EuroDURG bulletin

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NEWSLETTER OF THE EUROPEAN CHAPTER OF THE SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP OF DRUG UTILISATION RESEARCH (SIG-DUR) OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY OF PHARMACOEPIDEMIOLOGY (ISPE)

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The past Chair's message

Dear colleagues & friends,

This is the last time for me to write this annual message in the bulletin. During our conference in Glasgow, I resigned as chair of EuroDurg after seven years on the position. At the same time we changed the constitution to the same model as ISPE, having elections every second year with a chair, a past-chair and a chair elect, working together to get a more sustainable leadership. So, consequently, I became the past chair which means that I will have further two years of pleasure working with the board, continuing to promote Drug Utilization Research in Europe and other continents.

It has been a fantastic journey to be the chair of EuroDurg during this period. Drug utilization research has been rapidly expanding in all countries across the globe and there has been an enormous methodological development from the early descriptive studies to advanced studies using a range of quantitative and qualitative methods. The ongoing digitalization of healthcare will further increase access to large amounts of new types of data for drug utilization research to help us understand why and how people are using medicines. So, the golden days are definitively here to stay!

There is no space here to write about all achievements during this seven-year-period, but some of them deserve a special recognition:

- The three fantastic scientific meetings – in Antwerp 2011, Groningen 2014 and Glasgow 2017.
- The "book" – Drug Utilization Research – methods and applications. Finally, we have a comprehensive literature showing the state of the art in our research field.
- Our contribution to the creation of a strong specialist interest group for Drug Utilization and Health Services Research within ISPE. This has increased our visibility in ISPE, but also facilitated the growth of DUR in other continents. A special thanks to those of you that have been active in strengthening the collaboration with DU researchers in Africa, Australia, Asia and America.
- The development in cross national comparisons of drug use. From a public health perspective, the observed differences in national and international patterns of drug utilization require much further study. This has been tricky, but we have contributed to better studies and with the support of ISPE, new guidelines are soon to be in place.

- Methodological development in other important areas of DUR such as the drug utilization in the elderly, drug utilization in children, antimicrobial drug use and DUR as a tool for health policy in the introduction of new medicines.

I want to express my gratitude to all of you who have engaged in our activities during the years, and particularly to Marion Bennie and Katja Taxis, the local chair and scientific chair, respectively,

for the fantastic conference we had in Glasgow in October. Many thanks also to all of you who worked with me in the board during these years. The effectiveness of our meetings has varied over time, but overall the period may be summarized with two words: "business and pleasure".

Finally, a special thanks to two persons. Ria Benko, our secretary. Without you, the organization would not have been as visible as we are. You have been a fantastic secretary during this period. Secondly, Monique Elseviers, the past chair during my period, a great inspirer for all of us in DUR.

I wish you all a happy new 2018! And my best wishes for Marion, who will be an excellent chair during the coming period!

Björn Wettermark
Past Chair of EuroDURG
European chapter of ISPE SIG DUR

Dear colleagues,

It is my pleasure to send this message to you all as I take up chair of EuroDURG for the next two years. I am very humbled by both your confidence in me to take on this role and through your support in coming to Glasgow for our conference in November 2017, a real high for myself and local colleagues to host you all, offer some Scottish hospitality and make new friends.

Firstly I must thank Björn Wettermark personally, and on behalf of the EuroDURG Executive Committee for the seven years he has lead our Group with too many major achievements to mention - the most recent in my view being the new DUR book, published under Monique Elseviers and Björn's leadership. He is not going anywhere and we agreed at the General Assembly that moving forward there will be a 2 year tenure for the following EuroDURG positions: Chair, Chair-elect and Past Chair. I am delighted also that Katja Taxis is Chair-elect given her experience as previous ISPE SIG-DUR/HSR Chair. The full elected EuroDURG committee and positions are detailed at the report on General Assembly and we have already had our first meeting to reflect on 2017 and start planning for upcoming 2018 and potential 2019 events.

A significant amount of our time as an Executive Committee in 2017 was taken up with the planning for EuroDURG 2017 in Glasgow. Katja lead the Scientific Committee with a whole army of session chairs to build an excellent education and science programme over 3 days - more detail later in the bulletin and on the website (add in website). My role as chair of the Local Organizing Committee was to ensure we had a great venue that worked for the meeting at the University of Strathclyde and gave delegates a taste of Scotland including our bagpipes and ceilidh traditions. A special mention also to Monique who kept both chairs calm when it came to all the logistics for the sessions and the posterwalks – a master-piece in action– a big thank you from the whole of the EuroDURG community. My personal thanks to all the Local and Scientific Committee members who put in a huge effort to make it a success.

We are busy preparing the final report for the meeting and reviewing the evaluation feedback.
The initial evaluation review, opinion of 139 participants (54% from academia, 25% from health care and the remaining in various other areas) is already available. The overall scientific content was rated with a 4.3 (out of 5, being the best mark), relevance to work was rated as 4.2, social program got 4.3, networking opportunities 4.2 and respondents were also happy about the practical arrangements rating this as 4.3. The majority of individual educational and scientific sessions were also rated very highly above 4. Finally, 99% of respondents wrote they would attend another EuroDURG meeting.

Suggested future topics from participants (that can of course guide the selection of future conference topics) were obtained by a nice online voting session that created a

word cloud (see below). We welcome any suggestions from the wider community – just send them to your local country representative or direct to one of us on the board.

Looking to 2018 – another busy year on the horizon with lots of local and regional meetings coming up – detailed in the country reports and the upcoming conferences sections of the bulletin. Please support your local meetings and continue to build our community both at home and more internationally – the challenge facing all health systems globally is an increasing burden of disease, in part supported by the new technologies advances coming onto the market, but being challenged by the cost of treatment, both personally and /or through public funding models. Our growing EuroDURG communities working together and with others presents the potential to move towards more personalized, tailored treatment choices and delivery packages to help maximize resource use and improve public health. Please take time to read about the events shaped and attended by our community in the bulletin and plan for an active 2018. I hope to see many of you through 2018 at some of the key events.

