

# EURO DURGbulletin

No. 2

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## EUROPEAN DRUG UTILIZATION RESEARCH GROUP

*Editors. This issue was prepared by the following members of the Executive Committee of EURO DURG: Nicola Montanaro, Emilio Sanz, Robert Vander Stichele, Liselotte von Ferber, and Ulf Bergman.*

### Dear EURO DURG member

We are pleased to send you the 2nd EURO DURG Bulletin. In this issue you will find information about ongoing DURG activities in Europe, about our constrained budget; you will find a proposal for working rules for national DURGs to be discussed at business/chair meetings on 16-17 September in Berlin. You also will find news about the upcoming Berlin meeting. Three major events need your attention.

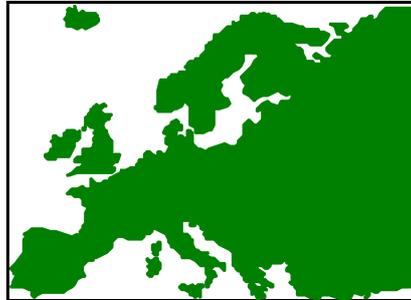
First there will be the EURO DURG workshop (about 100 participants). It will run from Tuesday, September 16, 10.00 till Wednesday, September 17, 13.00, at the Humboldt University, Unter den Linden 6, Berlin (near station Friedrichstrasse), local organizer Dr. Marion Schaefer (Institute for Pharmacy, phone: +49 30 965 92 415, fax: +49 30 924 82 80). There will be six working group sessions, in two parallel tracks, so make sure you make the right choices by studying the program on your arrival. There will be the annual business meeting of our society on Tuesday, 17.00. You are all invited for discussion of draft working rules of the society, the budget, the action plan of the society, and the preparation of the next EURO DURG meeting. Two meetings of the Chairs are planned and you will find more information in this Bulletin.

Secondly, we invite you to the EACPT - EURO DURG Joint Symposium, as a part of the official program of the EACPT Congress (about 1000 participants). It will be held at the Hotel Inter Continental Berlin, on Wednesday, September 17, 14.00-17.00.

Thirdly, there will be the Drug Utilization Poster Session. The 80 selected posters will be presented in 8 groups (further details at page 4 of this Bulletin).

We welcome you to a most promising meeting in Berlin.

*Editorial Board*



### Proposal of working rules for national DURGs

*Draft by the Executive Committee of EURO DURG, adopted on the meeting of June 11, 1997, submitted to the members of national DURGs for comments, and to be discussed at the Business meeting of EURO DURG, September 16, 1997 in Berlin.*

#### **Rationale**

EURO DURG is an association of national associations (drug utilization research groups, DURGs). Its strength as an international organization lies within the dynamism of its national DURGs. A close collaboration between the national DURGs and the Board of EURO DURG should develop. Furthermore, national DURGs should be aware of each others activities, exchange information on national projects, and collaborate in international projects.

This document serves as a mission statement for the national associations, with the explicit intention to ensure the continuity with the collaboration be-

tween the World Health Organization and the Drug Utilization Research Groups.

EURO DURG, now a formalized association, should have a procedure of acceptance and renewal of acceptance of national DURGs. Formulation of some general principles and a good insight in national situations will prevent a tendency to restrict membership and avoid problems in formal application. In each country, the professional mix of the members will differ, according to local situations.

These working rules are intended to ensure that scientists of all relevant constituencies are able to participate in the national DURGs and that nobody is excluded solely on the basis of affiliation. National DURGs will have different forms of relations with local chapters of other international associations, in the field of clinical pharmacology or pharmacoepidemiology. It is important to ensure communication about the nature of these relations to EURO DURG.

Finally, the viability of an organization such as EURO DURG relies on a sound financial basis, especially with the aim of independence from sponsoring, especially from commercial sources. Therefore, arrangements are to be made as to the financial contribution from national DURGs to EURO DURG and the distribution of costs between the national and international level.

#### **Definition of a national DURG**

A national DURG should be:

a scientific association, legally constituted (or subgroup of a legally constituted association)

with a democratic, pluralistic approach

with an open register of funding.

