Australian University Research Centre

Research focused on improving the way we all use medicines!

The Quality Use of Medicines and Pharmacy Research Centre (QUMPRC) is based at the University of South Australia (Adelaide, Australia). Professor Libby Roughead was appointed as its director in 2011. Libby’s previous experience as a hospital and community pharmacist informs her research, which focuses on quantifying problems with medicine use, implementing and evaluating interventions, and facilitating supportive policy.

The QUMPRC has over 20 staff with expertise ranging from pharmacy and medicines safety to statistics, mathematical modelling, database management, health informatics, indigenous medicines, chemistry and health promotion.

All Libby’s research is supported by consumer and stakeholder advisory groups, which meet regularly across the life of the research projects. This has ensured that the research is relevant to the needs of her community and it has also helped in the translation of research into practice.

Libby also runs the Veterans’ Medicines Advice and Therapeutics Education Service (MATES), a national program that has been running since 2004, and provides four interventions per year to veterans, general practitioners and allied health providers (www.veteransmates.net.au). More than 55 interventions have been implemented. As a result, 300,000 veterans and 33,000 general practitioners – as well as all pharmacies and aged-care facilities in Australia – have been targeted by the program. The program uses a whole of health care administrative claims dataset within a public health approach to promote changes in health care. Doctors of veterans receive data on their prescribing for each individual veteran they treat with recommendations tailored for the care of each veteran. Collectively, doctors have received 1.5 million targeted messages for individual veterans. This data-driven approach has improved health outcomes – reducing hospitalisations for heart failure, bleeds, confusion, hip-fracture, and pneumonia, as well as preventing premature death.

Libby undertook the evaluation of Australia’s national strategy for Quality Use of Medicines, and is an expert member of the Australian Government’s Drug Utilisation Subcommittee of the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee, the Medication Safety Oversight Committee of the Australian Commission on Quality and Safety in Health Care; and the Medicines Safety Program Steering Group of the Australian Digital Health Agency. Libby was the lead author of the WHO publication “methods for drug utilisation to support pharmaceutical policy development” and has acted as a temporary advisor of WHO-convened meetings on monitoring access to medicines: using antimicrobial consumption data, providing access to medicines under universal health coverage, and using health technology assessment for universal health coverage and reimbursement systems.
ISIUM Conference

People Improving the Use of Medicines: What We Know & Don’t Know

Location & dates
The meeting, People Improving the Use of Medicines: What We Know & Don’t Know, will be held in Bangkok, Thailand from 27th to 29th January 2020. We are aiming to have between 100 and 150 participants.

Purpose & objectives
The purpose of the meeting is to reinvigorate the movement for rational use of medicines by sharing new knowledge and experiences on how to improve medicines use and agreeing on a plan for future ISIUM work. The objectives are:
1. To understand rational use of medicines and therapeutic practices in terms of new knowledge and perspectives.
2. To share experiences in people’s education and empowerment in improving the use of medicines and therapeutic practices.
3. To explore what governments and other stakeholders should and could do to ensure the safe and effective use of medicines, and how they may be held to account.
4. To define priority areas for future ISIUM work on improving the use of medicines and its promotion, with a focus on people’s empowerment.

The meeting will also provide an opportunity to build ISIUM’s network, share information, propose perspectives from which ideas can grow and give ISIUM visibility.

Conference organising committee
The conference is being organised on behalf of ISIUM by the following people.

Arturo Quizhpe (former Dean, Faculty of Medical Sciences at Cuenca University in Ecuador, former coordinator of Latin American Peoples Health Movement, and current coordinator of ReAct Latin America) has agreed to chair the Conference Organising Committee. Mary Murray has agreed to support him in this role. The other members of the Committee are:

Natalia Cebotarenco, coordinator of Coalition for Rational and Safe Use of Medicine (CORSUM) – based in Moldova
Kathleen Holloway, formerly WHO Geneva and SEARO, Essential Medicines Programs
Niyada Kiatying-Angsulee, board member of ISIUM; chair of local Bangkok organising committee; representative of her program – Drug System Monitoring and Development Centre (DMDC)
Eva Ombaka, former coordinator of the Ecumenical Pharmaceutical Network based in Nairobi; former board member of Health Action International (HAI)
Debra Rowett, board member of TG Foundation, Professor of Pharmacy at University of South Australia; former President, Australian Pharmacy Council
Budiono Santoso, board member of ISIUM; former Head of WHO Essential Medicines Program (WPRO); former Head of Clinical Pharmacology and Director of the WHO Collaborating Centre on Research and Training on Rational Drug Use, Centre of Drug Policy Studies, Gadjah Mada University, Yogyakarta, Indonesia
Professor Prasit Watanapa, Dean of Medicine, Siriraj Hospital, Bangkok; Chair of Thai RDU Subcommittee (to be confirmed)

Mary Hemming and Mary Murray have both agreed to act as the conference secretariat – until we need extra help!

