

EuroDURG bulletin

No. 14

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EUROPEAN DRUG UTILIZATION RESEARCH GROUP

Editors. This issue was prepared by the following members of the Executive Committee of EuroDURG: Peter Mol, Monique Elseviers, and Robert Vander Stichele. Send reactions to: p.mol@med.rug.nl

The Chairs' message

**Dear Chairs of National DURGs
Dear DURG members**

Sailing on the wind of renewed general interest in the consumption of and expenditures on pharmaceuticals, the drug utilisation research community has revived itself and is becoming more active and visible.

A number of projects have worked on international comparisons of drug consumption: antibiotics (ESAC), statins (Euro-med-stat), antihypertensives after MI (Euroaspire), hormone replacement therapy in the aftermath of pivotal clinical trials (PILLS).

EuroDURG was the driving force behind an international expert meeting on Quality Indicators in 2004 in Belgium (DURQUIM-meeting), resulting not only in a transparent conceptual and theoretical framework, but also in specific recommendations and concrete initiatives, such as the building of a catalogue of validated prescribing quality indicators. Putting this catalogue on our website will increase its usefulness. Also on the web site, a database of doctoral theses of relevance to Drug Utilisation Research will be installed, as the number of these theses is growing and can be turned into a gold mine of scientific information.

2005 will bring us an international meeting in Ulster, Northern Ireland, in the line of the Balaton Meeting,

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at
www.EuroDURG.com*

Hungary in 1996, and the Prague Meeting, Czeck Republic, in 2001. Thanks to the UK-DURG group, we will have a very interesting and well prepared meeting, bringing keynote speakers and cutting edge researchers together.

Please prepare all to send your abstracts before March 31 and register before May, 31 for the meeting (June 29 till July 2, 2005).

Those of us with a clinical pharmacology background will also join the Meeting of the European Association of Clinical Pharmacology (EACPT) in Poznan, Poland, from June 26 till June 30, 2005.

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EURODURG ULSTER MEETING 2005

*Prescribing, Clinical pharmacy, Medication management
Patient and policy maker perspective*

29th JUNE – 2nd JULY, 2005
**THE UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER,
COLERAIN, NORTHERN IRELAND**

COST:

£320 (Sterling) / €450 (Euro)
*Includes registration, accommodation,
all meals & transport to and from Belfast airports*

ORGANISERS:

*The European Drug Utilisation Research Group (EuroDURG)
The UK and Ireland Drug Utilisation Research Group*

CLOSING DATE FOR ABSTRACT SUBMISSION
31ST MARCH 2005

CLOSING DATE FOR REGISTRATION
31ST May 2005

For detailed information, see page 4 of this bulletin



EuroDURG organization

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The autumn of 2005 will bring us an expert meeting on the use of prescribing quality indicators in antibiotics, organised together with the European Surveillance of Antibiotic Consumption, and sponsored by the European Science Foundation.

2005 will be the year that we will discuss more intense cooperation with the International Society of Pharmaco-epidemiology.

Let's gear up for another busy year.

Robert Vander Stichele,
President EuroDURG

Quality Indicators

EuroDURG Quality Indicator Meeting (DURQUIM), Mechelen May 2004, Belgium

Appropriate use of medicines is of critical importance for patients achieving good health and for the efficient use of resources in health care systems. The proper use of medicines is relevant for patients, for health care professionals, for policy- and decision-makers in health care systems, as well as for the pharmaceutical industry. In order to analyze patterns of medication use and to implement strategies for improving the prescribing and use of medicines, indicators are needed

To date, various indicators have been used to identify problems in the quality of prescribing, to monitor changes and to provide feedback to individual prescribers. However, there is still considerable debate about the usefulness, reliability and validity of the different indicators. EuroDURG, supported by the WHO/EURO and the RIZIV, assembled in May 2004 a group of experts to discuss the topic of prescribing quality indicators in Mechelen, Belgium. Forty experts from 19 countries, all practically involved in the development and application of prescribing quality indicators, discussed for 2 ½ days prescribing quality indicators. The prime objective of the meeting was

to develop a conceptual framework to construct indicators of prescribing quality. Recommendations were formulated for the development and application of prescribing quality indicators for associations of health care providers and European and national health authorities.

Output of the meeting

- The recommendations of the meeting are available on the EuroDURG website.
- A background document is available upon request or through WHO-EURO.

