



ISN COMGAN Quarterly Update
January – March 2005

April 6, 2005

To: Jan J. Weening, President ISN
cc: ISN Executive
ISN Council
COMGAN members

I want to report on ISN COMGAN's activities in the first quarter of 2004. During the past three months, we have supported 12 CME meetings, and three site visits. This year ISN has extended its activities in African nephrology in particular, as this report will indicate. A second visit to East Africa by ISN COMGAN showed a tremendous growth in interest and attendance at the meetings. It indicates the value of consistent, reliable and ongoing involvement by ISN. Rwanda was a new site this year, and was an invaluable experience. The importance of ISN Fellowships, CME's and counsel is verified by the enthusiasm for our activities in African countries. As a result, Drs Naicker and Dirks are discussing plans for future site visits to Angola, Malawi, Zambia, Mozambique, Botswana, Namibia, Madagascar and Mozambique.

I. CME Meetings

1. The first ISN COMGAN visit of the year was to Myanmar, January Jan 05 -16. The meeting was organized by Professor Paing Soe, Director of the Department and also Head of Nephrology, Yangon General Hospital and the ISN participants included Peter Kerr (Melbourne), Randall Faull (Adelaide), Tony Clarkson (Adelaide) and Visith Sitprija (Bangkok). About 200 doctors attended.

There were two aspects to the trip – spending time with the nephrologists over the course of the week and a full day Nephrology seminar in Yangon on January 14, followed the next day by a half day discussion of clinical problems. The seminar had sessions on: difficult nephrotic syndrome (Clarkson); Hep B and C in the transplant recipient (Faull); update on vasculitis (Faull); managing erythropoietin resistance (Kerr); implications of late referral for dialysis (Kerr), and renal issues in malaria (Sitprija). Each talk was followed by up to 30 minutes of vigorous discussion. There was a high standard of medical knowledge, and physicians' difficulties lie mostly with the lack of facilities.

The local nephrologists expressed appreciation for the lectures and especially the clinical discussion. The seminar received good local coverage. The local nephrologists are very keen to have these visits continue as they have great difficulties attending international meetings due to restrictions on travel and the low level of their income. The subject matter of this symposium, when compared with that of previous meetings in

Myanmar, reflects significant growth. This was particularly noticeable in the intricate details of management of transplant and dialysis patients where increasing experience of local physicians was apparent. It is hoped that private funding for further visits might be obtained to maintain the now well-established Sister Centre relationship between Adelaide and Yangon. Another step forward is that the first ever physician from Myanmar has applied for an ISN Fellowship

2. The 5th Postgraduate Training Course of the ERA/EDTA was held in Prague, Czechoslovakia on January 22-26. The meeting was, as always, very well organized by Vladmir Teplan, and ISN COMGAN speakers were Norbert Lamiere and Eberhard Ritz.

3. The Fourth Think Kidney Symposium was held in Muscat, Oman on February 1 –2. Unfortunately the scheduled ISN COMGAN speaker was unable to attend, but the meeting was very successfully organized by Dr Marhoud Marhouby, and a number of topics were covered. These included: ESRD in Oman: problems and solutions; the preventive role of ACE and ARB in diabetic and in non-diabetic renal disease; cardiovascular problems in CRF; Hypertension: Is the blood vessel the cause or the victim?; nutritional adequacy in dialysis patients; the MIA syndrome and its management; Immune Tolerance; and Xenotransplantation: The promise and the risks.

4. The 24th Annual Congress of the Egyptian Society of Nephrology was held in Alexandria on Feb 15-18. Superbly organized by Dr Saleh Naga, there were 950 physicians and nurses in attendance. It featured wide ranging talks and a KI Forum by John Harrington with Meguid El Nahas as discussant. Other ISN participants included Professors F. Locatelli, W. Vanholder, J. Freehally and R. Barsoum.

The meeting concluded with a list of recommendations including better training for young nephrologists, increasing transplant centers and concentrating on studies in prevention and early detection of kidney disease.

5. The 25th Annual Conference of the Indian Society of Nephrology Southern Chapter was held February 18-20, 2005 in Chennai, India and was attended by 250 Southern Indian nephrologists. It was opened by Prof M.S. Amaresan, Dr M. Jarakumar, Georgi Abraham, and the Organizing Committee. ISN sponsored speakers included Dr M Sutheranin of New York (transplantation), Dr Daniel Cattran of Toronto (IgA and GN nephrology) and Vishnu Moorthy of Wisconsin (early detection of CKD in India). Jan Weening spoke on focal and segmental glomerulosclerosis and John Dirks on Calcium and Phosphate in CKD. Thirty-nine national faculty from all corners of the country made this exciting meeting a truly national congress.