Membership of a national DURG is an

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individual matter, based on the scientific interest in the field of DUR and not on position in one of the health care sector constituencies. Formal mandates from organizations cannot be requested.

### The functions of national DURGs

This list of functions is an adaptation from a background paper, made by Inga Lunde, WHO consultant, dated May 28, 1991, during the meeting of the WHO DURG in Verona, Italy.

It is a set of potential goals for national DURGs, who can thrive at their pace to the fulfillment of these functions.

- 1) Encourage collaborative drug utilization research
- 2) Act as a link with EURO DURG (and hence with WHO and Collaborating Centres)
- 3) Act as a contact point of drug utilization researchers in the country
- 4) Coordinate with government and other agencies
- 5) Send an annual report to EURO DURG (who will transmit to WHO Europe)
- 6) Act as a clearing house for information on national DUR activities
  - keeping lists of the countries' sources for DUR, morbidity and mortality data
  - keeping lists of publications, published and unpublished, per country
  - keeping an indexed directory of past and current DUR projects
- 7) Support the elaboration and maintenance of a national drug register, linked to ATC and DDD, with special interest for the methodological rigour and the respect of international validation procedures.

### Formal procedure of acceptance by EURO DURG

Each national DURG should apply for formal acceptance by EURO DURG at the Executive Committee.

The Executive Committee of EURO DURG

- processes and evaluates the applications of national DURGs,
- issues clear guidelines for candidate groups
- arbiters in case of conflict on the national level.

withdraws acceptance by EURO DURG in case of non-fulfillment of financial obligations or serious infringements on working rules

### Liaison of national DURGs with EURO DURG

Each national DURG should designate a liaison-officer, responsible for international contacts with the board of EURO DURG for the communication of the annual report of the national DURG to report on the progress in fulfillment of each of the functions of national DURGs (see list above).

### Register of national DURGs within EURO DURG

The secretariat of EURO DURG maintains a register which lists all the accepted national DURGs (including the name of the current president and liaison-officer, and current version of the constitution).

Each national DURG confirms annually the official functions, contact address and then number of member on which the financial contributions are to be calculated (see *infra*).

Each national DURG should annually update a list of national members and communicate this list to EURO DURG.

In countries with an accepted national DURG, no individual memberships of EURO DURG should be accepted, after two years of formal acceptance of the national DURG.

### Relations of national DURGs with other international associations (or their local chapters).

All formal agreements between a national DURG and other international associations (or their local chapters) should be communicated to the EURO DURG Executive Committee, before approval.

### Financial arrangements between national DURGs and EURO DURG

The preliminary decision on this matter was taken at the Lake Balaton Conference in 1996.

It was decided that each national DURG pays a contribution to EURO DURG of 10 % of the national annual fee or 5 ECU minimum per registered member, in the first month of the year for which the contribution is due.

It is clear that this is a minimal contribution that will not ensure the viability of this international organization. National DURGs are invited to make more substantial contributions or to help in the payment of central costs on a voluntary basis. ■

## EURO DURG

### Budget



The organization of EURO DURG as an independent scientific society requires financial self-reliance. EURO DURG is mainly formed out of national DURGs and by individual members from countries in which there is no national DURG established yet. In fact, the contributions set by the Executive Committee reflect the idea of promoting the formation of new national DURGs. Members of these groups pay a fee of 5 ECU per year, through their national DURGs. Those affiliated individually must pay 10 ECU per year in a three years base (30 ECU each three years).

During this first period, 8 national DURGs have contributed to the European Organization with generosity.

Norway has also provided a generous amount even though they are not yet members. The fee was defined by taking into account the real possibilities of the members of all different countries in Europe, and the standard amount of other scientific societies. As the fee is low (almost symbolic), both national and individual members are encouraged to contribute with additional amounts from different sources.

### Some Explanations

#### Incomes

The more the number of members, the higher the incomes. You are encouraged to promote EURO DURG; and to form national DURGs. The lower fees (when a national DURG is formed) will be counterbalanced by an improved efficacy and communication. We are studying the possibility of getting extra funds from official and private sources in Europe (WHO, national Governments, European Commission, European Programs, etc.). In principle the direct support from the Pharmaceutical Industry will not be allowed, in order to preserve our independence. You are really encouraged to submit ideas, proposals or possibilities to the Executive Committee.