Marion Bennie
Chair of EuroDURG
European chapter of
ISPE SIG DUR

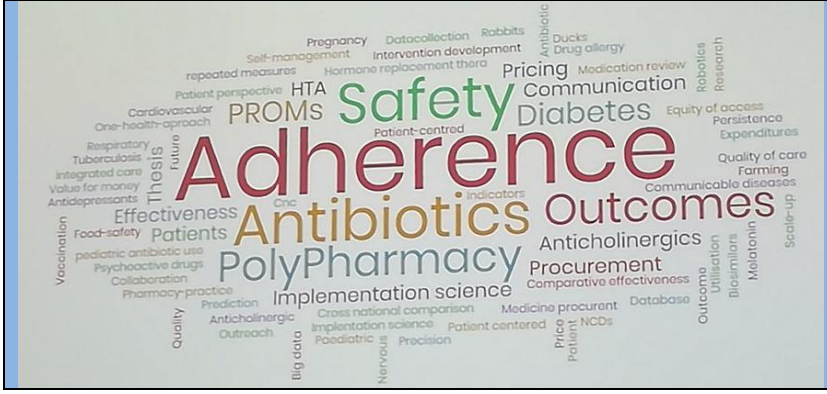
Conferences meetings

…Previous events

EuroDURG Conference Glasgow

In November Glasgow welcomed 264 delegates who travelled from 39 countries to our 3-day meeting entitled: Patients, Medicines, Bytes: Drug Utilization Research and E-health. Our ambition was to challenge ourselves as a community to embrace the rapidly expanding digitalization of our health and social care systems as an opportunity to build on our existing strengths in population level drug utilization and clinical outcomes research. The increase in individualized data streams (from sensors, patient reported outcomes, etc) presents the potential to expand our understanding of the public value and safety of established and new medicines. However, to do so we need to expand our data science teams and methodological approaches to manage and interpret these rapidly expanding data flows in a responsive manner to drive advancements in patient care.

The conference speakers (over 40 invited speakers) rose to the challenge. This was led by 3 great plenary sessions: firstly, a journey into the future digital world from an industry expert - Gillian Docherty – focused on bringing new digital advancements into the public sector in Scotland, followed by our own chair Björn Wettermark contextualizing this from a DUR perspective;



WORD CLOUD

What are the three topics you will work on after the EuroDURG 2017 conference?

Director of the new Health Data Research UK Institute – to maximize the connectivity and intelligence generation capability arising from "Big Data", and the need to expand the diversity of our multi-disciplinary team expertise and do research at scale across boundaries, followed by Sarah Cunningham Burley outlining best practice in how to assure the patient and public voice is integrated within our research; and thirdly, our own three musketeers - Katja Taxis, Lisa Pont and Veronika Wirtz presenting the global perspective on DUR and health policy – a fitting international perspective to close the conference.

Our plenary session where complimented by an extensive program of introductory and advanced education sessions, led by international experts, to kick of the conference on Wednesday morning followed by a mix of interspersed parallel sessions, workshops and mini-symposiums focused on DUR methods, clinical topics, health policy and patients. Our delegates where active throughout, with 214 abstracts submitted resulting in 54 oral abstract presentations across the sessions and a further 146 posters, all of whom were part of a poster walk over 2 days to stimulate discussion on the wealth of research ongoing within the community.

The scientific programme was accompanied by a EuroDURG social programme to promote networking, old and new, across the 3 days. We started with a Welcome reception, hosted by the City of Glasgow, in our historic City Chambers, built in 1888, accompanied by the Scottish bagpipes. Our Gala dinner was hosted along the Clyde riverfront at the Glasgow Science Centre where delegates played with various interactive exhibits before dinner and followed by a traditional Scottish ceilidh where delegates enjoyed a range of dancing into the night.

The conference webpage link is still active at: http://eurodurg2017.net/

Marion Bennie
Chair of EuroDURG

General Assembly

The GA of EuroDURG took place during the Glasgow conference, with the attendance of approximately 20 people.

First Björn welcomed us, presented the agenda and summarized the achievements of EuroDURG. He thanked the undertaken by all of us. Than Ria, our secretary, listed the number of in-person and teleconference (over 40!) meetings that were necessary to produce the book and organization of the Glasgow conference. She outlined that direct email communication is distributed to more than 1000 DUR email addresses. Elisabetta, our webmaster summarized the general content and updates of the EuroDURG webpage. After Monique Elsevier, the chief editor of the DUR book gave a brief update on the book (e.g. sales statistics), and highlighted the available forms.

The last part of the meeting was the election process, the preparatory work of which was made by Monique and Bob. They proposed a new way of guiding the group: with the harmonized action of a past, present and future chair. They proposed Marion Bennie to be the chair and Katja Taxis as chair-elect, both of them accepted the role. The board members unanimously supported this division of roles. The four new applicants were introduced thereafter and the new board was elected as follows:

EuroDURG ExCO 2017-2019

Marion Bennie (Scotland) – chair

Björn Wettermark (Sweden) – past chair

Katja Taxis (the Netherlands) – chair elect

Elisabetta Poluzzi (Italy) – webmaster

Brian Godman (UK) – treasurer

Ria Benko (Hungary) – secretary

Robert Vander Stichele (Belgium) – liason with ISPE

Monique Elseviers (Belgium)

Vera Vlahović-Palčevski (Croatia)

Begler Begovic (Bosnia and Herzegovina)

Katja Taxis (The Netherlands)

Anna Birna Almarsdottir (Denmark)

Cathrine Sermet (France)

Gabriel Sanfélix-Gimeno (Spain)

Paraskevi Voula Papaioannidou (Greece)

Gisbert Selke (Germany)

Jolanta Gulbinovic (Lithuania)

Hedvig Nordeng (Norway)

Verica Ivanovska (Macedonia)

Sabina Vogler (Austria)

Seán MacBride-Stewart (UK)

At the very end future plans including conference organization was discussed.

