

# NEWS

# ISN

ISN NEWS 54 August 2015

## Better research, better global kidney care



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Advancing Nephrology Around the World



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# EDITORIAL

## Reaching out to researchers globally

In this edition of ISN News, we focus on the importance of supporting tomorrow's research by recognizing the great work of the ISN Clinical Research Program. Chair of the Program Marcello Tonelli states that: "Improving research should lead to better patient care."

This is especially the case in developing countries where funding and academic opportunities differ from those in the developed world. Investing resources, energy and time into this growing need has now become a priority for this ISN Program.

Raising awareness about prevention was the aim of this program when it began. Now, we find out how more and more ISN-funded research projects are focused on specific regional needs such as acute kidney injury - closing the gaps in kidney care globally and supporting future leaders.

Of course, much of the success of the ISN Clinical Research Program is due to program participants who share their knowledge. And in this issue, you can read more about those who give their time to the Educational Ambassador Program, Continuing Medical Education courses, the Renal Disaster Relief Task Force and the Saving Young Lives initiative.

In our interview with Portuguese nephrologist Catarina Carvalho, we find out the true value of volunteering and how training colleagues in East Timor is beneficial on a professional and personal level.

We hope you enjoy this issue of ISN News.

### The ISN Team

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# News in brief

## On standby for kidney patients in the aftermath of Nepal earthquake

The ISN Renal Disaster Relief Task Force (RDRTF) was on alert to support doctors in Nepal after the earthquake hit the region in May.

Even though the task force decided not to send a team onsite, ISN RDRTF Chair Wim Van Biesen sent out several reports on the evolution of functional dialysis services locally. Thanks to the Nepalese Society of Nephrology patients were dispersed more equally.

The Tribhuvan University Teaching hospital treated 1,100 disaster victims. The dialysis unit also treated chronic patients from other centers.

Vivekanand Jha and John Oommen are in the process of developing a web application based on the short version of the crush guidelines. This application will be available online soon free of charge, and can be used on different platforms. This initiative should make the crush recommendations even more accessible, and allow rescue and healthcare workers onsite to refer to these guidelines at any time and place.



To find out more about the efforts of the Renal Disaster Relief Task Force, visit: [www.theisn.org/rdrtf](http://www.theisn.org/rdrtf)

## Membership

### ISN Membership - make a difference

ISN connects science and humanitarian efforts. Through education, ISN is reaching out to global medical communities, giving them the knowledge and support to reduce the impact of kidney disease worldwide. Membership to ISN supports these activities and provides member specific benefits including exclusive eligibility for ISN capacity building programs, online and print subscription to *Kidney International* and *Nature Reviews Nephrology*, online training and education, and reduced registration fees to ISN events.

**Membership is now free for trainees.**

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# Independent investigators

**Mentoring researchers in developing countries, the ISN Clinical Research Program now also funds projects in specific areas of intervention - closing the gaps in kidney care.**

Improving research should lead to better patient care. Particularly, in lower and middle income nations where mentorship, infrastructure and funds for research differ. One of five pillars within the ISN Programs, the Clinical Research Program strives to make today's research more sustainable and build independent investigators who become leaders in their regions.

Building capacity is a continuing priority with the ISN Clinical Research Program taking example from the ISN Sister Renal Centers Program trio initiative. The goal is for leaders from successful projects to become mentors and help develop more research by partnering with a less advanced institution within their own region.



For more information, visit: [www.theisn.org/cr](http://www.theisn.org/cr)



Program Chair Marcello Tonelli explains: "Under the leadership of Giuseppe Remuzzi, the focus was on raising awareness in low-income settings by communicating that kidney disease is common and treatable."

Thanks to success stories in Mongolia, Nepal and China, lots of data now exists.

Many clinical research projects have contributed to the Oby25 initiative, which states that nobody should die of preventable and treatable acute kidney injury by 2025. Funding also continues to be awarded to projects focusing on AKI.

Tonelli says: "We now want to look at the effect of the burden of kidney disease, point to the need for intervention and close gaps in care regionally."