Message from Dr Arturo Quizhpe, Chair of the International Conference Organising Committee
Dear friends,

In recent years we have witnessed a deepening of the medicalisation of life, while the gap has increased between those who have access to medical services and those who lack health coverage.

What is Health? What is Medicine? These are some of the questions which require objectivity, transparency and broad dialogue at community level and in the facilities of the official health system.

ISIUM has taken up this challenge with passion and commitment, and now has the chance to hold its first international meeting in the city of Bangkok in Thailand.

This meeting is a special moment – the starting point to take up the new challenges in science and in the empirical experiences of communities that struggle for access to medicines as part of the right to health that belongs to every human being on the planet.

Affectionately and respectfully, we call upon all members of ISIUM to contribute your innate experience, scientific training and humanity to the success of our meeting. We need your knowledge, work and joy to accomplish the agenda.

Arturo Quizhpe Peralta
**Partnerships & collaborations**

This meeting is being organised in collaboration with our local Thai partner, the Drug System Monitoring and Development Centre (DMDC), which is based in the Department of Social Pharmacy at the Pharmacy Faculty, Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok. This centre focuses on consumer protection, medicines policy, the drug monitoring system and regulation policy. It is funded by the Thai National Health Promotion Foundation and Niyada Kiatying-Angsulee – a member of the board of ISIUM – is its director.

With DMDC, we have held discussions with the Thai RDU Subcommittee of the National Drug System Committee and the Thai Food and Drug Administration. Both these bodies have agreed in principle to be core partners with ISIUM to host the conference. The Prince Mahidol Awards Conference (PMAC) will be taking place in Bangkok from 31st January 2020, and we have been liaising with the organisers of PMAC to co-host a side meeting on rational drug use at country level.

The Therapeutic Guidelines (TG) Foundation is another potential partner for the meeting. It will consider this at its next meeting in August.

**Venue, local travel, accommodation**

A local organising committee is being set up by Niyada Kiatying-Angsulee and they are currently investigating and arranging the venue, local travel and accommodation options. Mary Murray and Mary Hemming will be visiting Bangkok at the end of August to have further meetings with local organisers and assist with finalising arrangements.

The meeting will be a very exciting milestone for ISIUM and we are looking forward to bringing renewed vision and energy to the better use of medicines.

**Program & speakers**

The committee is currently developing the program for the meeting and selecting suitable keynote speakers.

**Financial aspects**

In deciding to arrange a meeting, we realised that some external funding would be essential if plans were to proceed. We applied to the TG Foundation and were able to obtain a grant of AU$19,000. These funds will certainly help, but we need to raise a further $15,000. We have reached a bit more than one-third of our target so far … so if you are able to make a donation see below for details.

**Ready ... set ... let’s go ... to Bangkok!**

Please support ISIUM!

ISIUM’s success depends on it remaining completely independent of any funding from vested interests. Your donation could be used to assist more people from developing countries to attend the Bangkok meeting, to exchange ideas and provoke dialogue. Extra funds are also required help us develop our infrastructure and website.

Please consider making a contribution. Any donation – no matter how small – will make a difference.

There are three ways to donate to ISIUM:

1. through a crowd funding website, GoFundMe
2. through the PayPal Giving Fund portal, or
3. by making a direct deposit into ISIUM’s special donations account. The bank account details of this are:
   - **Bank**: Commonwealth Bank of Australia
   - **Account name**: International Society to Improve the Use of Medicines Limited Donations
   - **BSB**: 063-158
   - **Account no.**: 1044 8030

If you make a donation by direct bank transfer, please send details of your donation to Mary Hemming (mary.hemming@isium.org) for a receipt to be sent.

ISIUM is endorsed as a Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) by the Australian Taxation Office. So, for Australian tax payers, all gifts of $2 or more made to the International Society to Improve the Use of Medicines are tax deductible.