Ria Benko

DUR poster award

By tradition, EuroDURG put a lot of effort in rewarding the scientific value of all abstracts submitted for their conferences. First of all, a large number of abstracts are always selected for oral presentation. The remaining submissions are categorized per topic and scheduled for poster walks. All first authors are invited for a poster presentation of 3 minutes followed by 2 minutes of discussion.

During the conference in Glasgow, 146 abstracts were selected for poster presentation. During a dedicated afternoon session on Thursday as well as on Friday, nine poster walks were organized, including 6-10 poster presentations each. The chair and co-chair of each walk selected the best poster for the poster award based on the scientific content, the quality of the poster and the way the study results were presented and defended. All nine poster award winners received an e-copy of the DURbook: Drug Utilization Research: Methods and Applications.

EURODURG BEST POSTER AWARD 2017 (Monique Elseviers)

Poster Category	Best Poster Winner	Affiliation
Antibiotics/other	Joanna Johnson	NHS Glasgow, UK
Cardiovascular	Tanja Mueller	University of Strathclyde, UK
Cancer/Biologicals	Ylena Ingrasciotta	University of Messina, IT
Drug Policy	Augusto Guerra Jr	University of Minas, BR
Elderly	Gary O Brien	University College Cork, IR
Nervous system	Sandy Maumus-Robert	University of Bordeaux, FR
Diabetes/Adherence	Linda Van Eikenvorst	University of Groningen,NL
Interventions/Pregnancy/Pediatrics	Anne Benard-Laribière	University of Bordeaux, FR
Suprising others	Catharina Schuiling	University of Groningen, NL

Congratulation to the winners!

ISPE SIG-DUR

The last SIG DUR Meeting was held during ICPE Conference in Montreal, Canada, 28 August 2017. There was an election this year and the new Chair for two years is Veronika Wirtz (University of Boston),

Vice/Co-Chair: Douglas Steinke (also Chair Elect for the period 2019-2021) (University of Manchester);

Past chairs: Lisa Pont; Katja Taxis.

- There was a brief overview and update of projects, some of which you can read elsewhere in this Bulletin. These were: Cross-national comparison guidelines Bob Vander Stichele (Ghent University); Group project working on Opioid, Li-Chia Chen (University of Manchester). A number of plans for the future were discussed. These included:
- Special session during Mid-Year meeting in Toronto on Pharmacoepidemiology within Pharmacy Education, Ingrid Sketris (Dalhousie University);
- Suggestions for topics for the special session organized by SIG at ICPE Prague;
- Organization of webinars on DUR topics.

Watch out, these webinars may be interesting for all EuroDURG members. We will send out invitations as soon as the dates are available.

If you have questions or suggestions or if you would like to receive more information on the SIG DUR of ICPE, please email me: k.taxis@rug.nl

Katja Taxis

Report on the ESPACOMP meeting

The 21th ESPACOMP meeting took place in Budapest, Hungary in autumn 2017. Participants arrived from 20 countries across EU, USA, Australia, Sri Lanka, Brazília. Overall 75 abstracts were submitted to the meeting.

The pre-conference educational day had 2 workshops focused on: 1) Writing Effective Specific Aims and Objectives for Dissemination and Implementation Science 2) Addressing medication non-

adherence with patients: Enhancing motivation to improve medication adherence, that was the starting event of a newly introduced ESPACOMP inter-professional training program „ Optimizing patient's adherence to medication".

The main meeting on Friday and Saturday had 6 main themes with keynote speakers and selected contributed abstracts in two parallel sessions. The plenary sessions included the John Urquhart Memorial Lecture (held by Thomas Nevins University of Minnesota, USA), introduced last year to honour the memory of John Urquhart - the outstanding researcher, colleague, mentor and friend- by continuing the important work he began many years ago.

The topics of the plenary speeches and the presentations in the sessions demonstrated the tendencies of medication adherence in Europe and around the globe, focused on the measurement methodology, qualitative and quantitative methods of research, and on the development of intervention and communication methods to promote health behaviour, including the effective digital interventions. The oral presentations were accompanied by poster presentations available during the meeting days and a convenered poster session is also included in the program. The best poster presentation was honoured by the Jean-Michel Metry poster prize.

The dinner program was organized in the historical building of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences which will help participants to remember the event for a long time.

Gyongyver Soos and Ria Benko

Report on the ENCePP Plenary

The 16th ENCePP Plenary Meeting took place in London, on 21st November 2017, on a very historical day for EMA, the first day after the decision on relocation of the authority from London to Amsterdam.
87 delegates – including 3 observers from EFPIA, PMDA Japan and Health Canada – participated in the meeting, which marked the tenth anniversary of ENCePP.

The following issues were included in the agenda and were discussed: 1) Welcome and adoption of agenda, 2) ENCePP Anniversary 2007-2017, 3) Report from Steering Group, 4) Framework of collaboration between EMA and Academia, 5) Models for multi-database studies, 6) Revision 4 of ENCePP Code of Conduct, 7) Promoting ENCePP at national level, 8) Benefit-risk assessment, 9) EMA Patient registries initiative, and 10) Update on Brexit-related issues. Eurodurg was represented in the Meeting by Paraskevi (Voula) Papaioannidou.

After a welcome address by the chair Xavier Kurz, Susana Perez-Gutthann, the Deputy Chair of the previous Steering Group, presented the 10-year history of ENCePP, including some important milestones and outputs, like methodological guidance and governance principles. She highlighted the anniversary leaflet (that is also available on the ENCePP website), and invited participants of the first meeting in 2007 to a short discussion.
Tom MacDonald, the Deputy Chair, presented reports from ENCePP Steering Group, Working Groups and highlighted the areas of focus of the new 3-year ENCePP work plan 2017-2019. Among them he stressed the role of ENCePP in facilitating the initiation and conduct of observational research and in proposing mechanisms to support multi-national and multi-database studies. He presented data on Studies registered by ENCePP partners and mentioned the number of registered studies by November 2017 was 1191.
He also invited ENCePP partners interested in joining any of the existing working groups to express their interest to the ENCePP Secretariat.