At the recent ISPE-conference (see elsewhere in this bulletin) in a plenary session a summary of the Mechelen meeting and the main issues regarding Prescribing Quality Indicators were presented by Flora Haaijer-Ruskamp. One parallel symposium was completely dedicated to the subject and was very well attended. Morten Andersen (DK), Steve Chapman (UK), Colleen Metge (CAN), and Lynn Weeks (AUS) gave an overview of the various aspects related to quality indicators based on the work of DURQUIM, putting the Mechelen meeting into a worldwide perspective.

The future

Currently the EuroDURG-DURQUIM scientific committee is working on publishing a series of articles in a peer reviewed journal on the key-issues addressed during the meeting: i.e. -taxonomy, data-sources, validity and use of quality indicators. Further, EuroDURG is exploring ways to specifically address Quality Indicator issues related to specific disease areas. Below Morton Andersen describes

how one of the recommendations of DURQUIM, i.e. creating a database of prescribing quality indicators, is implemented.

Peter Mol

On behalf of the DURQUIM scientific committee

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Catalogue of Prescribing Quality Indicators

Creating a catalogue of Prescribing Quality Indicators

Two of the recommendations from the Drug Utilisation Research Quality Indicator Meeting (DURQUIM) in Mechelen, Belgium 13-15 May 2004 were

- to start with a catalogue of Prescribing Quality Indicators (PQI) used across Europe with information on validation, use and references to guidelines, studies and reports
- to organise and maintain a catalogue of major data sources across Europe, using EURO-MEDSTAT as a starting point

A group of researchers with an interest in prescribing quality indicators and close relation to EuroDURG have therefore set out to collect the information necessary for these catalogues of indicators and databases.

The starting point for the catalogue of indicators is the table in the

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DURQUIM report. This will be supplemented with an updated literature search. We will focus on indicators that have gone through some kind of formal validation process or indicators that are in routine use, even if information on validity is scarce or absent. We are also interested in indicators developed for use in intervention studies, because content validity, i.e. references to guidelines, recommendations and the scientific evidence base, often has been discussed for those indicators. Not all results of validation processes or interventions, however, end up as indexed scientific publications. Some are published in institutional reports, and some may even only be accessible in unpublished documents. We will therefore also conduct a search of relevant websites.

We would also like to ask you to contribute to the process. If you have information on PQIs already applied in your country, with references to descriptions of how they have been used and in particular to studies of their validity not referred to in the DURQUIM report, we would like to hear from you. Although we primarily want to deal with indicators measuring the *quality* of prescribing, we do not exclude commonly used comparator indicators. But in all cases we need references either to printed or electronically published material (web addresses).

Collection of information on databases has already been initiated by ISPE. A summary document with names and links to databases has been presented at the ISPE website (http://www.pharmacoepi.org/resources/summary_databases.pdf). Additional information on data sources in Europe is available from the EURO-MEDSTAT project and some updated information has also been retrieved using a questionnaire distributed at the DURQUIM. It would be desirable if these efforts could be coordinated. Particular attention should be given to data relevant for prescribing quality indicators.

We plan to make the indicator catalogue accessible at a website with a link from the EuroDURG homepage. The catalogue should be updated regularly. The website will also contain links to other sites presenting information on quality indicators, and to relevant research organisations and institutions.

With the combination of systematic efforts and voluntary contributions from EuroDURG'ers we hope to stimulate the exchange of information and the research in this important field. We will present more information at the EuroDURG scientific meeting to be held in Northern Ireland this summer.

If you would like to contribute to the project or join the working group, please write to the e-mail address below.

Coordinator of the PQI working group

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References

Haaïjer-Ruskamp FM, Hoven JL, Mol PGM. A conceptual framework for constructing prescribing quality indicators: a proposal. World Health Organisation (EUR/04/5049450) 2004.

Hoven JL, Haaïjer-Ruskamp FM, Vander Stichele RH. Indicators of prescribing quality in drug utilisation research: report of a European meeting (DURQUIM, 13-15 May 2004) Eur J Clin Pharmacol, published online 9 December 2004.

