG was contacted by the European Union funded project PROTECT (Pharmacoepidemiological Research on Outcomes of Therapeutics by a European Consortium). The aim of the project was to address the limitations of methods currently used in pharmacovigilance and pharmacoepidemiology and to strengthen the monitoring of the benefit-risk assessment of medicines in Europe. The team has made a valuable inventory over databases on drug utilization in most European countries and a nice poster was also presented in Brighton with an overview on various European organizations working with cross national drug utilization data. EuroDURG has due to limited resources taken the decision not to be an official partner in the project but endorse all individual members to help the Protect team in their inventory. Cross national studies of drug utilization are very valuable to identify areas for improvement but there are also many challenges with the comparability across countries due to differences in, e.g., data availability, healthcare organization and reimbursement system. It is therefore important that people with experience of DU research in each individual country contributes with their knowledge in these European projects.

Bjorn Wettermark

ARITMO project

As we reported in our last Bulletin, the ARITMO project had been approved by EU and started in early 2010. The aims of the ARITMO project are to

- Estimate the spontaneous reporting rate of patients experiencing drug-induced arrhythmias when prescribed drugs known to be associated with an increased rate, e.g. antipsychotics (ATC N05A), anti-infectives [antibacterials (J01 and J04), antimycotics (J02) and antivirals (J05)] and H1-anti-histamines (ATC R06). The countries providing spontaneous reports from national databases include France, Germany, Italy, and the UK.
- Provide a detailed description of current utilisation patterns broken down by patient populations among European countries for products in each of these classes. As a result, help identify geographical areas where there is currently high exposure to the most arrhythmogenic drugs. This covers where pertinent and possible in-patient, ambulatory care and self-medication.

This will be achieved through a collaboration between the University of Bologna (UNIBO – Elisabetta Poluzzi and colleagues), Department of Clinical Pharmacology at the Karolinska Institutet (KI), Stockholm (Brian Godman, Björn Wettermark and Morten Andersen) and colleagues from across Europe who have provided utilisation data for previous CNC studies.

The role of EuroDURG has been essential with facilitating the collaboration between UNIBO and

KI (expertise: CNC project), along with helping with data providers, endorsing one of the most important aims of EuroDURG.
The ESAC group is also being contacted for assistance especially with anti-infectives in view of the scope of this project, their considerable expertise collecting Pan-EU data on anti-infectives, anti-virals and anti-mycotic drugs, the need to complete the project in as many European countries as possible during 2011, and limited available resources.

Further details will follow shortly, and the help of EuroDURG members will again be greatly appreciated to successfully complete this ground breaking project linking different datasets'.

Brian Godman, Elisabetta Poluzzi

SIG-DUR projects

International ATC Browser

A few years ago Euro-DURG started a project to construct a web site where it would be possible to browse the international Anatomical Therapeutic Chemical Classification (ATC) in a number of languages and with the ability to choose a country and see the medicinal product packages on the market in that country for a specific ATC code.
In the past years attempts to build this browser were limited to a few collaborating countries.
In the mean time, with the advent of eHEALTH (the massive support of governments for medical informatics solutions in the health care sector), the ATC classification, although a member of the World Health Organisation classification family, is in danger of loosing its primacy for drug utilisation to the competition of SNOMED (**S**ystematized **No**menclature of **Med**icine).
State of the art application of ISO-standards for multilingual thesauri and of semantic web technology will be needed to assure that ATC remains the cornerstone of drug utilisation monitoring.
Therefore, a revamping of the protocol of this project is necessary on an academic level.
It is anticipated that the successful completion of this project will play an important role in the linking of international drug knowledge databases to national collections of medicinal product packages.

Robert Vander Stichele

Pan European Cross National Comparison studies

As we informed our readers in last years' Bulletin, from 2009, the Cross-National Comparison project (see details in Bulletin 2010) was fused with another EU project (DU generic policy project) and continued under the leadership of Brian Godman and Bjorn Wettermark.
The drug utilisation generic policy project focused on four drug groups: statins; proton pump inhibitors (PPIs), antidepressants; ACE-inhibitors and angiotensin receptor blockers (ARBs).
The pricing of generics (especially omeprazole and simvastatin), demand side measures to enhance their utilisation (omeprazole vs. esomeprazole and simvastatin vs. atorvastatin and rosuvastatin), as well as the combined measures to enhance prescribing efficiency, involving over 20 European countries and regions have now been published in peer review journals (details below).

Only administrative databases were used in the studies, although there have been comparisons between utilisation patterns seen with sales data (from IMS) vs. the administrative database in Lithuania to help explain the low utilisation of PPIs and statins seen versus Western European countries.