Isabelle Moulon (EMA) presented the framework of collaboration between EMA and Academia, which was adopted in March 2017, aiming to formalise and structure the collaboration between the Agency and Academia. One of the key elements of this collaboration is to identify opportunities to promote research and knowledge. Isabelle Moulon presented the action plan highlights and invited delegates to identify further action plan items. After a brief discussion on the lack of funding for pharmaco-epidemiological studies, it was suggested to add the topic of funding as a matter of concern to the existing action plan. The framework for academia would be further discussed at Steering Group level and all ENCePP partners would be invited to provide their feedback.

Gianluca Trifirò, the newly appointed Chair of the reactivated Working Group 3 (data sources and multisource studies) presented the purpose of revitalizing WG3 and the discussions of the group on the concept paper on 'Models for multi-database pharmaco-epidemiologic studies'. As there is a large heterogeneity of methods used to combine data from multiple databases, some of the planned actions are to perform Surveys of ENCePP partners and to Revise studies in the EU PAS Register.

Thomas Goedecke and Rosa Gini discussed the proposed 4th revision of the ENCePP Code of Conduct, presenting an overview of the proposed amendments. Patrice Verpillat presented perspectives from industry, Laura Yates presented Perspectives from academia and Xavier Fournie and Giovanni Fiori presented Perspectives from Contract Research Organisations (CRO). A very interesting discussion followed, concerning transparency and scientific independence, as well as adherence with the Code and values of the studies.

Ursula Kirchmayer presented the Italian chapter of ENCePP centres providing examples of how this cooperation has proven to be very successful in promoting regulatory science and improving education and training in Italy. The establishment of similar models might be of interest to other countries in view of promoting networking and collaboration.

Hans Hillege introduced the table of effects in benefit-risk assessment, which is part of the new CHMP Benefit-Risk Assessment template.

Xavier Kurz presented the EMA Patient Registry Initiative which was launched in September 2015 with the aim of strengthening the contribution of patient registries to the benefit-risk evaluation of medicines and invited patient registries to add their details in the ENCePP database.

One day after the selection of Amsterdam to host EMA, Brexit related issues were discussed in the Meeting by Noël Wathion, Chair of EMA's 'Operations and relocation preparedness task force'. The decision to relocate the Agency to Amsterdam is considered a good one in the interest of maintaining business continuity, and it is very much in the Agency's interest to maintain access to UK expertise in post-authorisation studies even after Brexit. EMA has initiated a business continuity plan to ensure that necessary resources are available for Brexit preparedness.

The 16th ENCePP Plenary Meeting was a very interesting meeting, and ended with a brief summary of discussions by the chairs, Xavier Kurz and Tom MacDonald.

Voula Papaioannidou

Report on the 46th ESCP conference

The 46th European Symposium on Clinical Pharmacy, Heidelberg, Germany with the title: Science meets practice - towards evidence-based clinical pharmacy services took

place in October 2017. Over 600 clinical pharmacy practitioners and researchers participated in the conference.

The plenary lectures covered topics on how to advance clinical pharmacy practice. This included evidence for clinical pharmacy services based on systematic reviews of the literature, reports on new clinical services in different European countries and developments around clinical decision support systems. On the final day, teaching clinical pharmacy using patient simulation was also covered.

There were also numerous workshops on research methods, medication reviews, teaching, technological developments offered. This allowed participants to discuss topics in smaller groups. Furthermore more than 300 posters on various topics were presented.

There was also a very good social program offering networking opportunities. This included a walk to the famous Heidelberg Castle and a tasty dinner including a makeshift disco. If you look for inspiration to advance medication use led by pharmacists the yearly conference of the European Society of Clinical Pharmacy is the place to go.

Katja Taxis

Report on the NORPEN meeting

The Nordic Pharmaco-Epidemiological Network (NorPEN) had its annual meeting in Helsinki in November 2017. The meeting had a pre-course focusing on analyzing registers with hands-on practical training with programming using codes in STATA, R, and SAS. The first day of the meeting focused on vaccine safety. Different speakers from the Nordic countries were invited to provide insight into the topic. Among the issues highlighted was the association of swine flu vaccines for narcolepsy in Finland, HPV vaccinations and case reports in Denmark, and general methodological approaches for studying vaccine safety. A pharmacoepi-slam session was held where members from the Nordic countries were invited to present their research in 3 minutes. This is becoming a tradition and it provides good possibility for all PhD students in the network to give a short verbal presentation about their study. The first part of the second day focused on measuring drug exposure and safety outcomes using register data. The second part focused on comparing rules and policies regarding biosimilar drugs in the Nordic countries. There are a number of important differences between the countries and the session highlighted that the Nordic countries can learn a lot from each other in this respect.

See videos from the conference on Youtube for Thursday and Friday.

Anna Birna Almarsdottir

News from other continents with involvement of EuroDURG

LATIN AMERICA

Following the 2013 seminar Pharmacoepidemiology Research in Latin America and the 2015 seminar Pharmaco-

epidemiology Research on Essential Medicines, the seminar Drug Utilization Research in Country and Health System Contexts was held at Hotel Novo Mundo, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, September 13-15, 2017, financed by the Brazilian Graduate Course Board (Capes). It was jointly hosted by the Department of Medicines Policy and Pharmaceutical Services (NAF), of the Sérgio Arouca National School of Public Health (ENSP), Oswaldo Cruz Foundation, GETESA/René Rachou Institute, Oswaldo Cruz Foundation and the School of Pharmacy of UFMG. The main objectives were to understand and discuss DUR in country contexts, and to share experiences on pharmaco-epidemiology research with participants from Brazil and other Latin American countries, North America and Europe. Five European professors and one from Australia, as well as over 90 people from Brazil, including researchers, professors and graduate students participated. Main themes were Cross-National Comparison Studies, Methodologies in DUR, Use of databases for DUR, DUR and pharmacoeconomics, strategies for DUR in health systems and DUR for specific populations. Students participated presenting their current work with discussions. The seminars held so far have fostered various types of collaboration, in research and exchange. Most notable has been the research collaboration with the Division of Clinical Pharmacology at Karolinska Institute Huddinge and the cooperation between members of DURG LA. The most recent cooperation initiative is a multicenter cross-national research project on availability of databases for DUR in Latin America, that has been approved by financing bodies and will commence in 2018. The seminar has proven to be a fundamental effort in consolidating and supporting DUR in Brazil and in LatinAmerica.