Of course, a great way to support ISIUM is to become a member. A membership application form with details of fees is on pp. 6 & 7 of this newsletter. We would welcome you being part of our goals and aspirations.
Cuba has a unique health system which has free, high quality health services as core principles. In spite of some idiosyncrasies in the system, there is much to admire and emulate.

An important initiative of the Cuban National Health System was to establish the Centre for the Development of Pharmacoepidemiology (with a network that allows it to reach all levels of care) as part of the National Program for Medicines. Since it was set up in 1996, there has been a focus on the rational use of medicines … and many milestones have been achieved.

As part of the program a control card system was introduced that identifies Cuban patients with chronic non-communicable diseases. This system, together with the introduction of sentinel prescription monitoring sites, allows the study of trends in the usage of medicines, the evaluation of prescription quality and the impact of various interventions. Also, incidents that are thought to be related to the use of a medicine can prompt a research project.

Another important area of development has been the monitoring of the safety of medicines. Over a period of more than 20 years, research studies were undertaken to enhance both passive and active pharmacovigilance in Cuba. As a result, there has been an increase in the quantity and quality of suspected adverse drug reaction reports in Cuba’s pharmacovigilance system. Between 2010 and 2012, Cuba was ranked in the top 11 to 13 countries worldwide for contributing the highest number of reports to the Uppsala Monitoring Centre, based on the number of reports per million inhabitants and year. In 2012 Cuba was ranked number 11!

There have also been significant advances in drug information. The Cuban pharmacoepidemiology network has produced a suite of resources that provide relevant and reliable high-quality information regarding the use of medicines. These include manuals such as Good Prescription, clinical practice guidelines, drug information bulletins for primary health care, therapeutic guidelines for primary level and the National Formulary of Medicines (first published in 2002). The National Formulary of Medicines is now available in a variety of formats, including versions for the web and multimedia, and an app for cell phones – it was the first app in the area of health.

Cuba has a National Formulary Commission which is comprised of a multidisciplinary team of pharmacology experts and representatives of medical specialties. The Commission is responsible for deciding each year which drugs should be included or removed from the country’s basic or essential medicines list, based on the best scientific evidence, and operating according to an established and rigorous process.

The pharmacoepidemiology network undertakes research in a range of areas relating to improving the use of medicines. Projects have included the monitoring of the safety and use of biotechnological medicines in phase IV studies and innovations of the Cuban pharmaceutical industry. Pharmacoepidemiological studies of the use of antimicrobial and psychotropic drugs are other examples of research undertaken.

The pharmacoepidemiology network has also done some work with the general public. A television show – La dosis exacta (The exact dose) – has been developed that focuses on the risk of self-medication and the promotion of the rational use of drugs from a patient’s perspective. The show is successful and gets very high viewing ratings.

Last but not least, regulations have been developed which allow the establishment of a system to control the use of antimicrobial agents and narcotic drugs. The Ministry of Health in Cuba is continuing to support this broad strategy to improve the use of medicines.
Out-of-Stock Medicines
An all too common problem in too many places
From Professor Rob Moulds

The reliability of the supply of essential medicines is one of the bedrocks of ensuring the quality use of medicines. Yet the problem of essential medicines at times being ‘out of stock’ seems to be a problem all health systems have never been able to totally eliminate.

Undoubtedly much time and effort has been expended over the years in trying to eliminate the problem – and it would almost certainly be much worse were it not for those efforts. Yet it persists.

Perhaps there might be an irreducible minimum of out-of-stock events, and our efforts should be directed towards keeping them to that minimum rather than aiming to make sure they never happen. This would put out-of-stock events in the same category as some other events in healthcare, for example postoperative complications or adverse drug reactions, for which we accept such events are so intrinsic to the interventions being undertaken that they can never be totally eliminated.

Yet a ‘risk management’ approach to the elimination of out-of-stock events seems defeatist when compared to those other healthcare problems where harm minimisation, rather than total elimination, is the only realistic aim. In the broader community we also certainly don’t take that attitude to problems such as airline accidents or terrorist attacks where total elimination is the only politically acceptable response.

Intractable problems usually have multifactorial causes – and so multifactorial solutions are usually required. They also tend to be like a balloon – no sooner is one weak bulge pushed in and strengthened than the balloon bulges out somewhere else. However, another approach is to take a step back and perhaps see if we might not be able to adjust the paradigm, or framework, within which we are thinking.