An appreciable number of people involved in drug utilisation networks across Europe contributed data as well as input to the papers to enhance their content and publication endorsing the value of networks and teamwork.

The papers also demonstrated the value of evaluating health policy reforms alongside drug utilisation to help explain for instance the low utilisation of PPIs and statins seen among some Central and Eastern European countries vs. Western European countries. In addition, the rationale behind the appreciable variation seen in the utilisation of generic vs. patent protected PPIs and statins among Western European countries. The papers also endorsed the value of using the 4 E approach (education, economics, engineering and enforcement) to categorise the plethora of demand side measures to enable comparisons between countries. The next stage of the research will be the development of a scoring system around the 4Es. The objective being to help health authorities and health insurance agencies better plan for the future when considering additional demand side measures to implement to further enhance prescribing efficiency and their possible impact/ influence. More individual country publications are also ongoing/ planned.

The three Cross National Comparison publications to date are:

Godman B, Shrank W, Wettermark B, et al. Use of generics – a critical cost containment measure for all healthcare professionals in Europe? Pharmaceuticals 2010; 3:2470-94 doi 10.3390/ph3082470 ISSN 1424-8247

Godman B, Shrank W, Andersen M,et al. Comparing policies to enhance prescribing efficiency in Europe through increasing generic utilisation: changes seen and global implications. Expert Rev. Pharmacoeconomics Outcomes Res 2010; 10: 707–722

Godman B, Shrank W, Andersen M, et al. Policies to enhance prescribing efficiency in Europe: findings and future implications. Frontiers in Pharmacology 1 (Article 141), 1-16 doi:10.3389/fphar.2010.00141'

Brian Godman

Knowledge databases, Drug information, and Drug Utilisation

Drug Information Centres help to shape drug utlisation towards more rational drug therapy. In many countries one national or several regional Drug Information Centres are active, with or without a national mandate. In the past century, Drug Information Centres responded to questions from prescribers, and provided printed material. In the past decade the full potential of the internet was used to communicate by building web sites. In the coming decade the focus will be on providing point-of-care drug information, incorporated in electronic prescription modules and electronic health records.

This is an enormous challenge. It is taking the science of synthesizing evidence from randomized clinical trials, systematic reviews and guidelines to specific practice recommendations into computer-interpretable algorithms. The full range in expertise in clinical pharmacology will need to be translated in knowledge databases which can drive decision-support systems.

Construction of these knowledge databases from universal clinical pharmacology expertise and evidence should be an international collaborative effort. Indeed, there is no reason for doing this on a national basis, and there are lots of pragmatic reasons for spreading the burden of the construction and maintenance of such knowledge databases over different teams in different countries, working together according to mutually agreed protocols.

In the past years, modest international contacts occurred between independent drug information centres of Finland, Sweden, Belgium, the Netherlands, Italy and others.

With the advent of eHEALTH (the massive support of governments for medical informatics solutions in the health care sector) on the European level and in every European Country, tremendous efforts and resources will be devoted to semantic interoperability and decision support. It is crucial that the independent drug information centres collaborate on the European level to ascertain their pivotal position in these fields.

The EuroDURG Network is ready to contribute to the coming together of the independent Drug Information Centres at the European Level.

Robert Vander Stichele

News from NATIONAL DURGs

Germany

The 17th conference of the German Drug Utilisation Research Group (GAA e. V.) took place on 25th and 26th of November 2010 in Osnabrück. This year the conference had its special focus on use of medications in nurse's care, role of pharmacies in the consultation of patients, and issues in polypharmacy. Speakers gave an overview about their latest research results in 24 oral and 15 poster presentations. Each session was introduced by invited speakers.

Further information available at:

http://www.gaa-arzneiforschung.de.

Abstracts are available in English: http://www.egms.de/dynamic/en/meetings/gaa2010/index.htm

Upcoming events…

The German national network for health services research "Netzwerk Versorgungsforschung" and the GAA will organize the very famous and large congress (about 600 participants expected) for health services research in October 2011 in Cologne. This year with a special focus on drug utilization!

More information can be found here: www.dkvf2011.de and www.dnvf.de.

Katrin Janhsen
co-chair of German -DURG

Italy

On the 1st of October 2010, the Italian DURG and the Italian Society of Pharmacology organised a meeting entitled "Pharmaco-vigilance and Drug utilisation as tools for drug prescription appropriateness: Italian experiences". The meeting took place in Imola (University of Bologna). Many young researchers in Clinical Pharmacology from both University and Regulatory Institutions attended to the meeting to present their most recent research activities.
The meeting was focused both on drug utilisation (1 lecture by Roberto Raschetti from National Institute of Health, and 6 oral communications) and pharmaco-vigilance (one lecture by Mauro Venegoni from Lombardia Pharmacovigilance Centre, and six oral communications).