Claudia Garcia Serpa Osorio-de-Castro

MURIA GROUP

AFRICA

MURIA (Medicines Utilisation Research in Africa) Group grew out of initiatives with ISPE, EuroDURG, and the World Congress for Basic and Clinical Pharmacology in South Africa in 2014.

In Port Elizabeth, South Africa, hosted by Ilse Truter in January 2015, it was agreed there should be a pro-active group in Africa stimulating cross national research to enhance the rational use of medicines, especially given the high prevalence of both infectious diseases and non communicable diseases (NCDs) in sub-Sahara Africa It was agreed that the vision of MURIA could be achieved through training, collaborative research, information sharing and the facilitation of access to data across Africa. As a result, address current challenges regarding DU research in Africa. Please see URL link: http://muria.nmmu.ac.za/.

Since then, there have been three educational workshops and symposium to stimulate DU research in Africa: 2015 and 2016 in Botswana and 2017 in Namibia with the 2017 meeting attended by ISPE personnel to discuss the forthcoming DU manual.

MURIA 4 is scheduled for 17 – 20 June 2018. Topics discussed have included both infectious diseases and NCDs, with each meeting typically attracting over 100 researchers from across Africa. There have also been separate training workshops as well as separate symposium in Botswana to improve antibiotic use, one in 2016 to establish point prevalence studies (PPS) across Africa and other antibiotic studies in Botswana with the help of the WHO (Massele A et al. Expert Rev Pharmacoecon Outcomes Res. 2017;17:1-4), and a follow-up meeting in October 2017 to

assess current progress in Botswana and plan for the future. The PPS studies in Africa built on the Global and European PPS studies, but included additional information around HIV, malaria, TB and malnutrition.

To date, PPS studies have been conducted in Botswana, Kenya, South Africa and Zimbabwe, with further studies planned in other African countries including Namibia and Zambia.
MURIA members from Kenya and South Africa also presented their work at the recent EuroDURG meeting in Glasgow. MURIA members are also involved in the ISPE initiative to develop a training manual on DU in Africa and South America, as well as heavily involved in national antibiotic plans as well as activities to reduce current high levels of morbidity and mortality due to NCDs in their countries.

DU research in Africa is challenging as typically systems are paper based, and there is extensive self-purchasing of medicines across countries. However, members are seeking ways around this as well as undertaking projects to assess initiatives to reduce unnecessary self-purchasing of antibiotics given increasing concerns with resistance rates. Research activities have already resulted in over 40 publications in peer-reviewed journals involving MURIA members from 2 or more countries - emphasizing cross national collaboration - with additional publications from their own country units. This is accelerating. MURIA welcomes anyone interested in undertaking DU research in Africa and membership forms can be found on http://muria.mandela.ac.za/Membership.

Brian Godman

Below we list all forthcoming international or European, English language conferences and their abstract submission deadlines that may interest people engaged in DU research. For national conferences please see country specific news below.

ISPE 2018

The ISPE Mid-Year Meeting will be organized in Sheraton Centre, Toronto Hotel, Toronto, Canada, April 21-24, 2018.

Abstract submission deadline has passed

For more information visit: https://www.pharmacoepi.org/meetings/mid-year-2018/

The 33rd International Conference on Pharmaco-epidemiology & Therapeutic Risk Management will be held in the Prague Congress Center, Prague, Czech Republic, August 22-26, 2018.

The agenda will be available in the coming months.

Deadline for abstract submission (poster/oral presentation or symposium, workshop: February 14, 2018.

For more information and submission of an abstract: https://www.pharmacoepi.org/meetings/34icpe/

International Society of Pharmacovigilance

The 18th Annual Meeting of the International Society of Pharmacovigilance (ISoP 2018), "Pharmacovigilance without borders", will take place in Geneva, Switzerland from the 11th to 14th November 2018. The theme of the conference relates to the optimisation of pharmaco-vigilance

Deadline for abstracts submission 14 February, 2018.

so that it can operate without borders, offering greater efficiency, clarity of reporting and thus enabling to analyse the latest information to better care for patients on a worldwide basis. The draft program includes topics such as pharmacovigilance and pharmacogenetics, patient empowerment in pharmacovigilance, progress in pharmacovigilance in developing countries, pharmacovigilance in big data era, risk communication in pharmacovigilance and international approaches to pharmacovigilance.

The abstract submission deadline is not yet available

Venue: International Conference Centre Geneva (CICG), Geneva, Switzerland.

For more information visit: http://www.isop2018geneva.org/index.html

ESCP
European Society of Clinical Pharmacy

European Society of Clinical Pharmacy

The ESCP spring conference 2018 "Expanding roles & opportunities for the pharmacist in optimizing use of oral cancer drugs" will take place in Reykjavík, Iceland, 19-20 February. This conference will explore the several roles of the pharmacist in providing pharmaceutical care to patients receiving oral cancer therapy.

Abstract submission deadline has passed.

For more information visit: http://www.escpweb.org/Reykjavik

The 47th European Symposium on Clinical Pharmacy, "Personalised pharmacy care" will be held in Belfast, Northern Ireland, 24-26 October, 2018 (Venue: Belfast Waterfront Symposium and Exhibition Centre, Belfast, Northern Ireland).

A 'one size fits all' approach is wasteful of scarce resources and does not promote the effective and efficient care of individual patients. All aspects of clinical pharmacy practice regarding "personalised care" will be discussed at the symposium.

