



# STI Global Update

## Newsletter of the International Union against Sexually Transmitted Infections

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### President's Letter

This is my first newsletter as the new president of IUSTI-World. I took over from Dr. David Lewis last July at the ISSTD-IUSTI World Congress in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. First, I would like to thank David for his four year tenure and service as IUSTI President and his many years of contribution to IUSTI. He has done a marvelous job and has led IUSTI and its Regions to great prominence, both as an organization dedicated to science and combating the epidemic STIs throughout the world, but also as an organization that can have many disciplines working together to achieve its goals. On an individual level, David has significantly contributed to the world's literature on gonorrheal infections and the rising problem of antimicrobial resistance. I would also like to thank all of our IUSTI members and the IUSTI-Executive Committee for their continual support to IUSTI. Our membership is our strength.

We said farewell to a few outgoing IUSTI- officers. Immy Ahmed stepped down as treasurer and Janet Wilson as Secretary General. We thank them for their excellent service. Our new treasurer is Professor Jonathan Ross and our new Secretary General is Dr. Elizabeth Foley. Our new President-Elect is Dr. Janet Wilson.



Dr. Francis Ndowa became the Regional Director Africa. Other new members elected to the

Executive committee 2107-2021 include: Dr Maria Eugenia Escobar, Argentina; Dr Patricia Galarza, Argentina; Dr Gloria Aguilar. Paraguay; Dr Ranmini Kularatne, South Africa; Dr Sara Lowe, Zimbabwe. Those re-elected for a second term 2017-2021 include: Dr Keith Radcliffe, UK; Dr Edward W Hook. USA; Dr J. Dennis Fortenberry, USA; Dr Sunil Sethi, India. Welcome to all.



A silver medal was presented to Prof Ryoichi Hamasuna for organizing the excellent Asia Pacific Region IUSTI in Okayama, Japan in December, 2016 and a gold medal was presented to Angelika Stary.



The Rio meeting was a success and the report to IUSTI indicated:

Scientific committee: Co-chairs: Angelica Miranda (Brazil) & Caroline Cameron (Canada)

Programme:

12 plenaries speakers

16 symposia

16 oral presentation sessions

4 pre- conference symposia

Abstracts: Received 699 abstracts: 96 oral presentations, 603 posters

The abstracts are published in the STI Journal.

Registration numbers: 709 (100 paid for by ASB in the Ministry of Health)

- Brazilian: 365
- USA: 147
- Australian: 47
- Scholarship applications: 132: 14 supported; 118 unable to be supported



The European IUSTI congress was a huge success and was enjoyed by all. Eija Hiltunen-Back and her committee provide an excellent Congress greatly appreciated by all. The chair of the Scientific Committee Prof. Stephan Lautenschlager created a scientific program with excellent plenary speakers; Manuel Battegay, Catriona Bradshaw, Charlotte Gaydos, David A. Lewis, Jorma Paavonen and John White.

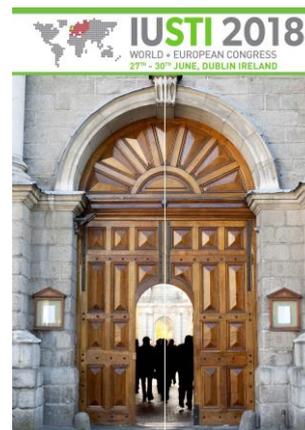
The next IUSTI World meeting will be Dublin, Ireland. Trinity College has been chosen as the preferred venue, on the basis of lecture theatre availability, central location, low cost accommodation, and unique atmosphere. A date change from end August to **27-30 June 2018** was necessitated. Abbey Congress Services have been appointed as PCO for the Congress. Kees Rietmeijer was appointed Chair of the Scientific Committee, and Prof Henry De Vries as Co-Chair. "The Appliance of Science" was chosen as the Congress Theme. The concept of integrated symposia with basic science, clinical science and clinical application evolved. The website is live. <https://www.iustidublin2018.com/>

Trinity is the sole constituent college of the University of Dublin, a research university in Ireland. The college was founded in 1592 as the "mother" of a new university, modelled after the collegiate universities of Oxford and of Cambridge, but, unlike these, only one college was ever established; as such, the designations "Trinity College" and "University of Dublin" are usually synonymous for practical purposes. It is one of the seven ancient universities of Britain and Ireland, as well as Ireland's oldest university.

