



## **ISN COMGAN REPORT January - March 2004**

April 8, 2004

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

I want to report on ISN COMGAN's activities in the New Year, particularly in February and March.

It has been a busy start to the year. ISN COMGAN has sponsored 41 speakers at 12 international meetings attended by over 3000 physicians. There have also been three site visits. The first quarter culminated with the Bellagio Conference that was sponsored by the Rockefeller Foundation. Twenty-one of the world's leading nephrologists, including nine from developing countries gathered to explore the theme "Prevention of renal disease in the emerging world: Toward global health equity". This meeting was very successful and will be fully reported in an article in the Lancet and a special KI supplement. We have been invited to apply again!

A number of other very successful international meetings have been held this year, including our second CME Course in Myanmar at which Randal Faull and Tony Clarkson gave talks on prevention and renal diseases specific to tropical countries. Nearly 200 people attended the course.

Under the capable administration of Jaffar Naqvi, an "Excellence in Dialysis -Update in Nephrology" meeting attracted 200 participants in Karachi, Pakistan to hear ISN speakers Nathan Levin and Allan Collins. The theme of the conference was "Prevention: The Rational Option".

We also participated in the ERA-EDTA, Czech Society of Nephrology, ISN meeting in Prague led by Vladimir Teplan and Eberhard Ritz; and an



International Conference on Dialysis in San Juan, Puerto Rico organized by Nathan Levin, and attended by 473 health care practitioners.

The Indian Society of Nephrology meeting in Mangalore, India, organized by Chakko Jacob was one stop on a multi-city visit to India and Nepal undertaken by our outstanding ISN ambassadors Robert Schrier and Kirpal Chugh. The total participation was superb – close to 400 physicians in India and 60 in Nepal.

Drs. Tita Fogazzi, John Eastwood, David Pugsley and Jwo Adu all spoke at a successful meeting of the Nigerian Association of Nephrology in Jos, Nigeria, which was ably organized by Dr Egun Bamgboye and attracted 70 participants. We now have an annual involvement in Nigeria.

The 8<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Arab Society of Nephrology and Renal Transplantation and the 23rd Annual Congress of the ESN in collaboration with ISN took place in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, and included 8 ISN sponsored speakers. A KI Forum chaired by John Harrington was held on ‘Schistosoma Associated Nephropathy’ with Secretary General Rashad Barsoum as an excellent discussant. Over 700 attended from 25 Arab countries in North Africa and the Middle East.

Guiseppe Remuzzi and John Dirks participated in a large (250 participants) Continuing Education Program in Pediatric Nephrology & Urology, which was held at the Institute of Child Health and Great Ormand Street Hospital in London, UK. Dr. Dirks participated in Mexico City to speak at a meeting on “Education for the diagnosis and prevention of diabetic nephropathy” which laid out an important project to evaluate and train 600-800 Mexican general practitioners in the education & prevention of diabetic nephropathy. Ricardo Correa-Rotter is leading this study to educate primary care physicians and has enjoined ISN as an active participant.

The highly successful and well-attended (270 physicians) First National Congress in Pediatric Nephrology in Cali, Columbia featured sessions on hypertension and its treatment in children, and nephritic syndrome. The conference was organized by Dr. Jaime Restrepo and included speakers Bernardo Rodriguez-Iturbe and Melvin Bonilla-Felix.



## **Site Visits**

Drs. Sarala Naicker, and John Dirks and Peter Mathieson conducted a site visit to Tanzania (Dar Es Salaam), and were joined by Dr Peter Mathieson for visits to Uganda (Kampala) and Kenya (Nairobi) in early February. This is the first major ISN visit to all three East African countries. The long-term goal is to identify and nurture leaders for the nephrology communities in these countries who can also assist in organizing ISN COMGAN sponsored prevention and education meetings over the next few years. The urgent need for such visits was proved in Kenya, where 15 of the country's 16 nephrologists participated in the meeting. We appreciate the superb organization by Ahmed and Meguid Twahir in Nariobi. Linda Ezekiel organized a truly outstanding visit in Daar Es Salam. The plan is to have regular CME's in all three East African countries.