Deadline for workshop proposals: 15 March 2018

Deadline for abstracts submission: 23 April 2018

For more information visit: http://www.escpweb.org/Belfast

Health Technology Assessment International

HTAi 2018 Annual Meeting: "Strengthening the Evidence-to-Action Connection", will be held June 1 – 5, 2018 at The Westin Bayshore Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

With terms such as "fake news", "alternative facts", and "post-truth" now in common parlance, it is more important than ever that researchers, policymakers, health care practitioners, technology developers, patients, and the public affirm their commitment to action based on evidence and collaborative approaches that will strengthen the evidence-to-action connection. The HTAi 2018 Annual meeting will provide an unparalleled opportunity to consider, debate and clarify the role of health technology assessment (HTA) in the health care ecosystem.

Abstract submission deadline has passed.

For more information visit: https://www.htai2018.org/

Gabriel Sanfélix-Gimeno

European projects

A tool for the electronic assessment of potentially inappropriate medication (PIM) in old age.

In 2014, an international multidisciplinary team of experts (most EuroDURG members) met in Ghent, Belgium to focus on the quality and safety of pharmacotherapy in old age. They defined the requirements for an electronic assessment tool based on available explicit lists of Potentially Inappropriate Medications (PIMs). One year later, Ivana Ivanova, a MD of Macedonia, started a 3-year PhD studentship in the Heymans Institute of Clinical Pharmacology of the University of Ghent. She developed the PIM tool consisting of a repository of PIM criteria from different lists with electronic selection capabilities and automated algorithms to assess the quality of prescribing. Several EuroDURG members offered national or regional secondary databases of drug utilization aiming to validate the electronic selection and assessment tool and to investigate the association of PIMs with mortality and hospitalization. Within one year, a web-based version of the PIM tool will be made publicly available with the intention to contribute improving the quality of pharmacotherapy in old age.

Monique Elseviers

Good practice guidelines for conducting and reviewing cross-national comparison (CNC) drug utilization studies

In 2015, the EuroDURG working group on CNC studies received an ISPE grant to develop a methodology to assess the validity of cross-national drug utilization studies and to develop a good practice guideline for designing, conducting, reporting and reviewing CNC studies.

1. We started the work with a scoping review of Cross National Comparison (CNC) studies conducted by Yared Santa-Ana-Tellez (WHO Collaborating Centre for Pharmaceutical Policy & Regulation of the Utrecht University, The Netherlands) and Carlos Durán (Yachay Public Company, Quito, Ecuador). The review provides a comprehensive overview of methodological approaches to perform CNC studies aiming to evaluate the

comparability of included DU data.

2. Mainly based on the experiences of the CNC review, we developed a checklist to evaluate CNC studies. The CNC checklist mainly focusses on the systematic evaluation of all sources of bias that could jeopardize the validity of the comparison. Draft CNC checklists were used by internal and external reviewers to evaluate published CNC studies and to evaluate and improve the inter-observer variability.
3. Finally, we produced a good practice guideline for CNC studies. The guideline concentrates on the specific comparative aspects of DU studies giving DU researchers and reviewers a practical tool for designing, conducting, reporting and reviewing CNC studies. The guideline will assist researchers by highlighting the most common and potential biases and limitations of this type of studies and by recommending procedures to overcome them. The final report including the literature review, the CNC checklist and the CNC guideline is ready to be submitted. After approval by the ISPE Planning Committee, the documents will be made publicly available on the ISPE/EuroDURG website.

Monique Elseviers

News from European NATIONAL DURGs

Austria

The WHO Collaborating Centre for Pharmaceutical Pricing and Reimbursement Policies organised, in collaboration with the WHO Regional Office for Europe, the 2nd Summer School on Pharmaceutical Pricing and Reimbursement Policies in Vienna from 28 August to 1 September 2017. 29 participants from public and not for profit institutions working in the field of pricing and reimbursement of medicines from 19 different countries attended. In the framework of the Summer School, a public panel discussion titled "Strengthening the purchasing power for medicines – possibilities and risks" took place in Vienna on 30 August 2017. It brought together high level Austrian policy-makers, experts, representatives of international organisations (WHO / Medicines Patent Pool) and NGOs (such as Médecins Sans Frontières). For further information: http://whocc.goeg.at/SummerSchool2017

The next Summer School is scheduled for the period from 23 July to 27 July 2018. More information: http://whocc.goeg.at/SummerSchool2018

In 2017, an information platform (in German language) targeted at physicians with the aim to support a more rational and safe prescribing went online. It is hosted in Austria's official public health portal and is accessible at: https://www.gesundheit.gv.at/gesundheitssystem/professional/arzneimittelsicherheit/inhalt. One focus topic is "polypharmacy and elderly people". The platform will be constantly expanded.

Sabine Vogler

Norway

DURG Norway held their spring meeting the 19th April with focus on the elderly population, methodological aspects of pharmacoepi and several lectures from the PharmaTox strategic Research Initiative at the University of Oslo. Professor Kate Lapane, University of Massachusetts, USA was invited as main speaker and gave the lecture "Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Antipsychotic Use in Nursing Homes".

The 24th Norwegian Epidemiology conference NOFE was held in Tromsø November 7-8. The topic was New frontiers in epidemiology, and the keynote speakers were; Magne Thoresen, Kristian Hveem, Camilla Stoltenberg and Anne Tjønneland. During the conference, the following article was awarded the best paper in epidemiology by Norwegian

researchers in 2017: Pandemic Influenza A H1N1 Vaccination and Subsequent Risk of Type 1 Diabetes in Norway. Ruiz PLD, Stene LC, Gulseth HL, Tapia G, Trogstad L, Bakken IJ, Håberg SE. Epidemiology. 2018 Jan;29(1):e6-e8.

Scandinavian Journal of Public Health calls for papers on Nordic Registry Data (deadline June 30 2018) for a special issue on this topic.