**EuroDURG
GENERAL
ASSEMBLY 2004**

At the ICPE 2004 in Bordeaux, France on Monday 23 August from 18.00 – 19.30 the bi-annual EuroDURG general assembly convened. A report of that assembly is printed below:

1) Election of chair and secretary for the meeting

Approximately 30 members from 12 countries attended the meeting. Robert Vander Stichele (Belgium) was elected as chair of the meeting and Hanne Strøm (Norway) as secretary.

2) Approval of the agenda

The agenda was presented by the chair and approved.

3) Report of the EuroDURG Executive Committee 2002-2004

The report August 2002 – August 2004 was presented by Hanne Strøm. The report was approved.

4) Financial Report

In the absence of the treasurer, John Larsen (who was excused), Morten Andersen presented the financial report 2002-2003 and the budget for 2004-2005 (see enclosure). It was highlighted that the payment of membership fees from many countries is missing for several years, and the national representatives were strongly encouraged to return the invoices. The situation makes it very difficult to come up with a proper budget for the future.

It was discussed how to avoid “free riders” in the future. Exclusion of members who do not fulfill their financial obligations is a possible solution, however there is pro and cons that should be considered carefully if such a step is taken.

Individual membership was put forward as an alternative to national membership.

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EURODURG ULSTER MEETING 2005

Between Wednesday, June 29 and Saturday, July 2, 2005, the University of Ulster in Northern Ireland will become the place to be for drug utilisation researchers and administrators. The Ulster meeting will concentrate on the dissemination of current drug use research and its application throughout the enlarged European Union. The meeting is organized by EuroDURG together with the UK and Ireland Drug Utilisation Research Group. It is the latter organisation, under the experienced leadership of Professor Hugh McGavock, who will take care about the logistics and the local organisation of the meeting.

Themes

Seven themes have been selected for the congress:

- Automated feedback to prescribers: the need for high quality indicators
- Bringing together medicines information services, evidence-based medicine centres and pharmacovigilance systems
- Patient compliance, adherence and concordance: how able and willing are doctors, pharmacists and nurses to involve patients in treatment decisions and management
- Reducing the international threat of multi-drug antibiotic resistance by improving drug utilisation in hospitals and the community
- Independent prescribing by nurses and the team management of chronic diseases
- Prescribing for the elderly, children and in pregnancy
- Combining continuous monitoring of morbidity and prescribing: an essential development for drug use research and safer medication

Each of these seven themes will run throughout the congress in three distinct 90-minute sessions: a session with keynote addresses, a workshop and a session with free presentations.

Call for abstracts

Abstracts are not limited to the main congress themes, any aspect of drug use is welcomed. Closing date for abstract submission will be March 31st, 2005. Abstracts should be in English, should not exceed 250 words and should include: title, authors, aim, methods, results and conclusions. Abstracts form can be obtained by e-mail to b.sandland@keele.ac.uk.

A EuroDURG Scientific Committee will judge all abstracts. Those of best quality will be recommended for oral presentation. EuroDURG will organize a guided poster walk. Authors of abstracts selected for poster presentation will be invited to give a short oral presentation at their poster site. EuroDURG will grant a 'Best Poster Award'.

Costs

The conference fee of £320 (€450) includes superior student rooms for three nights (most with private bathroom), meals and snacks from Wednesday evening, 29th June, 2005 to breakfast on Saturday morning, 2nd July. It also includes coach transfer from and to Belfast airports. The welcoming party and conference dinner (with wine) are also included.

Travel

Low-cost airlines (e.g. EasyJet, BMI baby, Flybe) have services direct to Belfast or via London, Birmingham or Manchester. Early on-line booked fares are good value, e.g. €200 from Prague. From Great Britain, fast and frequent ferries are ideal for delegates wishing to have an Irish touring holiday before or after the conference.

The venue

The University of Ulster at Coleraine provides modern conference facilities in a setting of outstanding beauty beside a large river on the North Atlantic coast of Ireland. The first hundred study-bedrooms have en suite bathrooms and will be booked entirely by the EuroDURG 2005 Conference.

Social Programme

The congress will start with a welcome evening with buffet dinner on Wednesday. All attendees are invited for the congress dinner on Thursday and an informal farewell party on Friday. Coach tours for accompanying persons will be organized on Thursday and Friday.