## Understanding the CKD and obesity link in China

Some 15,000 community residents aged between 18 and 75 years old participated in an epidemiological study across Southern China. Based on the grant, the project got further political and financial support from China (3 million RMB Yuan) and led to a grant from the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme.

Prof. Hequn Zou who led the project says: "Due to the great social and economic contribution of the project to public health, a Provincial Key Laboratory of Metabolic Diseases was founded in Southern Medical University Affiliated 181 Hospital."

Aside from showing educational and scientific success, this was the first time the association between body adiposity index (BAI) and chronic kidney disease (CKD) was explored. It is also the first report on normal-weight individuals with metabolic disturbances associated with obesity in the Asian population. According to the findings, waist-to-height ratio is not a suitable predictor of CKD. BAI is an alternative predictor of CKD for women but not for men.

Waist circumference (WC) is significantly associated with insulin resistance and metabolic syndrome independent of BMI. BMI is independently associated with incident metabolic syndrome in women. The current findings support using both BMI and WC in clinical practice.



## Balkan endemic nephropathy

Members of the Society of Nephrology, Dialysis and Transplantation in Bosnia and Herzegovina organized screenings in Bosanska Posavina, as a part of the "Program of detection of chronic kidney diseases in high-risk population in Bosnia and Herzegovina."

They looked into Balkan endemic nephropathy (BEN), a chronic tubulointerstitial nephropathy diagnosed in a few agrarian regions of the Balkans. Even though there is much discussion about etiology, the prevailing opinion is that BEN is caused by chronic poisoning from aristolochic acid ingested in food by people with a genetic predisposition to this disease.

According to the Renal Register of Bosnia and Herzegovina, there are around 15% of BEN patients receiving chronic dialysis, but no official data on the number of pre-dialysis BEN patients, because of a lack of adequate demographic data and screening or systematic examinations of the population living in the affected region since 1991.

This research shows that continued vigilance is needed to reduce the impact of BEN and improve the health of those who are affected or at risk.



# Saving Young Lives supports peritoneal dialysis in Uganda

A training course on peritoneal dialysis (PD) at the Noura Children's center, Soba University Hospital in Khartoum, Sudan is helping doctors in Uganda set up their own PD program.



**S**aving Young Lives (SYL) is leading the initiative in its mission to develop sustainable programs for treating acute kidney injury (AKI) in sub-Saharan Africa and South East Asia.

Pediatric nephrologist Judith Aujo explains that through her meeting with Prof. Hassan Abu Aisha, one of the pioneers of the Sudanese PD program, she received valuable advice on making this program work and how he encouraged the Ugandan and Sudan teams to maintain collaboration, and even consider joint research projects.

Explaining the importance of this course, she believes: "As a pediatrician with an interest in pediatric nephrology, this training was an eye opener on how much one needs to study in this field."

Peter Ntege adds: "Uganda's health system is deficient of doctors, especially specialists. SYL will pull more doctors into nephrology, not only improving the doctor's skills and the health system, which currently counts five adult nephrologists and no pediatric nephrologists."

This course set out to cover the basic PD principles, cases with AKI and catheter insertion. Judith Aujo, Peter Ntege, Margaret Idumira and Milly Nakazzi from the Kisenyi Health Center and Mulago National Referral and Teaching Hospital in Uganda spent two months at the Sudanese center to learn more from the local experts about their experiences of setting up a PD program.

Saving Young Lives brings together the expertise of ISN, International Pediatric Nephrology Association (IPNA), the International Society for Peritoneal Dialysis (ISPD) and the Sustainable Kidney Care Foundation (SKCF).



Find out more about the Saving Young Lives (SYL) initiative: [www.theisn.org/syl](http://www.theisn.org/syl)

# CME update

## Courses recently took place in India and Benin providing valuable training in vascular access, transplantation and nephrotic syndrome.