Hedvig Nordeng

Germany

In November 2017, the German national DURG "Society for Drug Utilization Research and Drug Epidemiology (Gesellschaft für Arzneimittelan-wendungsforschung und Arzneimittelepidemiologie GAA) held its 24th annual meeting in Erfurt.
The meeting had three main themes: cultural aspects of medication therapy, methodical challenges in secondary data analysis, and medication safety (AMTS) and discharge management. Several speakers were invited to provide insight into the topics. Further presentations were given by various researchers who presented their ongoing research in these fields in Germany. Research projects of participants were presented during oral and poster presentation sessions. Details of the meeting including the abstracts can be found at URL link: http://www.egms.de/de/meetings/gaa2017/.
For 2018, the 25th GAA Annual Meeting is planned to be held from November 22nd -23rd in Bonn.
Please contact Katrin Farker (katrin.farker@med.uni-jena.de) or see our website for further information: http://www.gaa-arzneiforschung.de.

Katrin Farker
Chair of German –DURG

Italy

Two main annual DU reports have been prepared by the Italian Medicine Agency(AIFA): http://www.aifa.gov.it/content/luso-dei-farmaci-italia-rapporto-osmed-2016 and by Health Search - Italian College of General Practitioners and Primary Care: http://report.healthsearch.it/
Moreover, the Regional Health Agency of Tuscany (ARS Toscana) has published its second report on use of drugs, available at the following link: https://www.ars.toscana.it/files/pubblicazioni/Volumi/2017/Doc_96_web.pdf). It addresses 10 questions on drug utilization, mostly on use of biologics drugs (for rheumatoid arthritis, cancer, ophthalmic use), but also on biosimilars and on largely used traditional drugs (such as antibiotics and non-steroidal anti inflammatory drugs). A webinar on pharmaco-epidemiology monthly is organized by ARS Toscana, with a frequent focus on articles, protocols, or preliminary results of drug utilization studies (link to the initiative, in Italian: https://www.ars.toscana.it/temi/journalclub_farmacoepidemiologia/)
The National Institute of Health (ISS) organized the usual conference on drug utilization and pharmacovigilance, with special contributions on differences in appropriateness of drug use between genders, deprescribing in general practice, appropriate use of cannabis. In 2018, specific courses on analysis of drug utilization data are going to be organized by ISS.
Italian Society of Pharmacology (SIF), Italian Society of Hospital Pharmacy (SIFO) and Italian Society of Clinical Pharmacy and Therapeutics (SIFACT) devoted specific sessions to drug Utilisation during their National Conferences.

Elisabetta Poluzzi

Scotland

Our news from Scotland is brief this year as we report separately in the bulletin on the EuroDURG conference – a major team event throughout the year from the Local Organizing Committee, supported by the Abbey Conferencing and Events team to ensure we were ready to receive you in Glasgow in November. Our University staff and students all enthusiastically engaged to get everything

published, bagged and badged for your arrival. Our wider Scottish community of clinicians and researchers also came in numbers and reported that it was a great opportunity to hear about development and research across Europe and beyond – facing the same clinical challenges around lack of robust intelligence on use of medicines in routine clinical care – a lot of new connections were made which I hope will grow and prosper.

We continue to be busy as part of the Farr Institute Health Informatics community – with publications and presentations both local and globally. 2018 will see hopefully a transition to the new HDR-UK (Health Data Research –UK) Institute for the Farr community in Scotland and the opportunity to build broader networks both across the UK and more internationally. We are in the midst of two EMA commissions to examine changes in prescribing for specific medicines with colleagues in Denmark and the Netherlands using our patient level data systems which is a nice new development. Amanj Kurdi and myself also had the opportunity to travel for the first time to Kenya and South Africa through Newton Funds to support with Brian Godman their evolving programmes in communicable and non-communicable disease surveillance and medicines stewardship – a great experience both personally and academically – with them returning for the EuroDURG conference which they thoroughly enjoyed. Our collaborations with Brazil continue to grow hosting two PhD students on fellowships for 6 months – a great addition to our local team in 2017. We look forward to a busy and exciting 2018 – growing the team, hosting visitors and supporting our local and international communities with high quality evidence using real world prescribing data to shape clinical practice.

Marion Bennie

Sweden

In Sweden we are looking forward to the upcoming NorPEN-meeting in Oslo, Norway, on November 7-9. The use of the Swedish Prescribed Drug Register has been restricted compared to other mandatory national health registers. Since 1st of January 2018 this is no longer the case since the original purposes of ”epidemiological studies, research, and for the production of statistics” have been extended to include also ”follow-up studies, evaluation and quality assurance within healthcare”. The original restriction was put in place over political concerns of possible violations of patient integrity since the register would cover almost everyone in the population. The withdrawal of this restriction follows 10 years of experience of safe data handling practices at the authorities, the county councils, and most importantly the research community.

This positive development is however being overshadowed by up to 8 months waiting time for access to data for research purposes. The extended purposes might worsen the situation if the National Board of Health and Welfare will not be able to expand their services. Another sign of lack of resources is the fact that historical data from 1975 to 2000 hasn´t been available for research purposes the last few years due to the need for resources to update and reinstall the data in a new database-environment. The situation calls for lobbying for relevant resources for infrastructure needed for drug utilization research and pharmacoepidemiology.

The Swedish Society of Pharmacoepidemiology is currently on hold in a restructuring phase with the goal to refocus it toward the needs of young researchers within the field of pharmacoepidemiology.

A national standardized methodology for routine-reporting of incident-rates has been developed by the National Board of Health and Welfare in collaboration with the NEPI foundation. Standardized reports on incident-rates by gender, age, geography and selected substances and substance groups are now being updated automatically on a monthly

basis and successively being made available to interested parties.

Mikael Hoffmann and Björn Wettermark

United Kingdom & Ireland

PRIMM held its 29th annual scientific meeting in London at the end of January. The theme of this one day meeting was "Optimising Medicines – Factoring in Frailty". It was an opportunity for researchers from both academia and the health service from the UK, Ireland and beyond to come together and be inspired by three excellent speakers Professor Adrian Blundell, Consultant Geriatrician and Honorary Associate Professor at Nottingham University, Dr Andy Clegg, Consultant Geriatrician and Senior Lecturer at the University of Leeds and Dr Tessa Lewis, a General Practitioner and Medical Adviser in Wales. Their entertaining presentations were accompanied by robust discussion on the subject of reducing medicines and ensuring that the right people are targeted in the right way.