The abstracts are available in English on the following site: http://www.farmacologia.unibo.it/Farmacologia/Dipartimento/Seminari+e+convegni/2010.htm

Upcoming events…

In September 2011, the National Conference of Pharmacology Society will take place in Bologna. Specific sessions will be devoted to pharmacoepidemiology and drug utilisation. The program will be published on the following website: http://www.sifweb.org/cong35/sif_cong_35_bologna_2011.php

Domenico Motola
Chair of the Italian DURG, Elisabetta Poluzzi

United Kingdom & Ireland

PRIMM
UK AND IRELAND

DURG transforms into PRIMM - A forum on medicines usage

The Drug Utilisation Research Group (UK & Ireland), established in 1989, is changing its name to PRIMM – Prescribing and Research in Medicines Management. This change, agreed at its most recent meeting, is to emphasise the society's increasing focus on medicines management and to reflect the breadth of the group's interests which now extend beyond traditional drug utilisation research.

Professor Colin Bradley, Chairman of the group comments: "The society's name change will help identify our purpose and position more strongly. However, our core mission hasn't changed. We're still determined to provide a platform for medicines research and highlight how that translates into policy and practice."

PRIMM is a multi-disciplinary organisation devoted to the study of medicine use in society. Its members are drawn from a comprehensive cross section of academics, policy-makers and practising health professionals, including doctors, pharmacists, health service researchers and other professionals. The new website address is primm.eu.com.
Please address any questions to primm@mema.keele.ac.uk

Upcoming events…

PRIMM 22ND Annual Scientific Meeting

For our February 2011 Annual Scientific Meeting, PRIMM will be hosting a one-day meeting entitled "Ensuring Quality in Cash-Strapped Times". This will be held at Chandos House, 2 Queen Anne Street, London on Thursday 17th February 2011. Further details and registration form can be found on our website (www.primm.eu.com). Closing date for registration was the 27th January 2011

PRIMM Mid-Year Meeting

For our 2011 Mid-Year meeting PRIMM is hosting a one-day conference jointly with the Drug Safety Research Unit on patient reporting of adverse drug reactions (ADRs): "ADRs: Is the patient voice loud enough?" This will be held in London at the Friends' Meeting House, Euston Road on Friday June 24th 2011.

Invited speakers will include patients and a representative of EMA. This conference will, for the first time, be open to members of the public, since the conference is about patient ADR reporting, and we plan to include a question and answer session to involve them fully in the meeting.

For further details please contact:

Mrs Linda Foster
PRIMM; School of Pharmacy
Hornbeam Building; Keele University; Keele; Staffordshire; ST5 5BG
Tel: 01782734117
Fax: 01782733326
Email: primm@mema.keele.ac.uk

Linda Foster

Norway

The Norwegian Society for pharmacoepidemiology (DURG Norway) is a multidisciplinary network of professionals involved in the field of pharmaco-epidemiology. The objective of the Society is in the broadest sense to contribute to optimizing drug use in Norway by means of supporting high quality research within this field. DURG Norway was founded in1998 and collaborates with EuroDURG. The name of the organization was later changed to the Norwegian Society of Pharmacoepidemiology. The main scientific activity of the Society is the annual meeting where invited speakers present their ongoing research in the field of pharmacoepidemiology. The meeting was held 14 April 2010. The main presentations were based on research in the field of "colleague based learning". Results from studies among Norwegian general practitioners dealing with how they prescribe antibiotics for upper respiratory tract infections and how to avoid inappropriate prescribing to elderly, e.g. by using Norwegian General Practice (NorGeP) criteria, which are a modified version of the Delphi criteria were presented. The meeting had also one session for free presentation where young researchers presented their studies concerning musculoskeletal side effects of statins, problems related to generic substitution, drug information related to pregnancy and the use of drugs with a potential of addiction by people that are getting imbursements because they are diseased and cannot work and earn their own money.

The Society also has given written input on a public hearing on "Good registries – better health". It has given proposals to the national health authorities on formal changes in the National Prescription Registry to improve the data and the access of data for researchers in pharmaco-epidemiology. The Society has distributed two Newsletters to the members and circulated the EuroDURG Bulletins. The Society has also published on our home page links to meetings to come and links to interesting publications.

The Norwegian Society of Pharmacoepidemiology had 60 members in 2010. The annual membership fee is 100 Norwegian kroner (12.5 Euro).