Immediately after the meeting, Professor MK Mani, with Professor Manjula Datta took the ISN group to the villages where a prevention project is being carried out with the help of nursing assistants and the villages' doctors. It was an exhilarating day. The group visited the clinic and participated in a town hall meeting with over 150 villagers. They discussed their follow-up for CKD, cardiovascular disease and diabetes. This is a very successful project in which low cost anti-hypertensives have been made available. A press conference was held later in Chennai and was widely covered by both local and national papers.

6. The First National Congress on prevention of chronic kidney disease in India was held on February 26- 27 at India Habitat Center in New Delhi and was attended by 387 delegates. The successful congress was organized by the department of Nephrology, All

India Institute of Medical sciences with Dr. SK Agarwal as organizing secretary and Dr S.C. Dash as chairman of the congress. It was sponsored by ISN, the Indian Society of Nephrology and national government bodies such as the Indian Council of Medical Research, New Delhi and Planning Commission, and the Government of India. ISN sponsored speakers included Dr M Sutheranin of New York on transplantation and Dr Daniel Cattran of Toronto on IgA Nephrology. Jan Weening and John Dirks also spoke on the global efforts of ISN and COMGAN.

The scientific topics included in the congress were directly related to the issues of prevention of chronic kidney disease (CKD), such as hypertension and diabetes, renal stone disease, magnitude of CKD in India and the issues related to the possible prevention strategies of CKD from the Indian point of view.

A meeting of the Steering Committee (chaired by Arjay Singh) was held to discuss the Screening and Early Evaluation of Kidney Disease (SEEK) project which is just getting underway. It will be carried out under the aegis of ISN and Brigham and Women's Hospital/Harvard Medical School.

7. An ISN Update was held in Beirut, Lebanon on March 18-20 by the Lebanese Society of Nephrology. Successfully organized by Kamal Badr, there were about 200 in attendance to hear excellent talks on a variety of topics: end stage renal disease (prevention, renal replacement modalities), molecular biology for the practicing nephrologist, transplantation immunology, non-invasive evaluation of vascular function in the hypertensive patient, angiotensin receptor blockade, and glomerulonephritis. ISN was well represented by ISN President Jan Weening and Barry Brenner.

II Africa

The first quarter of 2005 has seen ISN COMGAN focus on Africa more than ever before, thanks in large part to the superb leadership provided by Dr Sarala Naicker of Johannesburg, Chair of the Africa Subcommittee. Seven CME's and three site visits have been held in Africa this year.

1. On February 15-18 a very successful four-day meeting of the Nigerian Association of Nephrology was held in Port Harcourt, Nigeria, one of. It was an excellent and well-organized meeting, due to the efforts of Dr Ebum Bamgboye. The first day featured parallel sessions for physicians and nurses, as well joint sessions attended by 90 delegates from all parts of Nigeria. The ISN COMGAN speakers were Drs Dwomoa Adu and Sarala Naicker

On day two a Renal Care summit had 125 registrants, and centers on developing a renal care policy for Nigeria. It included an address by the Health Ministry, expressing support for renal care in Nigeria especially in area of prevention, training, and upgrading of treatment facilities. NAN President Dr Ademola Aderibigbe, spoke on problems of CKD limited by inadequate manpower, lack of government policies and support; lack of Renal Registry; and poor funding. The policy document arising from this summit will be formally presented to the Nigerian government later this year.

Days three and four were devoted to the main conference the theme, Environment and Kidney Disease. ISN COMGAN speaker Marc de Broe gave the annual guest lecture and Dr Bamgboye gave an excellent talk on challenges of kidney transplantation in Nigeria.

Nigeria is in a position to become a regional centre for nephrology training. There is the critical mass of trainers available and government plans to upgrade facilities. There is an enthusiasm and drive to improve renal services in Nigeria, as well as great appreciation for ISN COMGAN'S support to date.

2. On March 4-6 Sarala Naicker, Ram Gokal, John Dirks and Peter Mathieson attended the first of four CME meetings in East Africa. The Kenyan Renal Association symposium, "Improving Outcomes in Renal Disease" and held in Nairobi was ably organized by Ahmed Twahir and attracted at least 150 registrants from Kenya, Uganda, Sudan, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Mauritius, Seychelles and Ghana. Attendees included nurses, laboratory technician's, post-graduate doctors, registrars in internal medicine, physicians and specialists in various fields.