#### Expenditures

Communication within the Executive Committee is essential. We used telephone conferences as the most convenient way of getting in contact without spending too much money. The physical meetings of the Executive Committee have been paid for until now, by its members. We are exploring the possibility of taking advantage of INTERNET, but still there are some logistical problems. It seems that this item could not be lowered in the few coming years.

Other expenditures (secretariat and overheads) are almost symbolic. Most of the work has been covered by the personal work of the members of the committee the generous support of their University Departments. But some expenditures are unavoidable.

These two items covered the whole budgeted incomes. There are many other activities which will depend of extra sources, and the generous contribution of people (and their departments or companies). The production of a newsletter is important. EURO DURG will produce a very simple layout, and a short distribution list. Each national DURG will then distribute the newsletter among their associates. EURO DURG has already a Web Page:

<http://www.ull.es/sociedades/EURO-DURG>

located at the University of La Laguna. Contributions to improve the page (layout, contents, etc. ...) are very welcomed (Mail to: [esanz@ull.es](mailto:esanz@ull.es)). The number of "hits" to this page will allow

**Approximate BUDGET (in ECU)**

<b>INCOMES</b>	
10 countries x 50 Members x 5 s	2,500
50 Independent Members x 10 s each	500
Other sources	1,000
<b>Total Incomes</b>	<b>4,000</b>
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>	
Telephone Conferences per year (620 each)	3, 100
Secretariat (Mailing, hours, etc.)	500
Overheads	400
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>4,000</b>
<b>Other desirable activities</b>	
2-3 newsletters per year	1,000
Physical meeting of the Executive Committee	9,000
Support of working groups	3,000
Support for courses and guidelines	4,000
<b>Total extra expenditures</b>	<b>17,000</b>

us to form an idea of how useful this way of communication could be.

Even if the telephone conferences are useful, it is also important for the members of the Executive Committee to be able to meet each other and discuss, with enough amount of time, new proposals and activities. It could be appropriate to support, at least partially, these meetings.

Working groups, and specially the nominating committee need also support, as payment of telephone conferences, or the printing of some materials. Some amount of money, could also be allocated for this. Finally, a wealthy economical situation could facilitate the organization of seminars and courses, and the edition of guidelines for "Good Drug Utilization Research Practices".

**Conclusions**

The Executive Committee and the members of EURO DURG expect that the low fees will be seen as a matter of confidence on the personal responsibility of each member of EURO DURG in the fund-raising activities. At least we expect some good and practical idea to increase incomes, and diminish expenditures. ■

*E. Sanz, Treasurer*

## Meetings of the Chairs of the national DURGs in Berlin, September 16-17



The success of EURO DURG lies in the strength of its national DURGs.

In nine European countries, formal associations have been created of people

with a scientific interest in Pharmacoeconomics and Drug Utilization Research. The members of these associations come from different backgrounds, such as academia, health care provider associations, health policy managers, sickfunds. In countries such as Germany and Great Britain, strong associations with a wide membership have grown, in other countries smaller informal groups exist, sometimes as part of existing scientific associations. In Greece, Portugal, Iceland, Hungary and Norway, the process of formal constitution is on its way. It is important that we learn from each others' experience and that we can develop lines of mutual support.

Therefore, the Executive Committee of EURO DURG has planned two meetings of the Chairs of national DURGs during the Berlin meeting, September, 16 to 17.

The first meeting is September 16, during lunch time, from 13.00 till 14.30 u. and will be chaired by Dr. R. Vander Stichele. We would like to have the Chair or a representative of the Chair from each national DURG present at the lunch table.

In a first round, each Chair will present his association, the extent of its membership, its history, its achievements and ongoing activities. In a second round, we will discuss the process of formalizing the association and the connections with EURO DURG. In a third round, we will look at techniques to keep members informed and interested. We will look at the funding problem from the perspective of the national DURG. Finally, we will discuss the messages that Chairs of national DURGs wish to make at the Business meeting, later that evening.