ISN Continuing Medical Education (CME) courses are a constant and effective form of training for medical communities in the developing world. These latest meetings revealed how ISN Sister Renal Center partnerships and Educational Ambassador visits have helped set up CMEs in crucial areas of need.


March's CME organized in Gurgaon India helped to build vascular access and transplant services in new nephrology units in India.

The first day covered interactive ward rounds at the Medicity Hospital, with several cases presented by nephrology fellows. This was followed by a seminar on kidney transplantation and vascular access in incident and prevalent dialysis populations and a visit to the local dialysis unit.

Later in the month, a course on nephrotic syndrome was held in Cotonou and Parakou in Benin. It was organized thanks to a longstanding partnership between the Hospital Saint-Jean de Dieu and ISN Educational Ambassador Giovanni Battista Fogazzi.

Fogazzi says: "We had an unexpectedly high number of participants, most of whom were general doctors, and pediatricians. Quite importantly, we also had a good number of residents and medical students."



 Find out more about the ISN Continuing Medical Education Program: [www.theisn.org/cme](http://www.theisn.org/cme)

# World Kidney Day 2015: Kidney health for all

**Celebrating a great anniversary campaign worldwide.**

This year's World Kidney Day (WKD) campaign successfully raised awareness about the importance of kidney health in reducing the impact of kidney disease and its associated problems worldwide. 560 events were organized in 90 countries, including Algeria, New Caledonia, Chad and Ivory Coast. The most active nations were the UK, India, Brazil, Spain, Indonesia, Argentina, and Mexico.

"March 12, 2015 marked our 10th anniversary. It was particularly special because the theme "Kidney Health for All" highlighted the effects of poverty on Chronic Kidney Disease," says WKD Steering Committee representative Guillermo Garcia Garcia.

"The enthusiasm worldwide generated by WKD reflected the increased awareness of kidney disease," adds Philip Li from the WKD Steering Committee. The campaign also revealed great social media activity with 29,600 fans on Facebook, 5,223 followers on Twitter and 63,009 views on YouTube.

50 million people talked about World Kidney Day on and around March 12, 2015. There was amazing online exposure with 33,000 mentions of World Kidney Day in 9 languages across the web over March. Many participants drank a glass of water to raise awareness about the importance of kidney health, reaching 2 million people and sharing more than 4,000 pictures on social media.

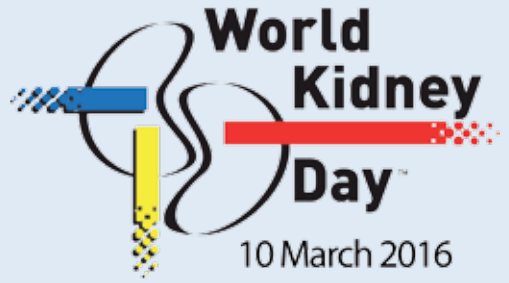
Some of the highlights of this campaign included:

- The Empire State Building was lit up in orange to mark the occasion.
- Screenings for kidney disease took place on board of the TGV from Paris to Marseille on March 12, 2015, an event under the patronage of the French President François Hollande.
- The Christ the Redeemer statue in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil was lit up for the day.
- A Parliamentary breakfast and a roundtable discussion took place at Parliament House in Canberra, Australia.
- The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) Department of Non-communicable Diseases and Mental Health, in collaboration with the Latin American Society of Nephrology and Hypertension, organized a webinar.

For more about World Kidney Day:  
[www.worldkidneyday.org](http://www.worldkidneyday.org)







Get the latest updates at  
[www.worldkidneyday.org](http://www.worldkidneyday.org)



## A BIG thank you

The American Society of Nephrology (ASN), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Non-communicable disease (NCD) Alliance, the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), European Renal Association – European Dialysis and Transplant Association (ERA-EDTA) and Kidney Disease Improving Global Outcomes (KDIGO) played a valuable role in endorsing this campaign. Many thanks to WKD sponsors Danone, Sanofi, AstraZeneca, Abbvie, WKD supporters Alexion, Amgen and WKD benefactors Baxter, Fresenius Medical Care.