Information

For congress flyers, registration forms, abstract forms and all further in information, please contact:

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From the 1st of February on, complete information will be available on the websites:

www.durg.org.uk and www.EuroDURG.com

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The possibility of providing the executive committee with updated lists (names and e-mail addresses) of national members was brought up again. Such lists would make it possible to present a more exact income budget. The executive committee reported that an attempt has been made to establish these lists, but without success. It seems rather difficult to achieve this goal: an archive of individual national members. It was commented that the income from membership fees is relatively small anyway.

It was concluded that a thorough discussion was required concerning the future of EuroDURG. Do we want a low budget organisation or has the time come for a change in the organisation? These questions will be on the agenda for the EuroDURG meeting in Northern Ireland, 2005 (see also point 7).

The financial report 2002-2003 and the budget 2004-2005 were approved without further comments.

5) Election of EuroDURG executive committee 2004-2006

The candidate for the chair:

Robert Vander Stichele was unanimously elected (13 country votes).

The following 10 candidates were elected as members of the committee:

Monique Elseviers (Belgium)

Blanka Koristkova (Czech Republic)

Vera Vlahovic-Palcevski (Croatia)

John Larsen (Denmark)

Joerg Hasford (Germany)

Judith Lam (Hungary)

Hege Salvesen Blix (Norway)

Björn Wettermark (Sweden)

Peter Mol (The Netherlands)

Stephen Chapman (UK)

6) Election of nominating committee 2006

The following three members were elected to the next nominating committee by acclamation: Emilio Sanz (Spain), Jiri Vlcek (Czech Republic) and Micha Levy (Israel).

7) Future of the EuroDURG

In the next couple of years, the following activities are regarded as major:

EuroDURG meeting in Ireland 2005

The chair informed about the decision taken in the executive committee to arrange a separate EuroDURG scientific meeting in Northern Ireland, 29th June – 1st July 2005 (joint meeting with the UK DURG). A flyer was distributed.

A joint EACPT/EuroDURG meeting is also planned in Poznan 25th-29th June 2005. Unfortunately the two joint meetings are in the same week, however this was not considered a major problem.

DURQUIM follow-up

The initiative taken by EuroDURG to arrange the first DURQUIM will be followed up. EuroDURG will continue working with QI, but focus on therapy areas (e.g. AB use, statin use). A question was raised whether the priority of therapy groups had been broadly discussed. No clear answer was given.

Handbook of Drug Use Research Methodology

A new, more global edition of the Handbook has been proposed several times. EuroDURG should, if possible, be involved in this work and a 2nd version of this booklet will be put on the agenda for EuroDURG in the future.

Future EuroDURG

As discussed under point 4 on the agenda, questions regarding EuroDURG as a separate organisation should be debated at the meeting in Northern Ireland, 2005. One possible alternative mentioned is to merge with ISPE.

8) Closing remarks from the chair

The chair focused on the achievements in the period, and especially the DURQUIM workshop as the major successful activity of EuroDURG.

17 September 2004

Hanne Strøm

20th International Conference on Pharmacoepidemiology & Therapeutic Risk Management

22-25 August 2004, Bordeaux, France.

More than 800 participants attended the conference from all parts of the world. There were close to 650 abstracts presented. The oral presentations (162!) were spread among 27 different sessions, and more than 480 posters were presented.

The Keynote Address was given by Bernard Begaud (the President of the Université Victor Segalen) who discussed the role of pharmacoepidemiology in medical training.

In the Invited Plenary Lecture Lucien Abenheim (the former Director General of Health, French Ministry of Health) presented his perspective on the role of pharmaco-epidemiology in shaping national drug policy. Samy Suissa (professor of epidemiology, University of Montreal) discussed time-dependent measures in pharmacoepidemiology. Nicholas Wald (Bald & The London Queen Mary School of Medicine & Dentistry) shared his views on combining strategies for controlling risk.

Within the Hot Topic Sessions, panels of international experts examined scientific and policy implications of Hormone Replacement Therapy, and the use of SSRIs in children.

Symposia covered adverse drug reactions from various aspects: safety data mining, active surveillance, risk communication, risk management programs, decision-making and evidence based pharmacovigilance, human teratogens, orphan drugs, automatic signal detection methods and pharmacoepidemiology and the law. Workshops were dedicated to the clinical assessment of adverse drug events following immunization; the sampling strategies applied to drug utilization studies, the maximizing

of the clinical explanatory power of drug dosing history data, the act on the best pharmaceuticals for children, the development and implementation of risk management programs for Alosteron HCl, based on epidemiologic data vs. post-marketing spontaneous reporting data.