In the second meeting, during lunch time, Wednesday 17, repercussions of the previous days' business meeting

will be discussed by the Chairs of the national DURGs.

We hope that an intense horizontal cooperation between countries will develop, in mutual support of each other and the Board of EURO DURG.

We urge all members to contact with their Chair, if they have a message to convey for these meetings. We are confident that the Chairs will prepare for these events, make contact with their members in order to collect their views, bring the information to the meeting (appoint a representative if they can not be present themselves) and have a lively interchange of experiences, support and plans for the future.

Looking forward to see you in Berlin. ■

*Dr. R. Vander Stichele*

## New national DURGs

EURO DURG, in spite of its good intentions and purpose, will not be able to survive as an organization or be able to fulfill its mission "to promote drug utilization research as a means to improve drug use by providing a European forum for communication and cooperation between people interested in drug utilization research" without a network or strong and active national DURGs.

Thanks to the motherhood of WHO Europe, DURG has been able to survive for more than 20 years. Now being on our own, our future success will depend on the rapid growth of national DURGs.

In addition to the former nine officially recognized groups (Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Spain Sweden, The Netherlands, UK), five new national groups have been established or are in process of being established.

We would like to welcome the DURGs of Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Norway, and Portugal and we look forward to a fruitful cooperation with, and scientific contribution from these countries.

At the same time we would like to urge the individual members of EURO DURG; in the remaining European countries to initiate the process of establishing national DURGs.

Dr. Robert Vander Stichele and Dr. Ulf Bergman welcome the opportunity to assist and advise on this process. Their respective addresses are given below. ■

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**Dear EURO  
DURG members,  
Dear EACPT  
Congress participants**

The EACPT Congress will give us the chance to introduce the methods, some results and the importance of drug utilization research to EACPT members.

We have pleasure in inviting you to the EACPT - EURO DURG joint symposium (September 17, 14.00-17.00.) and to the poster session at the EACPT Congress.

The posters of session 2, Drug Utilization Research, will be organized by EURO DURG (see table).

We are going to have a peer group review and for this purpose we have arranged the posters into 8 groups according to topics.

Presenters will prepare and give a talk lasting no more than five minutes, describing the purpose of the research, the methodology, the results, analysis and interpretation. The moderator will then lead discussion with a view to criticizing the methodology, results and interpretation and invite the presenter to defend their work and suggest ways of overcoming any difficulties which have been encountered. Every moderator will score the posters of his/her group and will recommend the highest scored posters for a poster prize.

We, your EURO DURG committee, believe that this is a far better way of communicating poster presentation, as we proved at our Hungarian meeting last year. Every poster presenter has a chance to present his/her work to a knowledgeable audience and have it properly discussed. That is what scientific communication should be. We look forward to seeing you in Berlin. ■

*PD Dr. Med. Liselotte von Ferber  
Head of the Scientific Subcommittee of  
EURO DURG Executive Committee*

### EURO DURG POSTER SESSION

Thursday September 18, 1997

Hotel Inter Continental Berlin, Budapesterstrasse 2, D-10787 Berlin  
(Phone: +49-30-26 02-0, Fax: +49-30-26 02-80760)

**time: 9.00-10.30 a.m.**

group	moderator	theme
1	Dr. Robert Vander Stichele, Belgium	Quality indicators of drug utilization
5	Prof. Ingrid Matheson, Norway Prof. Emilio Sanz, Spain	Patterns of Drug use - based on questionnaires - antibiotics
7	Kåre Øydvin, Norway	Patterns of drug use - trends in drug utilization in Mid and Eastern Europe
8	Prof. Annemarie Hoffmann, Germany Prof. Micha Levy, Israel	Patient perspectives - diverse

**time: 11.00-12.30 a.m.**

group	moderator	theme
2	Prof. Thomas Einarson, Canada	Optimizing drug use (policy)
3	Dr. Alberto Vaccheri, Italy	Methodology of drug utilization research
4	Dr. Hugh McGavock, Northern Ireland	Prescribing behaviour
6	Prof. Owen Wade, United Kingdom	Patterns of drug use - elderly - cardiovascular - diverse