# Finding purpose outside the day job

Becoming a volunteer reveals how a little help can go a long way when it comes to medical communities in need.



**“I really struggled to open the night shift in the dialysis center to set up a transport system helping nurses come and go safely from their homes to work outside of daytime hours.”**

Catarina Carvalho

**P**ortuguese nephrologist Catarina Carvalho discovered how her medical expertise and training would be tested when she volunteered to support doctors and nurses at the National Hospital in Dili, East Timor.

On the value of volunteering, Carvalho says: “Training is the most important thing you can provide.” Will it change how she practices nephrology in her home country? The experience took her out of her comfort zone, pushing her to reinvent herself. She has become more clinically objective than before in her examinations.

A health crisis hit the country 13 years ago after it obtained independence from Indonesia. In 1999, there were only 70 general practitioners and a surgeon.

Currently, specialized healthcare still mainly depends on the help of Cuban doctors. Outside the National Hospital where the country’s only hemodialysis center is located, health units are severely deprived. There is only one nephrologist in the country - and he is Cuban.

Arriving at the National Hospital, Dr. Carvalho was struck by the harsh difference in conditions. There were no kidney biopsies being carried out or urinary strips being used for testing of urine samples. About eight dialysis machines were available but the center was only open in the day. With no night shifts in the dialysis center, meaning fewer patients being treated.

She explains: “I really struggled to open the night shift in the dialysis center to set up a transport system helping nurses come and go safely from their homes to work outside of daytime hours.”

Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) is a big issue as it is largely under-diagnosed or patients reach the hospital in terminal stages, with unimaginable serum value levels of creatinine (>1000mmol/L). The main causes are uncontrolled hypertension, urinary tract lithiasis and infection.

Knowing the importance of kidney disease prevention, she built a screening program at the National Hospital and other health units, even encouraging the doctors to get tested. She also travelled away from Dili to organize screening camps in rural areas. Listening to the doctor’s enthusiasm about the importance of screening was probably the most rewarding aspect of her visit since early testing really helps to save lives.

**ISN nexus**

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**ISN NEXUS SYMPOSIUM 2016**  
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**IN KIDNEY DISEASE**

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Advancing Nephrology Around the World



# ISN Educational Ambassador in Asia

## Hands-on interventional nephrology workshop benefits kidney care for patients in Vietnam.

ISN Educational Ambassador Jan Swinnen from Westmead Hospital, Sydney, Australia shared his expertise with doctors and nurses at Cho Ray Hospital (CRH) in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. This was a valuable onsite training that is set to change how local doctors and nurses will carry out their interventional procedures.

Dr Swinnen explains: "I do believe that the local medical professionals can achieve 80% of what we achieve in Australia in terms of hemodialysis outcomes at a small fraction of the cost, by adapting hemodialysis access systems to the local setting."

He also wanted to transmit the importance of dialysis access for nurses, saying they should be "a central component of the course when managing patients, especially in the role of fistula surveillance."

Cho Ray Hospital acts as a referral center in southern Vietnam. Swinnen believes it should be promoted and services extended.

Tran Huon from Ho Chi Minh City University of Medicine and Pharmacy, Vietnam adds to this statement: "I would recommend other institutions get involved in this program."

This workshop helped improve Vietnamese physicians' understanding of AVF theory and practice. For the majority of this community, overseas training is limited due to the language barrier and financial restrictions.

He adds: "The opportunity to have the whole week with Dr Swinnen was the most rewarding experience of this visit."

The Educational Ambassadors Program helps emerging centers gain access to a teacher or an expert to join them onsite for specific hands-on training or to initiate and develop community based research and screening programs.

**Deadlines for applications to the Educational Ambassadors Program are May 1<sup>st</sup> and October 1<sup>st</sup> every year.**



For further information, visit: [www.theisn.org/eap](http://www.theisn.org/eap)



**"I do believe that the local medical professionals can achieve 80% of what we achieve in Australia in terms of hemodialysis outcomes at a small fraction of the cost, by adapting hemodialysis access systems to the local setting."**

Jan Swinnen

# Congratulations to our 'unsung heroes'

The ISN Pioneer Awards 2015 recognized individuals making outstanding and sustained contributions to establish and develop nephrology in their region.