EuroDURG at ICPE

EuroDURG was explicitly present at the 20th International Conference on Pharmacoepidemiology and Therapeutic Risk Management organized in Bordeaux, 22-25 August 2004. A large part of drug utilization researchers, mainly from Europe, attended the conference. Moreover, about half of submitted abstracts reported on drug utilization research.

Tuesday August 24th was the EuroDURG day of the conference, with most of the sessions dedicated to drug utilisation studies. In the morning, a EuroDURG/ISPE Plenary session has been organised handling the topic: How valid is the assessment of volume, expenditure and quality in drug consumption? First, the validity of drug consumption data expressed in volume and expenditure was discussed. Second, recent developments in the use of quality indicators were highlighted. During the afternoon sessions, a special symposium has been dedicated to each of these topics with some guest speakers and oral presentations of selected DUR abstracts in the same field.

At lunchtime of the same day, a EuroDURG guided poster walk has been organized. Authors of abstracts selected for the Tuesday poster presentation in the category *Prescribing and Utilisations*, were invited to give a short oral presentation at their poster site followed by a discussion. Eleven groups of 5 to 15 attendees guided by a EuroDURG poster chair visited a total of 109 abstracts.

During the poster walk, a EuroDURG scientific committee made a

EuroDURG Poster Award

pre-selection of three posters, candidate for the EuroDURG BEST POSTER AWARD, 2005..

Selected posters were:

1. Does the early adopter of drugs exist? A population based study of general practitioners' prescribing of new drugs (poster 20) *Torben Dybdahl e.a., Denmark*
2. Clinical guidelines and feedback to GPs and hospital doctors improves prescription habits (poster 88) *Kirsten Schaefer e.a., Denmark*
3. Drug utilisation by Retired People: Results from postal and domiciliary surveys in Belo Horizonte (poster 87) *Andreia Q Ribeiro e.a., Brazil*

The winner, Torben Dybdahl, will receive free registration for the EuroDURG Ulster meeting 2005 in Northern Ireland.

All in all ICPE was a very successful meeting with a very active EuroDURG!

Vera Vlahovic-Palcevski and

7th EACPT with EuroDURG, Poznan June2005

Monique Elseviers

EuroDURG in co-operation with EACPT is organising two of the 18 symposia at the 7th Congress of the European Association for Clinical Pharmacology and Therapeutics in Poznan, Poland June 25-29, 2005:

Drug utilisation as a tool in clinical pharmacology chaired by Jolanta Gulbinovic (Lithuania) and Robert Vander Stichele (Belgium) with speakers:

Nicola Montanaro (Italy) *Drugs for the initial treatment of hypertension : an indicator of prescribing quality (or lack of it).*

Alar Irs (Estonia) *Did the Eastern European Drug Utilisation monitoring traditions survive the transition?*

Jolanta Gulbinovic (Lithuania) *The role of the clinical pharmacologist in drug utilisation research and drug use evaluation activities in hospital.*

Robert Vander Stichele (Belgium) *The role of the clinical pharmacologist in drug utilisation research and drug use evaluation activities in ambulatory care,* followed by free communications.

And ***Quality indicators in therapeutics*** chaired by Ulf Bergman (Sweden) and Andrzej Czlonkowski (Poland) and with speakers: Morten Andersen (Denmark) *Validating prescribing quality indicators – how do we know that they measure quality?*

Vera Vlahovic-Palcevski (Croatia) *Use of quality indicators for antibiotic prescribing.*

Ulf Bergman (Sweden) *Use of voluntary adverse drug reaction reporting as a quality indicator.* Lämbit Rägo (WHO) *WHO indicators used to assess the quality of drug therapy at the national level,* followed by free communications.

There will be oral and poster presentations and deadline for abstract submission and early registration is 28 February.

Further information on: www.eacpt.pl

See you in Poznan in June!

Ulf Bergman & Bjorn Wettermark

Proposed New DUR Definition

A new definition of drug utilization research has been proposed:

Drug Utilization Research is a eclectic collection of descriptive and analytical methods for the quantification, the understanding and the evaluation of the processes of prescribing, dispensing and consumption of medicines, and for the testing of interventions to enhance the quality of these processes.

Please send your reactions to Bjorn Wettermark:

bjorn.wettermark@apoteket.se

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