Upcoming events…

The annual meeting for 2011 will be held in Bergen, Norway at the Institute for Social medicine, 6th of April, 10:00-17:00. The program will include one session related to common therapeutic challenges in drug treatment in elderly, one session related to use of health registries in epidemiologic research and a third session for free presentations.

Ingebjørg Buajordet
Chair of the Norwegian Society for pharmaco-epidemiology

Sweden

The Swedish Society for Pharmacoepidemiology (SLEF) has around 150 members from academia, healthcare, authorities and the pharmaceutical industry. The society had an active year running three seminars about hot topics in pharmacoepidemiology and drug utilization. The spring seminar focused on the influenza pandemia, diffusion patterns of the vaccine and methodological challenges in analyzing the effectiveness of it. In November, the society arranged a seminar on different ways to deal with confounding by indication in pharmacoepidemiologic studies. Several methods/designs were presented ending with a discussion around potentials and problems with a recent Swedish comparative effectiveness study on angiotensin receptor blockers and cardio-vascular risk. Finally, in early December the society arranged a seminar on how pharmaco-epidemiology and drug utilization research could help to counteract inequity in drug use. Presentations were given around, gender differences and regional variation drug utilization and suggested areas for future research were identified. Slides and abstracts from all the meetings are available on the website of the society www.pharmacoepi.se , part of the material is in English.

Upcoming events…

During 2011, the society will celebrate its 20th birthday. An international seminar will be arranged in Stockholm in October-November with a scientific program followed by a dinner. The society also plan to strengthen the collaboration with the newly established centre for improvement in drug use at the Medical Products Agency. A joint idea conference between different academic groups active in pharmacoepidemiology and drug utilization research in the country is planned in April and information about current research will be presented on the website of the society.

Bjorn Wettermark
Chair of the Swedish Society for Pharmacoepidemiology

We invite other national groups to inform us about their activities!
Please send your summary to benkoria@gmail.com

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Björn Wettermark (**chair**)
Centre for Medical Knowledge
Stockholm County Council
Box 17533
SE-118 91 Stockholm
SWEDEN
Tel: +46 8-737 40 81, 070/558 56 41
Fax: +46 8-737 40 12
E-mail:
bjorn.wettermark@sll.se

Monique Elseviers
University of Antwerp
Campus drie Eiken
Universiteitsplein 1
B-2610 Wilrijk
BELGIUM
Tel: +32 473 98 56 14
Fax: +32 3664 84 59
Email:
monique.elseviers@ua.ac.be

Peter Mol
Department of Clinical Pharmacology
University of Groningen
P.O.box 196
9713 AV Groningen
THE NETHERLANDS
Tel: +31 50 3638313
Fax: +31 50 3632812
E-mail:
P.G.M.Mol@med.umcg.nl

Robert Vander Stichele
Heymans Institute of Pharmacology
Ghent University
De Pintelaan, 185, B-9000 Gent
BELGIUM
Tel: +32 92269808
E-mail:
robert.vanderstichele@rug.ac.be

Vera Vlahović-Palčevski
Unit for Clinical Pharmacology
University Hospital Rijeka
Kresimirova 42
51000 Rijeka
CROATIA
Tel: +385 51 658805/Fax: +385 51 337536
E-mail:
vvlahovic@inet.hr

Elisabetta Poluzzi
Dept. Pharmacology, University of Bologna
Via Irnerio, 48
I 40126 Bologna
ITALY
Tel: +39 0512091809
Fax: +39 051248862
E-mail:
elisabetta.poluzzi@unibo.it

Brian Godman (treasurer)
Division of Clinical Pharmacology
Karolinska Institutet
Stockholm
SWEDEN
Tel: +4687374081
OR 070/5585641
Fax: +46 8-737 40 12
E-mail:
mail@briangodman.co.uk

Begler Begovic
Department of Clinical Pharmacology Clinical Centre University of Sarajevo, Bolnicka 25, 71 000 Sarajevo
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA
Telephone: + 387 33 563 086
Fax: + 387 33 667 309
E-mail: bbegovic@bih.net.ba

Ria Benkő (**secretary**)
Dept. of Clinical Pharmacy
University of Szeged,
Szikra utca 8
Szeged H-6725
HUNGARY
Tel/Fax: +36 62 544 921
E-mail: benko@clph.szote.u-szeged.hu or
benkoria@gmail.com

For updates of addresses or inquiries, please visit our website:
www.eurodurg.com
OR
www.pharmacoepi.org/eurodurg,

or contact Ria Benko at:
benko@clph.szote.u-szeged.hu
OR
benkoria@gmail.com