The first day had sessions on radiology and laboratory aspects of renal medicine. The second day featured presentations on CKD, acute renal failure and peritoneal dialysis mainly from international speakers. The last day featured haemodialysis, nutrition and transplantation. On Sunday John Dirks chaired a meeting on issues affecting Sub-Saharan Africa. Overall the conference was very successful and the support from pharmaceuticals companies was much appreciated, especially from Roche who covered travel for many of the doctors from surrounding countries.

3. On March 7-8, ISN made its first visit to Rwanda, one of the first medical specialty visits ever to that country. It was undertaken by Sarala Naicker, Peter Mathieson, John Dirks and Ram Gokal as part of a four-city East African tour. The visit was well orchestrated by Dr Jules Kabahizi, an ISN Fellow from Kigali, Dr D. Bonventre Nzeyimana of the Ministry of Health and Joseph Ntarindwa.

A briefing meeting took place with the Minister of Health Dr Joseph Ntarindwa, the Director of Health Care, Dr Claude Sekabaraga (ISN's ongoing contact in Rwanda), and Dr Emmunuel Kayibanda, Director of the CHUK University Hospital in Kigali. They outlined their current health care problems and the need for help from medical professionals in medical specialties, including nephrology. A visit was undertaken to the King Faisal Hospital, a private hospital built through an anonymous gift from Saudi Arabia. The ISN group met the Director General and visited renal patients on the wards, where peritoneal dialysis was being carried out on three patients with acute renal failure. A similar visit was made to the major teaching hospital, CHUK. Fifty to sixty people from the MOH and the hospital attended a brief conference on the ISN perspective and global prevalence of CKD (John Dirks), GN (Peter Mathieson), HIV nephrology (Sarala Naicker) and renal replacement therapy (Ram Gokal). A discussion in English followed and was animated by the Director of Health Care.

4. The second ISN COMGAN visit to Dar Es Salaam began on March 10 and consisted of a full day meeting from 9am until 11pm. The Deputy Minister of health, Dr Hussein Mwiyanzi opened the meeting and spoke of the needs in Tanzania with regards to chronic diseases including CKD. Dr Linda Ezekiel, an ISN fellow from Tanzania who is studying with Dr Sarala Naicker, organized an excellent meeting. She is a superb leader in nephrology for her country. Tanzania currently spends a great deal sending patients outside the country for RRT, however, an agreement for training nurses and physicians in RRT is now in place. Prof. Bjorne Iversen of Bergen, Norway, spoke on establishing a transplant program, Ram Gokal on a hemodialysis program, Prof. Peter Mathieson on PD while Linda Ezekiel reviewed the burden of kidney disease in Tanzania. Dr Ali A Mzige,

Director of Preventive Services for the Ministry of Health in Tanzania, spoke of the challenge of non-communicable disease Tanzanians in all walks of life. There is an African NCD Intervention Network (NANDI). John Dirks gave a global perspective on RRT in developing countries and the urgent need for more attention to low-cost dialysis. An afternoon program about dialysis facilities in Tanzania, hospitals and industry viewpoints were presented. Sarala Naicker spoke on the RRT experience in South Africa, and indeed all of Africa.

The two-hour evening CME program was launched by Prof. Matuja and included talks on prevention of CKD (John Dirks), diabetic nephropathy (Ram Gokal), the kidney and infection (Peter Mathieson) and implementing clinical guidelines in Africa (Sarala Naicker). About 70 people were in attendance and there was a lively question period.

There is a request for an annual visit to Dar and perhaps other cities in Tanzania as well. Dr Gokal has agreed to provide special counsel on RRT development.

5. The last stop was Kampala, where the ISN group had been invited by Prof. Harriet Mayanja-Kizzi, head of the Department of Medicine, and by Prof. Edward Kigonya, the Consulting Nephrologist there. The visit was organized and supervised by Dr Emmanuel Ssekasanvu, who has completed his training in internal medicine and has applied for an ISN Fellowship at Stellenbach University, South Africa. A meeting was held with the Director General of the Molago Hospital located on the campus of Makerre University. The group visited the superb HIV centers developed by the Gates Foundation and the Pfizer Corporation, which has fine clinical facilities and includes an excellent laboratory, which sees, treats and counsels every day 250 HIV patients.

Supported by local industry, the CME was held at the Hotel Africana. In 2004, there were 40 attendees, and this year over 200 physicians, nurses and decision makers attended. Dr Kigonya chaired the meeting, which began with three broad presentations by Drs Ssekasanvu and Simon Peter, a nephrology trainee. Drs Dirks, Mathieson, Gokal and Naicker presented topics similar to those given in Dar Es Salaam. There was an enthusiastic response by the listeners. A final four hour meeting took place on March 12 which was attended by Dr. Kigonya and the Director General Clinical Services to discuss future needs for nephrology, namely; training, CME meetings and RRT. A follow-up visit by ISN was requested.

