



INTERACADEMY MEDICAL PANEL NEWSLETTER

No. 6

March 2007

Editorial

IAMP, as an international network of medical academies and medical divisions within science academies, is ideally positioned to lead efforts to place health at the forefront of initiatives for global sustainable development. With broad representation from the developing world, IAMP is particularly well-suited to focus attention on the world's most vulnerable and marginalized people. The organization's ultimate aim is to help countries, especially poor countries or countries with weak health systems, help their citizens lead healthier and more productive lives.

IAMP has received valuable assistance from two closely related organizations in advancing its mandate: the InterAcademy Panel on International Issues (IAP) and the Inter-Academy Council (IAC).

At the IAP General Assembly held in Alexandria, Egypt, in December 2006, IAP representatives agreed that IAMP should be given observer status. This will allow the two organizations to work more closely together in pursuit of their shared goals.

At the IAC Board Meeting, held Amsterdam, The Netherlands, in January 2007, representatives from IAC and IAMP agreed to work together to develop a proposal and to prepare a list of potential funding sources for an IAC-IAMP study focusing on improving global surveillance for emerging zoonotic diseases.

The next IAMP Executive Committee meeting will take place at the IAMP secretariat in Trieste on 19-20 April. Agenda items include discussions for the drafting of a strategic plan and an examination of organizational and programmatic strategies designed to obtain external funding.

As co-chairs, we will continue to seek ways to implement IAMP activities both among our members and with other organizations. We look forward to receiving your thoughts on how we might move ahead as we seek to transform our principles into concrete action.

*Guy de Thé and Anthony MBewu
Co-Chairs, IAMP*

Programme Updates

1. Reducing maternal and perinatal mortality

IAMP is uniquely placed to call on the expertise available within its member academies to address a broad array of health problems of global importance. The organization has member academies from all continents and from countries with diverse cultural characteristics, income levels and health-care systems. It all adds up to a global perspective on critical health care issues and a deep pool of talent capable of addressing these issues from a full range of perspectives.

IAMP's emerging efforts to launch a programme on reducing maternal and perinatal mortality provides valuable insights into how members could work together to advance IAMP's mandate and, more importantly, contribute to efforts to improve critical global health issues.

Based on a recommendation made at the IAMP Second General Assembly, held in Beijing, China, participating member academies assembled a group of experts in the fields of anthropology, communication, epidemiology, health economics, neonatology, obstetrics and gynaecology and public health.

The group subsequently held a planning meeting at the IAMP secretariat in Trieste, Italy, in September 2006 under the auspices of the project's lead academy, the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences. The Swedish International Development Agency (Sida-SAREC) generously supported the meeting, which was designed to explore the feasibility of a project seeking to reduce maternal and perinatal mortality rates. Following two days of intense discussion, the group approved a plan of action and agreed to form a steering committee, which was given responsibility to develop a project outline. The outline was subsequently sent to the member academies of both IAMP and IAP.

Institutions that want to participate in this project have been asked to write letters of intent to the IAMP secretariat before the end of March. The steering committee will evaluate the letters and select the project participants.

Academies that are chosen to participate will be asked to carry out a needs assessment within their own country, a process that should take about a year to complete. A workshop will be organized in autumn of 2008 or spring 2009 to examine the preliminary results of these studies and to plan for a broad-based intervention programme.

Funds for the initial studies, each of which is estimated to cost about US\$50,000, have not yet been secured. However, the committee remains hopeful that money will become available once the list of participants is finalized.

On 13 February 2007, David Urussa, Muhimbili University, Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, organized a workshop in Tanzania to explore implementation strategies for reducing maternal and perinatal mortality rates in the Dar-es-Salaam region. The workshop focused on Urussa's assessment study presented at the IAMP workshop last September. IAMP hopes that this project can serve as a model for its own efforts.

