

SPECIAL ARTICLE

The Infancy of an International Paediatric Pharmacy Network

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There are several pharmacy and clinical pharmacology organizations in which pediatrics is one of many special interest groups and a few whose focus is entirely pediatric drug therapy. Recently the foundation for the establishment of an International Network of Paediatric Pharmacists has been laid. This paper describes that network.

KEYWORDS international, pediatrics, pharmacy network

J Pediatr Pharmacol Ther 2008;13:51-54

INTRODUCTION

During the past 18 or so months the foundation for the establishment of an International Network of Paediatric Pharmacists has started to be laid. This initiative was born from a virtual umbrella organisation called The International Alliance for Better Medicines for Children (IA). The "Shanghai Declaration", a document that outlines the IA's "commitment to improving safe and reliable medicines for children worldwide" resulted from an international symposium held in Shanghai, July 2006. The journal, *Pediatric Drugs*, is the official journal of the IA. In addition to organizations such as the IPA, WHO, ASCPT, CSCP, and ESDPPP, major Pharmacy groups (PPAG, ACCP, ESCP, CSHP, NPPG, CPA) from around the world have officially endorsed this document. For explanation of the abbreviations and websites see Table 1. The network of pediatric clinical pharmacists that is beginning to be

established, and how this network may relate to pediatric clinical pharmacology networks, is the focus of this paper.

ABBREVIATIONS ACCP, American College of Clinical Pharmacy; ASCPT, American Society of Clinical Pharmacology and Therapeutics; CPA, Commonwealth Pharmaceutical Association; CSCP, Canadian Society for Clinical Pharmacology; CSHP, Canadian Society of Hospital Pharmacy; ESCP, European Society of Clinical Pharmacy; ESDPPP, European Society for Developmental, Perinatal and Paediatric Pharmacology; IA, International Alliance for Better Medicines for Children; IPA, International Pediatric Association; JPPT, The Journal of Pediatric Pharmacology and Therapeutics; NPPG, Neonatal and Paediatric Pharmacy Group; PPAG, Pediatric Pharmacy Advocacy Group; UK, United Kingdom; WHO, World Health Organization

PEDIATRIC PHARMACY AND NETWORKING

There are several Pharmacy and Clinical Pharmacology organizations (ACCP, ESCP, CSHP, ASCPT, CSCP) in which pediatrics is one of many special interest groups. However, there are a few organizations (PPAG, NPPG, ESDPPP) whose focus is entirely pediatric drug therapy.

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Table 1. A selection of organisations, journals and websites in the area of pediatric pharmacy/clinical pharmacology

ACCP - American College of Clinical Pharmacy (www.accp.com)
ASCPT - American Society of Clinical Pharmacology and Therapeutics (www.ascpt.org)
CPA - Commonwealth Pharmaceutical Association (www.commonwealthpharmacy.org/site)
CSCP - Canadian Society for Clinical Pharmacology (www.cscp.net)
CShP - Canadian Society of Hospital Pharmacy (www.cshp.ca)
ESCP - European Society of Clinical Pharmacy (www.escpweb.org/site/cms)
ESDPPP - European Society for Developmental, Perinatal and Paediatric Pharmacology (journal site: www.ppdjournal.com)
IA - International Alliance for Better Medicines for Children
IPA - International Pediatric Association (www.ipa-world.org)
JPPT - Journal of Pediatric Pharmacology & Therapeutics (www.jppt.org)
NPPG - Neonatal and Paediatric Pharmacy Group (www.nppg.org.uk)
Pediatric Drugs - (//pediatrics.adisonline.com)
PPAG - Pediatric Pharmacy Advocacy Group (www.ppag.org)
PPDT - Paediatric and Perinatal Drug Therapy (www.ppdjournal.com)
WHO - World Health Organisation (www.who.int/en)

The Pediatric Pharmacy Advocacy Group (PPAG) is an “international non-profit professional association representing the interests of pediatric pharmacists and their patients”. There are approximately 650 active members. Matthew Helms (matthew.helms@ppag.org) is the Executive Director. PPAG conducts two meetings a year, a specialty meeting in the spring and an annual meeting in the fall. The 2008 Annual Meeting will be held at the Renaissance Harborplace Hotel, in Baltimore, Maryland on October 2-5, 2008. The official journal of PPAG is The Journal of Pediatric Pharmacology and Therapeutics (JPPT).