6. The 7th Nephrology Meeting in Sub-Saharan Africa was held in Conakry on March 18-20, under the excellent leadership of Prof B. Diouf, the newest member of the COMGAN Africa subcommittee. ISN speakers included Dr A. Chauveau of France and Dr Diouf. Informative sessions were held on nephrotic syndrome, urinary infections, hypertension, the quality of dialysis and prevention of renal disease.

One of the most far-reaching results of the meeting was the establishment of a West African Society of Nephrology.

III Site Visits

1. Dr Tita Fagozzi made a second visit to Burkina Faso on February 6th to meet with the head of the renal unit of *Hôpital Universitaire Yalgado Ouédraogo*, at Ouagadougou. The meeting had two purposes: 1) to explore supporting Senegalese initiative to establish a nephrological society which encompasses all the countries of West Francophone Africa: 2) To explore the possibility of organising a course on Basic Nephrology at national level and subsequently seeking financial and logistical support from the Ministry of Health.

2. From February 7–20, Dr Fagozzi worked at *Hôpital St. Jean de Dieu* at Tanguiéta, Benin Republic where he continued developing the nephrological program started in 1998. On February 10, with Dr Guy Aouanou, the pediatrician of *St Jean de Dieu*, Dr Fagozzi went to Parakou to visit the new hemodialysis centre, which has recently been created at *Hôpital Départemental*. By the time it is finished, the dialysis centre will have 12 machines.

3. On March 12–17, John Eastwood and Sarala Naicker visited Sudan. Because of the US OFAC regulations, their travel to Sudan was funded personally. The Sudan Society of Kidney Diseases and Transplantation met all expenses in Khartoum and the visit was very well organized by Dr Kaballo. There were 100-120 delegates at the conference, including nephrologists, pediatricians, physicians, renal transplant surgeons, junior doctors, nurses, dieticians and others. Over 50% of the attendees were doctors in training. Generous support for the meeting was provided by pharmaceutical companies.

There were presentations by local nephrologists on a range of topics, including acute renal failure, toxic nephropathy, the glomerulonephritides as well as hemodialysis, CAPD and transplantation. There were also specifically pediatric topics. The visitors each gave two talks and the ensuing discussions were lively and interactive. A number of issues were discussed in a free-flowing discussion at the conclusion of the meeting. In particular, the junior doctors requested increased training opportunities.

Drs Naicker and Eastwood were privileged to visit the hemodialysis unit at the Dr Salma Mohamed Suliman Hospital at a time when there were 10 children being dialysed. The unit was full, which meant that about 150 patients were being maintained. Memorable features of the visit were the warmth of the hospitality, and the unanimous enthusiasm and commitment to improving nephrology services in all parts of Sudan. The Sudan Society of Kidney Diseases and Transplantation expressed its gratitude at the visit after their years of isolation and the participation of ISN-COMGAN in the meeting was greatly appreciated. The next meeting of AFRAN will be held in Khartoum in November 2006.

IV The ISN COMGAN Research Committee

The Research Committee has further implemented its activities on prevention programs for emerging countries at several levels. Thanks to the great contribution of Bob Atkins, the document entitled: "Program for Detection and Management of Chronic Kidney Disease, Hypertension, Diabetes and Cardiovascular Disease in Developing Countries" (KHDC program) has been finalized. These guidelines for prevention programs provide information to potential local organizers, governments and others, and for fund raising. It allows for a flexible yet overall conforming series of prevention programs worldwide.

The Committee, through the work of Bob Atkins, Meguid El Nahas, Dick De Zeeuw, Norberto Perico, Li Peng and Giuseppe Remuzzi submitted in February an application to the Asia-Link program of the European Commission. The commission is designed to foster co-operation in the field of higher education between the European Union and South East Asia and China, and focuses on educational projects on chronic non-communicable diseases (kidney diseases, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases). Partners in this project are: M. El Nahas (Sheffield, U.K.), D. de Zeeuw (Groningen, The Netherlands), G. Remuzzi (Bergamo, Italy), H. Zou (Zhuahi, China), SK. Agarwal (New Delhi, India), SK. Sharma (Dharan, Nepal), MA. Mansur (Dacca, Bangladesh).