There were 14 posters presented, plus five oral presentations. The winner of the Hugh McGavock** bursary, was Professor Janet Krska, Medway School of Pharmacy, for her team's work on assessing factors which contribute to medicines burden. Their study showed that, in contrast to what may be expected, older people perceive medicines to be less of a burden to their everyday lives than younger people. The winner of the poster prize was Andrew Campbell and colleagues from Dudley and Walsall Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust and Keele University School of Pharmacy. This team's work demonstrated a dramatic reduction in hospital admissions and bed days due to the use of both paliperidone and aripiprazole long-acting injections in schizophrenia/schizoaffective disorder.

The posters and presentations demonstrated the diversity and quality of research going on in the area of medicines use in the UK and Ireland. Abstracts will be published in Pharmaco-epidemiology and Drug Safety (PDS) later this year.

PRIMM are very pleased to announce the addition of two new committee members; Dr Simon White (Keele University, England) and Dr Margaret Bermingham (University College Cork, Ireland).

The next meeting, the 30th Annual Scientific Meeting will be later in 2018 on Friday December 14th in London with the theme: Person-centred care in a digital world – "nudge, nudge, tweet, tweet". It promises to prove a very exciting and innovative meeting, so hold the date!

**Professor Hugh McGavock was Professor of Prescribing Science at Ulster University and a founding member of the Drug Utilisation Research Group, the forerunner of PRIMM. He made many major contributions to the safe and effective use of medicines in the UK.

Seán MacBride-Stewart

We invite other national groups to report on their activities in the next years' Bulletin!

Introduction of new ExCo members

Hedvig Nordeng
Norway

Professor Hedvig Nordeng, head of the Pharmacoepidemiology and Drug Safety Research Group, University of Oslo, Norway. Professor Nordeng is the holder of ERC STG Grant Drug In Pregnancy and head of the PharmaTox Strategic Research Initiative at the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences. In this initiative researchers and students from the School of Pharmacy, Department of Informatics, Department of Mathematics and Department of Biosciences at the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences, UiO form highly inter-disciplinary teams to study drug neurotoxicity. Professor Nordeng is also the head of Norwegian PhD School of Pharmacy and head of the International Partnerships for Excellent Education and Research (INTPART) program "The PharmaTox Honours Programme in Quantitative Life Sciences (QLS)".

Dr. Nordeng joined the School of Pharmacy, University of Oslo in 2006 as associate professor. In 2011 she became professor with pharmacoepidemiology as area of expertise. She also holds a position as researcher at the Department of Child Health, Norwegian National Institute of Public Health since 2005. She has a PhD in drug use during pregnancy, Faculty of Medicine, University of Oslo in 2005. Dr. Nordeng is the editor of a textbook in pharmacology for nurses and has authored over 110 scientific articles, book chapters and national guidelines on drug use in pregnancy and lactation.

She is part of the ENTIS, ENCePP, NorPEN and ISPE Pregnancy SIG.

Sabine Vogler - Austria

Dr Sabine Vogler is Head of the Pharmacoeconomics Department at Gesundheit Österreich GmbH (GÖG / Austrian Public Health Institute), and she is also Director of the WHO Collaborating Centre for Pharmaceutical Pricing and Reimbursement Policies (whocc.goeg.at) affiliated to the Pharmacoeconomics Department. Her areas of expertise are pharmaceutical pricing/prices, reimbursement and distribution (particularly in European countries) as well as cost-containment reforms, access and affordability issues. She was principal investigator of large projects including the PPRI (Pharmaceutical Pricing and Reimbursement Information) project, the PHIS (Pharmaceutical Health Information System) project and the "Study on enhanced cross-country coordination in the area of pharmaceutical product pricing". Besides research, she is also involved in policy advice for national public authorities and trainings. She published several articles, studies and reports. Before joining the Austrian Public Health Institute in 1995, she worked at the Department of Social Policies at the Vienna University of Business Administration and Economics where she obtained her PhD for her thesis on care for elderly people.

Verica Ivanovska - Macedonia

Dr. Verica Ivanovska is an assistant professor at the Faculty of Medical Sciences of the University 'Goce Delcev'-Stip in Macedonia. She has recently taken a sabbatical year to work at the Essential Medicines Department, World Health Organization in Geneva. Verica has graduated as a pharmacist and holds MSc in Public Health from Glasgow University, UK. She has defended her PhD thesis on priority medicines for children at Utrecht University, the Netherlands. Her main interests include rational drug use, drug utilization, clinical pharmacy and pharmaceutical policy analysis. Verica has contributed to two WHO publications (Medicines use in primary care in developing and transitional countries - 2009,

and Priority Medicines for Europe and the World - 2013), and has published her research in international peer-reviewed journals. She was a member of the WHO EURO Antimicrobial Consumption Monitoring (AMC) Network during 2011-2016. Verica has collaborated with the Macedonian Pharmaceutical Chamber and the Institute of Public Health on issues related to medicines use monitoring, public awareness campaigns, trainings and research capacity building exercises.

Seán MacBride-Stewart
UK

Dr. Seán MacBride-Stewart is a lead pharmacist in NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde responsible for developing resources to support medicines management work in primary care. His main interest is in the effective and efficient use of prescription data to influence prescribers. Sean is also a prescribing adviser in the Effective Prescribing & Therapeutics Branch of the Scottish Government and is primarily involved in the development of national prescribing indicators (for both primary and secondary care). The National Therapeutic Indicators are designed to improve the quality of care to patients, increase prescribing efficiencies and reduce inequalities across Scotland. Sean is in the final stages of a part-time PhD on the science of health improvement at the School of Medicine, University of Dundee.

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