PPAG is very interested in expanding the number of international members within its organization and encourages pediatric pharmacists to consider joining. The organization is establishing an international list serve which will facilitate communication with colleagues from around the world. A list serve is essentially a list of email addresses to which you can send a question or message. Everyone on the list would receive your email, and anyone willing to assist would respond. This is a tremendous way to communicate with colleagues from around the world without having to move from your computer. To join the PPAG international

list serve, please direct your preferred browser to [//ppag.org](http://ppag.org) and click on the International Initiatives link.

The Neonatal and Paediatric Pharmacists Group (NPPG) is a United Kingdom (UK) based group, which was formed in 1994, with the aim of improving the care of neonates, infants and children. Membership is open to any pharmacist, pharmacy technician or corporate body with a pharmaceutical interest in pediatric or neonatal pharmacy. NPPG holds an annual conference in the autumn of each year in different venues around the UK. This conference attracts delegates from around the world. Rowena McCartney (rowena.mcartney@cardiffandvale.wales.nhs.uk) is the current Chair of NPPG.

NPPG has links with various other pediatric organizations in the UK. The NPPG has a very successful website and message board which is used by members both within and outside of the UK. A Faculty of Neonatal and Paediatric Pharmacy (FNPP) was established within the College of Pharmacy Practice in early 2002 to help members with their Continuing Professional Development. The NPPG and FNPP work together to set standards and competencies to try to ensure best practice within

Table 2. Upcoming meetings for pediatric pharmacists/clinical pharmacologists

1. PPAG Annual Meeting. Renaissance Harborplace Hotel, in Baltimore, Maryland on October 2-5, 2008. (www.ppag.org).
2. ESDP - 11th Bi-annual conference: Safe and Effective Medicines for Children, Rotterdam, The Netherlands, 4-7 June 2008. (www.esdp-rotterdam.nl).
3. Pediatric Pharmacology Satellite: Establishing an International Collaborative Network in Pediatric Pharmacology, Toronto, Canada, 25-26 July 2008. This Satellite is part of: The IXth World Conference on Clinical Pharmacology and Therapeutics, Quebec City, Canada, 27 July-1 August 2008. (Secretariat email: cpt2008@nrc-cnrc.gc.ca)
4. NPPG Autumn Meeting 2008 (TBC) www.nppg.org.uk
5. ESCP Autumn Meeting October 2008 (TBC) www.escpweb.org
6. ACCP/ESCP International Pediatric Pharmacy Symposium, in conjunction with The International Pharmacy Congress Satellite Meeting, Orlando, Florida, USA, 24-26 April 2009. (www.accp.com)

TBC, to be confirmed

pediatric pharmacy.

NPPG is a company limited by guarantee and has recently become a registered charity. Membership of NPPG stands at approximately 250. The official journal of NPPG is *Paediatric and Perinatal Drug Therapy*, which is also the official journal of the European Society for Developmental Perinatal and Paediatric Pharmacology.

The European Society for Developmental, Perinatal and Paediatric Pharmacology (ESDP) was established in 1988. The Society encompasses the interests of many cross-sectional disciplines in human biomedical sciences. Its primary goal is to improve drug treatment in children by promoting research in developmental and paediatric pharmacology, on which they report during their bi-annual congresses.

The Pediatrics Practice and Research Network (PRN) of the American College of Clinical Pharmacy (ACCP) has almost 400 members. A large proportion of the ACCP PRN members are also members of PPAG. The Pediatric PRN meets twice yearly at the ACCP Spring and Annual (autumn) meetings. There are two to four hours of education content that is specifically directed towards paediatrics. *Pharmacotherapy* is the official journal of ACCP. The PRN list serve is very active and is an excellent way to share information as well as ask questions. The PRN Chair is David Hoff (david.hoff@childrensmn.org) and the Chair-Elect is Tracy Hagemann (tracy-hagemann@ouhs.edu).

Pediatrics as a pharmacy specialty is less developed in European countries than in North America (with the exception of Great Britain where there is a very robust network). Heterogeneity (many countries, cultures and

ways of practising pharmacy) has resulted in different stages of pediatric pharmacy advancement and clinical pharmacy as a whole. Several European countries (The Netherlands, Spain, Scandinavia, France and the United Kingdom) have well-structured pediatric pharmacy groups and some others, like Switzerland, are developing them.