## **Funding the Future**

ISN has launched a major fund raising initiative this year. In late December COMGAN received \$150,000 from Merck, Sharpe & Dohme to help with its global mission of prevention. This is the first corporation to participate in what is hoped to be a three year \$1,000,000 per year program called 'Partners in Global Prevention of Kidney Disease'. Approaches have recently been made to other corporations (including Fresenius and Roche). The goal is to attract seven partners in order to reach the \$1 million total.

ISN President, Jan Weening, COMGAN Chair John Dirks, Norbert Lamiere and ISN Executive Director Tom Reiser are working together to approach a number of international corporations (Amgen, Pfizer and Abbott) as part of this broad ISN fundraising initiative.

## **Model Sister Center Exchange Program**

There are now six active Model Sister Center relationships. Three continue to work well with excellent linkages between Italy-Bolivia, Toronto-Chennai and Belgium-Lithuania. Cuba-Madrid has re-established its link with visits this spring by two fellows who will spend two months working at the Gregorio Marañón Hospital in Madrid. When they return to Cuba both doctors will become active members in the transplantation team at the Instituto de Nefrologia, which performs between 40-60 renal transplants per



year. Collaboration between the Iasi, Romania and London, UK is just underway with the arrival of the first fellow at Guy's Hospital in London, UK for a four-month visit.

The ISN COMGAN office and ISN Headquarters in Brussels have undertaken a joint review of our whole Renal and Model Sister Center plan and their financing as part of an effort to solidify the existing relationships and create a more positive environment for forging new ones. A similar review is taking place for our Library Enhancement Program.

### **Regional Subcommittees**

The role of the regional subcommittees remains increasingly important as ISN COMGAN's activities expand in scope and number. This year has seen the addition of a number of strong local members on a number of committees. Alain Assounga (Durban) and Fatma Ben Moussa have joined the Africa subcommittee. Dr. Adrian Covic has joined the Eastern Europe, Dr. Matthew Breyer of Vanderbilt has joined East Asia, and Drs Yosuhiko Tomino (Japan) and Giuseppe D'Amico (Italy) have joined the Southeast Asia subcommittee.

In order to more accurately reflect its mandate, the Indonesia-Philippines subcommittee has been renamed as the Indonesia-Philippines-Pacific Islands, and has added two new members, Dr. John Collins of New Zealand and Dr. John Kelly. ISN COMGAN looks forward the contributions that will be made by each of these new members, and expresses deep appreciation to the outgoing members.

### **Associations and Linkages**

ISN continues to work closely with many regional and national societies and to seek occasions to link with other organizations. In February, John Dirks met with Michael Alderman, President of the International Society for Hypertension (ISH) and the ISH Council in order to discuss areas of common interest and future collaboration. As a direct result the ISH will send a representative to the 'ISN Update in Nephrology' meeting in Moscow in May/June, 2004 and are preparing to cooperate with ISN in other initiatives.



Ongoing communication between ISN and IFKF represented by Joel Kopple and Warwick Prime of the International Federation of Kidney Foundations and Jan Weening, Bill Couser and John Dirks of ISN has led to a joint ISN-IFKF proposal for the establishment of a World Kidney Day, which will be submitted to the executive of both societies and then to world bodies for consideration.

While in London, John Dirks met with Prof. Eldryd Parry of The Tropical Health and Education Trust (THET) in London to discuss matters of interest in Africa and opportunities for collaboration.

Late in March, Jan Weening and John Dirks met with the leadership and council of the International Paediatric Nephrology Association (IPNA) in Heidelberg to pursue areas of common interest and joint ventures. As a result, members of IPNA will join ISN Subcommittees, contribute speakers to ISN CME's such as Dubai, and consider other partnership opportunities.

We all appreciated the outstanding support by Beatrice Spiteri as COMGAN Manager. She has been ably succeeded by Sheila Robinson and I am also grateful for the help of Diana Tucker in Toronto and An Devriese in Brussels.

I am pleased to submit this report on ISN COMGAN activities from January to March 2004. I would like to take this opportunity to express my deep appreciation for the efforts of so many COMGAN members all over the world who have demonstrated their commitment to our ISN COMGAN activities and goals and to Jan Weening, our President, for his continuing support.

With best regards,

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