IAMP Members

- Academia Nacional de Medicina de Buenos Aires
- Academy of Medical Sciences of Armenia
- The National Academy of Sciences, Armenia
- Australian Academy of Science
- Austrian Academy of Sciences
- Bangladesh Academy of Sciences
- Belgian Royal Academy of Medicine
- Federation of European Academies of Medicine
- Academia Boliviana de Medicina
- Academia Nacional de Medicina, Brazil
- Brazilian Academy of Sciences
- Cameroon Academy of Sciences
- Canadian Academy of Health Sciences
- Academia Chilena de Medicina
- Chinese Academy of Engineering
- Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS)
- Academia Nacional de Medicina de Colombia
- Croatian Academy of Medical Sciences
- Croatian Academy of Sciences & Arts
- Cuban Academy of Sciences
- Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic
- Academy of Scientific Research & Technology
- The Delegation of the Finnish Academies of Science & Letters
- Académie Nationale de Médecine
- Académie des Sciences
- Académie des Technologies, France
- Union of German Academies of Sciences & Humanities
- The German Academy of Sciences, Leopoldina
- Academy of Athens
- Hungarian Academy of Sciences
- National Academy of Medical Sciences, India
- Indonesian Academy of Sciences
- Academy of Medical Sciences, Iran
- Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei
- TWAS
- Science Council of Japan
- African Academy of Sciences
- Kenya National Academy of Sciences
- The National Academy of Sciences, Rep. of Korea
- Latvian Academy of Sciences
- Lithuanian Academy of Sciences
- Macedonian Academy of Sciences & Arts
- Academy of Sciences Malaysia
- National Academy of Medicine of Mexico
- Mongolian Academy of Sciences
- The Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts & Sciences
- Nigerian Academy of Sciences
- Norwegian Academy of Sciences & Letters
- Palestine Academy for Science & Technology
- National Academy of Science & Technology, Philippines
- Polish Academy of Sciences
- The Caribbean Academy of Sciences
- Russian Academy of Medical Sciences
- Académie des Sciences et Techniques, Sénégal
- Slovak Academy of Science
- Slovenian Academy of Sciences & Arts
- Academy of Science of South Africa
- National Academy of Sciences of Sri Lanka
- Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences
- Swiss Academy of Medical Sciences
- Turkish Academy of Sciences
- Uganda National Academy Sciences
- Academy of Medical Sciences
- Institute of Medicine, US NAS

Contact details are available from the IAMP Secretariat.

Programme Updates (cont.)

2. Scientific writing for young scientists and clinicians

The African Academy of Sciences (AAS) and IAMP organized a workshop from 23 to 26 October 2006 to help young scientists upgrade their skills for grant and proposal writing and for the preparation of peer-reviewed articles. Scientists from Ethiopia, Tanzania, Uganda and Sudan attended the first in what the organizers hope will become an annual event. G.B.A. Okelo, former executive director of the AAS and currently professor of medicine at the University of Nairobi, Kenya, chaired the event. Stephen G. Agong, current AAS executive director, spoke at the opening session. Lecturers included Elizabeth Heseltine, an expert consultant and trainer in science communications, William Lore, editor-in-chief of the *East Africa Medical Journal*, and Erastus Njeru, senior lecturer on biostatistics at the University of Nairobi. Many participants brought draft research proposals that served as working documents during the training sessions. The next workshop is tentatively scheduled to take place in late 2007 at a location to be determined this summer.

3. Emerging infections

The aim of IAMP's emerging infectious diseases programme is to generate innovative ideas for clinicians and researchers working in this field. The programme focuses on assembling and disseminating existing knowledge and not on conducting surveys or implementing control measures.

The Chinese Academy of Engineering, Shanghai Academic Centre and Shanghai Medical College, Fudan University, will host a workshop on June 10-12, 2007 in Shanghai, China, examining such public health issues related to emerging infectious diseases as the provision of clean drinking water and adequate sanitation; manufacture and access to vaccines; and development of new drug and alternative therapies. Some 30 participants from IAMP member academies are expected to attend. For additional information, contact the IAMP Secretariat.

Meetings

Forum on Global Health Issues

The Inter-Academic Forum on Global Health Issues, organized by the National Academy of Medicine of Mexico (NAMM) in cooperation with the Latin-American Association of National Academies of Medicine (ALANAM), was held in Mexico City on 2-3 October 2006. The forum focused on four major themes:

- universal access to medical care;
- international cooperation in combatting disease epidemics;
- enhancing investments in health research and education; and
- strategies for addressing the challenges posed by aging populations.

The forum's ultimate goal was to outline potential solutions for policy makers, industry and academic leaders and the public. Representatives from 90 institutions in 20 countries were present.

An executive summary and four publications outlining the forum's recommendations can be browsed and downloaded at www.anm.org.mx.

Awards and prizes

The Royal Society Pfizer Award

The Royal Society Pfizer Award, which carries a £60,000 cash prize, recognizes young research scientists who have made innovative contributions to the biological sciences, including basic medical sciences. The award is designed to help recipients carry out first-class research projects at African centres of scientific excellence. The 2007 winner is Alexis Nzila from the Kenya Medical Research Institute, who is being honoured for his work on the mechanisms driving anti-malarial drug action.

For additional information, see www.royalsoc.ac.uk/nominate/?award=24

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