The Paediatric Special Interest Group (SIG) from ESCP has tried to act as the platform for advancing pediatric clinical knowledge, sharing practice between European Paediatric Pharmacy Associations (i.e., Masterclass in Edinburgh joining forces with NPPG), pediatric clinical practitioners or anyone with an interest in pediatrics. The Paediatric SIG is a platform for the dissemination of important and new European legislation that relates to pediatrics and builds on a strong network that may lead to future collaborative research projects and ultimately better care for children. Approximately 200 people have expressed interest in the activities run by the Paediatric Special Interest Group.

ESCP has held two major meetings each year (spring and autumn). Beginning in 2008 there will be a reduction to an autumn meeting and small specialty meetings during the course of the year. The official journal of ESCP is "Pharmacy World & Science". Sara Arenas-Lopez from the UK (sara.arenas@gstt.nhs.uk) is Chair until the end of 2008. Other members of the board are from Sweden, Italy and France.

The Paediatric Practice and Specialty Network (PSN) of the Canadian Society of Hospital Pharmacists has approximately 90 members who participate in an active list serve. There are two to four hours set aside for pediatric top-

ics at the annual winter meeting. The official journal of CSHP is The Canadian Journal of Hospital Pharmacy. The current PSN Chair is Kathryn Timberlake (kathryn.timberlake@sickkids.ca).

Clinical pharmacology and clinical pharmacy share many interests. Hopefully this alliance of professions will flourish and lead to work on projects of joint interest. The Pediatric and Maternal Pharmacology (PED) scientific section of the American Society for Clinical Pharmacology and Therapeutics (ASCPT) is a community of physician, pharmacist and scientist members within ASCPT whose focus is on the pharmacological and therapeutic needs of children, from conception through to adolescence. The PED section sponsors paediatric workshops and sessions at the Society's annual meeting each spring. Steve Leeder (sleeder@cmh.edu) is the current Section Chair and Jan Sullivan (sully@louisville.edu) is Vice-Chair.

The Canadian Society for Clinical Pharmacology has a long-standing interest in pediatric clinical pharmacology and regularly holds symposia on key issues in paediatric clinical pharmacology at their annual meeting, which is part of the Canadian Therapeutics Congress. Dr. Michael Rieder (mrieder@uwo.ca), a pediatric clinical pharmacologist, is the Scientific Programme Chair of the Canadian Society for Clinical Pharmacology.

MEET AND SHARE....

An opportunity for an International meeting of Pediatric Clinical Pharmacists and Clinical Pharmacologists from around the world will take place in April 2009 at The Joint ACCP-ESCP International Clinical Pharmacy Congress in Orlando, Florida, USA. An International Pediatric Pharmacy and Clinical Pharmacology Symposium will precede, and also be part of, the larger scientific meeting. Preliminary planning for the meeting has already begun.

Representatives from PPAG, ACCP, ESCP, NPPG, CPA, ASCPT, and CSCP have been soliciting ideas from their respective memberships. This meeting will provide an outstanding opportunity for Pediatric Pharmacists and Clinical Pharmacologists from both developed and developing countries to share information. Be sure to reserve the last week of April 2009 for this important inaugural meeting! If you cannot wait until 2009 or want to stay closer to home, there is another great opportunity to meet European colleagues in the field of paediatric pharmacy/clinical pharmacology in Rotterdam, 4–7 June 2008, at the 11th ESDP Conference (www.esdp-rotterdam.nl).

CONCLUSIONS

There already exist some informal networks and formal organizational meetings that enable pharmacists (and some pharmacologists) in North America and Europe to exchange information (Table 2). Hopefully these friendships and exchange of ideas will continue and grow larger. The websites, discussion boards and international meetings will create an opportunity for pediatric pharmacists to learn from each other through sharing. Ideally this endeavour will foster collaboration in the areas of practice, research, education and outreach, for which there is a great need given the scarcity of resources. Pediatric pharmacology still lags behind, although we know there is a vast amount of knowledge and experience out there, just at the present time not readily accessible. Future collaboration between pharmacists and other healthcare professionals with a special interest in pediatric drug therapy can only directly benefit the quality of care we provide our pediatric patients.

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