

Report of isirv Antiviral Group 2013-2014

The objectives of the isirv Antiviral Group (isirv-AVG) are to promote understanding of the clinical use of antivirals against respiratory viruses, collate and provide up-to-date information on the emergence of antiviral resistance, and communicate expert commentary on preclinical and clinical development of potential new antivirals. Membership of the isirv-AVG is open to all members of isirv. To assist participation in the various activities, members are requested to indicate their particular interests/areas of expertise via the website. To learn more about the AVG [come along to the isirv stand at the ESWI conference](#).

At the Annual AVG Meeting in Tokyo on 6th June, the Executive Committee elected Michael Ison as co-chair of AVG, replacing Arnold Monto, who wished to step down. Election of new members to the Executive Committee were initiated in July this year, using a process akin to that used for election to the isirv Board. Two other members of the Committee voluntarily stepped down: Charles Penn and Marilda Siqueira. Six nominations were received for six positions (three vacancies plus three new positions), thus all were elected: Karoline Bragstad, Bin Cao, John DeVincenzo, Alicia Fry, Nahoko Shindo and Hui-Ling Yen.

The Proceedings of the second isirv-AVG conference on *Severe Influenza: Burden, Pathogenesis and Management*, held in Hanoi, Viet Nam, 29-31 October 2012, were published as a supplement of *Influenza and Other Respiratory Viruses*, Vol 7 Suppl 3, in November 2013.

Since *Options for the Control of Influenza VIII* was held in 2013, the isirv-AVG did not organise a separate conference last year. Instead it held two small AVG-sponsored workshops during *Options* in Cape Town:

A GISAID-AVG Training Workshop, organised in conjunction with WHO, on *Sequence Analysis and Detection of Antiviral Resistance*, on 7th September. The programme included an initial session of brief lectures followed by three demonstrations on the use of the GISAID EpiFlu™ database for sequence analyses and the detection of antiviral resistance mutations, and assays for neuraminidase inhibitor susceptibility. The 28 participants were mainly from WHO designated laboratories in African and other low resource countries. AVG provided financial support for five people to attend the Workshop and the *Options* conference. The programme, slide presentations and photographs are available in the AVG document repository (under Membership - my account) on the website.

A small AVG discussion meeting on *Clinical Trial Endpoints for Studies of Antivirals in Hospitalised and At-Risk Influenza Patients*, on 8th September, was chaired by Fred Hayden and Maria Zambon and attended by 52 participants. The agenda, presentations and a summary report are available on the website.

The third isirv-AVG conference on *Influenza and Other Respiratory Virus Infections: Advances in Clinical Management* was held in Tokyo on 4-6 June 2014. Against a backdrop of constant threats from the emergence of novel highly pathogenic agents, the conference focused on recent advances in understanding and mitigating the impact of respiratory virus infections, with particular emphasis on clinical management. Of the 190 clinicians, public health specialists and medical scientists from 34 countries over a third were from Japan. Generous support for the conference included provision of 13 travel scholarships to assist younger delegates to attend. The programme, abstract book, and a summary, together with oral and poster presentations, are available to members on the website. An overview of the conference will be published in *Influenza and Other Respiratory Viruses*.

The Fourth isirv-AVG conference on *Novel Antiviral Therapies for Influenza and Other Respiratory Viruses: Bench to Bedside* will be held at the University of Texas at Austin on 2-4 June 2015 and will focus on various issues related to antiviral drug development, from discovery to licensure. The AVG will also participate in the first isirv International Meeting on Respiratory Pathogens (IMRP) to be held in Singapore on 2-4 September 2015.

The AVG Reference Panel (Version 2) of influenza A and B viruses for assessment of neuraminidase inhibitor susceptibility continued to be distributed on request.

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