## Africa

**Dr. Rashad S. Barsoum**

was awarded for his dedication to patients, education and research leading to modern nephrology in Africa.



## North and East Asia

**Dr. Shanyan Lin**

His dedication to patients, education and research led to the development of modern nephrology in North & East Asia Region.



## Central and Eastern Europe

**Professor Vytautas Kuzminskis'**

involvement in the ISN Sister Renal Centers Program led to establishing modern nephrology in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia.



## OSEA region

**Dr. Zaki Morad**

is a visionary who laid the foundation for delivery of quality nephrology care and for expansion of dialysis and nephrology services in Malaysia.



## Latin America

**Dr. José Carlos Peña**

received this award for his instrumental role in developing nephrology in Mexico.



## Russia and CIS region

**Maya Ignatova**

is a real pioneer whose dedication and innovative approaches were crucial to the progress of pediatric nephrology in Russia.



## Middle East

**Dr. Behrooz Broumand**

was rewarded for his dedication to patients, education and research leading to the further development of nephrology in Iran.



## South Asia

**Professor S. Adibul Hasan Rizvi**

contributed equally to establishing nephrology and urology services in his region and is the founder of ethical transplantation.



Find out more about these awards:  
[www.theisn.org/about-isn/awards-a-prizes/pioneer-awards](http://www.theisn.org/about-isn/awards-a-prizes/pioneer-awards)

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# ISN

## upcoming events

ISN events connect global medical communities, giving them the knowledge and support to reduce the impact of kidney disease worldwide.

### ISN Regional Workshop in Russia this September

The next ISN Regional Workshop will be held in conjunction with Renal Week and the Russian Dialysis Society Congress. An opportunity not to be missed as ISN Regional Workshops are now the go-to meeting to meet participants and leaders involved in the ISN Programs.

The session will take place on September 16, 2015 from 5 to 7pm in St-Petersburg, Russia at the Conference-Hotel Azimut. Talks will focus on general information about the ISN Programs as well as an update on the latest program activities across the region.

ISN Programs Chair John Feehally and ISN Continuing Medical Education Program Chair Fredric Finkelstein will join discussions alongside representatives from the New Independent States (NIS) and Russia Board including co-chairs Elena Zakharova and Irma Tchokhonelidze.

This event is open to the public and is a unique chance to meet directly with the ISN leaders and discuss local and regional needs for ISN Programs to strengthen the connections between ISN and the region. Whether you are a member of ISN or not, come and join the discussions and find out everything there is to know about ISN Programs.



**ISN Forefronts Symposium 2015**  
**Immunomodulation of Cardio-Renal Function**  
October 22-25, 2015, Shenzhen, China  
[www.isnforefronts.org/shenzhen](http://www.isnforefronts.org/shenzhen)



**ISN Nexus 2016**  
**Translational immunology in kidney disease and new therapies for renal immunopathology**  
April 14-17, 2016, Berlin, Germany  
[www.isnnexus.org/berlin](http://www.isnnexus.org/berlin)



**ISN Forefronts Symposium 2016**  
**The Metabolome and Microbiome in Kidney Disease**  
September 23-25, 2016, San Diego, California  
**Website coming soon**



**ISN Forefronts Symposium 2016**  
**Regulatory RNA's and the Kidney**  
December 9-11, 2016, Vienna, Austria  
**Website coming soon**



**WCN 2017**  
**Sustainability and Diversity**  
April 21-25, 2017, Mexico City, Mexico  
[www.wcn2017.org](http://www.wcn2017.org)



For the full list of ISN events visit [www.theisn.org/events](http://www.theisn.org/events)

# ISN FOREFRONTS SYMPOSIUM 2015

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[www.isnforefronts.org/shenzhen](http://www.isnforefronts.org/shenzhen)