The Research Committee continues to be involved in the organization of early detection and intervention programs in low- and middle-income countries. A feasibility

prevention study has been performed on 105 subjects in the Republic of Moldova under the co-ordination of I. Codreanu and A. Tanase (Chisinau, Moldova) and data analyses are ongoing. Raul Herrera Valdes (Cuba) is completing a urine screening program of the 81,000 inhabitants of the Isle of Youth in Cuba. In Indonesia (D. Harris, D. Pugsley, W. Prodjosudjadi) a screening program is ongoing on behalf of the National Society of Nephrology. A community-based screening and intervention program (20,000 people) has been organized in the city of Wanzai (China) by Li Peng and Hequn Zou. Other programs in Armenia (M. De Broe), Nepal (S. Kumar Sharma), Bolivia (N. Perico) and Sogod/Catman - Philippines (D. Pugsley, B. Atkins) are at the planning stage. A pediatric nephrology prevention program has been further implemented in Nicaragua (F. Sereni, A. Edefonti, G. Marra), and particularly at the Hospital La Mascote in Managua. In addition, a pediatric detection and intervention program for chronic kidney disease is at the planning phase in Nigeria (Ada Asinobi) with the outstanding contribution of Anita Aperia. Of interest, the Wanzai project is partially supported by the local Chinese government. Local resources are so far available for the Cuba and Indonesia programs. The pediatric project in Nicaragua is self-sustaining thanks to Italian resources.

The Research Committee has been asked by WHO, Geneva (JoAnne Epping-Jordan) to serve as consultant for an epidemiological protocol on kidney disease in Morocco on the behalf of their Ministry of Health. Marc De Broe, a member of the Committee has been appointed to this mission and recently visited Morocco to meet local health authorities, WHO representatives, nephrologists and epidemiologists. Besides being of vital importance to Morocco, this experience suggests the possibility of fruitful cooperation between ISN and WHO. The Research Committee (G. Remuzzi and Jan Weening) also participated in the ISN COMGAN Health Economics Workshop organized at Muscat (Oman) in March to discuss the need, design, cost-effectiveness and implementation of screening and prevention programs for chronic kidney disease.

V Future Plans

ISN COMGAN is currently planning three strategic planning conferences to take place over the next 12 months.

1. Low Cost Dialysis in the Emerging World. This meeting will consist of a number of formal presentations and a series of workshops on technical issues (machines, reuse, dialysers etc), economic analyses, and the experience of low-income countries, all culminating in recommendations for action to increase the availability and affordability of dialysis.
2. Chronic Kidney Disease in Latin America. The meeting will investigate the burden of kidney disease in all the countries of Latin America and explore strategies relevant to those countries with the purpose of formulating a strategic plan for both prevention and treatment.
3. Bellagio Conference. A second meeting in Bellagio on "Prevention of Vascular Diseases in the Emerging World: A Multidisciplinary Approach to Global Health Equity" will be held pending the successful outcome of ISN COMGAN's application to the Rockefeller Foundation, which will be announced late in May.

VI Model Sister Centers

A new Model Sister Center has been established between Guatamala City (Randall Lou) and Salt Lake City, Utah (Richard Siegler). Randall Lou has been doing exceptional work in Guatamala for children with kidney disease. In 2003 he created a non-profit program - Fundación para el Niño Enfermo Renal-FUNDANIER (Foundation for children with kidney diseases). In order to achieve

his goals of effective treatment to decrease the mortality and morbidity due to end stage renal disease he divided the activities of FUNDANIER in three: education, research and patient care.

Education: The activities have been directed to paediatric residents and general paediatricians. They are taught about the burden of kidney diseases and about early identification and prevention strategies on chronic kidney diseases.

Research: The aim has been to identify at risk population and cost effective strategies for prevention and treatment of chronic kidney diseases. Guatemala has one of the highest incidences of the world of neural tube defects, and these patients are at risk for end stage renal disease (ESRD). Cancer patients are another target group that FUNDANIER has reached. In Guatemala only five out of 100 children with ESRD would receive renal replacement therapy.

Patient Care: FUNDANIER supports the paediatric nephrology ward (five beds) at Roosevelt Hospital, one of the two third level hospitals in Guatemala. It provides medications and also partially supports the material needed for kidney biopsies. It also has an out Patient Clinic.

This remarkable foundation is largely the result of the efforts and dedication of Dr Randall Lou, a truly remarkable doctor.

VI Global Alliance on Transplantation

Following the successful launch of The Global Alliance for Transplantation in Vienna, the principals to prepare the detailed business plan for each of the 3 project areas namely Statistics, Education and Standards and to finalise the Governance and Management Structure. John Dirks was invited to participate in this important process by attending a workshop, which was held in Oxford on Monday March 14th 2005. The final proposal that resulted from the meeting, and the role that ISN will play in this initiative will be finalized over the next few months.