Up until now, we have thought of the problem as largely a systems problem, so requiring systems solutions. Another paradigm might be to consider the problem in the same manner as we would a disease – and consider it in terms of causes, differential diagnosis, clinical manifestations, investigations, and management.

To this end, a paper will be put up in the ISIUM ‘discussion paper’ section, which facetiously considers the out-of-stock problem as a clinical syndrome. Some ISIUM members will probably think this is not a useful contribution. However at least it might stimulate further interest in how we might try to solve this intractable problem.

Rob Moulds undertook his medical education at the University of Melbourne. From 1975, he spent much of his professional life at The Royal Melbourne Hospital as a specialist physician and clinical pharmacologist. Whilst there, he played a major role in medical education. Rob was also actively involved with Therapeutic Guidelines Ltd ever since it began. He was the first Chairman of the Board of Directors and he chaired many of the expert groups who write the guidelines.

In 2002 Rob took up a position in Fiji as the Professor of Medicine at the Fiji School of Medicine; for a time, he also acted as the Dean of the Fiji School of Medicine.

Since retiring from that position in 2009 Rob has worked as a medical advisor at Therapeutic Guidelines Ltd in Melbourne. However, he has maintained his interest in the Pacific region, and has made many visits to Pacific countries to assist them in a range of medical and therapeutic challenges, including the development of their own guidelines.
Application for Membership

I wish to apply to become a member of the International Society to Improve the Use of Medicines (ISIUM)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family name</th>
<th>Given names</th>
<th>Preferred name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of organisation you are affiliated with (if any)</th>
<th>Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Street number and street name (personal or organisation)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suburb/city</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Postcode</th>
<th>Country</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Email address</th>
<th>Skype ID</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Telephone number (work hours)</th>
<th>Telephone number (after hours)</th>
<th>Preferred telephone number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Biographical information

Please provide a brief summary of your particular interests, skills and experience in improving the use of medicines. ISIUM will use this information to establish a database of members. Examples of interests could include: medicines policy, strategies to improve use (e.g. independent information about drugs/therapeutics, academic detailing, behavioural change, consumer/community activities), factors influencing prescribing, definitions of disease, critical appraisal of the promotional activities, and liaison with the media to encourage responsible reporting about drugs and therapies.

_________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

Applicant declaration

I agree that the biographical information I have provided can be made available to other members of ISIUM.

Signature __________________________________________________

Date ______________________________________________________

Payment

See next page for information about membership fees and payment options.
Fees

The annual membership fee is:

– persons living in developed countries: US$100.00
– persons living in middle-income countries: US$50.00
– persons living in low-income countries: US$25.00
– students: US$25.00

Please tick the relevant box.

In addition, each member is required to pay a single one-off payment of US$8.00 for the company guarantee.*

The term of membership is 12 months from the date you pay your membership fee.

* ISIUM is set up in Australia as a not-for-profit company ‘limited by guarantee’. ‘Limited by guarantee’ refers to the maximum liability of each member if the company is wound up while the member is a member, or within 12 months after they stop being a member. Each member’s guarantee is limited to eight dollars (US$8.00) and this is required to be paid in advance. This one-off payment will be refunded to you if you cease to become a member.

Payment options

You can pay your membership fee (plus the company guarantee if you are just joining) by either:

PayPal*  
Direct bank transfer

Please tick the relevant box.

* Fees charged by PayPal for international transactions are considerably lower than those charged by banks, so the preferred option for payment, especially for people living outside Australia, is via PayPal.

If you are not able to pay via PayPal you can transfer money directly into ISIUM’s bank account. To do this you will need the following information:

Bank Name: Commonwealth Bank of Australia
Bank Address: 51-53 Errol Street, North Melbourne, Victoria, 3051, Australia
Account Name: International Society to Improve the Use of Medicines Limited
BSB: 063 158
Account Number: 1042 9470
SWIFT/BIC Code: CTBAAU2S
IBAN*: 06315810429470 (see note below)

* IBANs are not used in Australia. However, payers in certain countries may require one.

If you make a direct transfer into the bank account can you please advise by email to info@isium.org.

Complete and scan both pages of this form and email to: info@isium.org.

Once your application for membership is received, an invoice for payment will be sent to you from ISIUM’s PayPal account.