*20th IUSTI World Congress with ISSTD in Vancouver, Canada, 2019*

Caroline Cameron reported that the 20th IUSTI World Congress will be held as a joint meeting with the 23rd Meeting of the ISSTD in Vancouver, Canada. The meeting will take place at the

Vancouver Convention Centre on July 14-17, 2019.. The Co-Chairs of the event are Professor Caroline Cameron (ISSTD President-Elect, University of Victoria) and Professor Charlotte Gaydos (IUSTI-World President, Johns Hopkins University). Scientific Co-Chairs of the Joint Meeting are Prof David Lewis, Western Sydney Sexual Health Centre/University of Sydney and Prof James Blanchard, University of Manitoba. The meeting will combine an outstanding scientific programme with a rich social programme that reflects the culture and traditions unique to the host city.



*21st IUSTI World Congress in Bangkok, Thailand, 2020*

The Consortium of Thai Training Institutes for STDs and AIDS (COTTISA) and the Thai Medical Society for the Study of Sexually Transmitted Diseases (TMSSTD) will be the local hosts. The Congress will be organised by TMS-STD, COTTISA, and Ministry of Public Health of Thailand. The TMS-STD has experience of organising the IUVDT-A-P meeting in 1993 and TMS-STD and COTTISA have organised the annual International STDs/AIDS Diploma Course since 1991. The venue will be the Bangkok Convention Centre & Centara Grand Hotel which has over 500 guestrooms. There are also more than 10 hotels with at least 400 rooms within a close vicinity of the congress venue. The date will be beginning of November 2020.

*Charlotte Gaydos, IUSTI-World President*

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## Regional Reports

### Europe

*IUSTI Europe Conference in Helsinki*

We experienced a couple of inspiring days in the 31st Congress of IUSTI Europe on Sexually Transmitted Infections in Helsinki, Finland on 31 August – 2 September 2017. We had over 350

delegates from 40 different countries and 150 Finnish dermatologists attending the Marina Congress Center during the last days of summer weekend. We had the chance to enjoy the excellent talks from 40 invited speakers and besides that we had over 70 scientific abstracts that were presented in oral or poster sessions.



Angelika Stary, Airi Pöder, Jorma Paavonen, Eija Hiltunen-Back

For the successful congress you also need a relaxing social program and time to meet colleagues. After Opening ceremony with Sibelius's Finlandia, Helsinki City hosted a welcoming reception in the City Hall and the congress was finished with a dinner in the island off Helsinki with an amazing sunset. Organizers would like to thank all the delegates for coming to Helsinki, sponsors and exhibitors for their valuable support, and Marina Congress Center for the good food and service.



Kees Rietmeijer - Chair of the Scientific Committee of IUSTI World & Europe Conference 2018 in Dublin, Derek Freedman - President of the IUSTI World & Europe Conference 2018 in Dublin



Stephan Lautenschlager - Chair of the Scientific Committee of the IUSTI Europe Conference in Helsinki, Eija Hiltunen-Back - President of the IUSTI Europe Conference in Helsinki

### *IUSTI-Europe Advanced STI Course in Helsinki*

The IUSTI Advanced Course on Sexually Transmitted Infections 2017 "Test and Treat" took place from August 30 to August 31, 2017. It was the third IUSTI Europe Course and held for the first time as a pre-meeting in conjunction with the IUSTI Europe Conference in Helsinki. This advanced

course was particularly aimed at young clinicians and Health Care Providers (HCPs) developing an interest in sexually transmitted infections. Well-known European and local Finnish experts presented an update on diagnostic technologies and summarized the most recent treatment recommendations.

The course was fully booked and attracted more than 50 young doctors from 22 different European countries as well as participants from the USA and Australia. IUSTI Europe as well as National Representatives from Austria, Italy, Switzerland, and UK supported young trainees with altogether 18 scholarships. The course reflected the high interest of participants and the excellent atmosphere during the 2 day programme. Some of the young participants presented interesting cases selected from their own countries and therefore were actively involved in the programme. Many of the trainees used the opportunity to continue their participation at the IUSTI Europe Conference. The feedback of the participants after the course was very enthusiastic.

We want to thank all speakers for their excellent contribution, the local organizers for the perfect local support and all participants for their interest in the very successful third IUSTI Europe Advanced Course on STIs.



Participants of the IUSTI Europe Advanced STI Course with the organizers of the Course Angelika Stary and Marco Cusini

### *IUSTI Europe STI Guidelines Committee meeting*

Editorial board teleconferences are held every three months with an annual physical meeting taking place in conjunction with the annual IUSTI-Europe scientific congress in the autumn. Since the date of the last report a teleconference was held in June 2017. The annual meeting of the Editorial Board took place in Helsinki on Thursday 31 August 2017.

The board awaits developments with the EDF initiative to set up a foundation to oversee the production of dermato-venerology guidelines, hopefully to be headquartered in Berlin. All parties agree that it is important to maintain good liaison between the European STI Guidelines Project and the EDF over the production of European guidelines. Prof. Alexander Nast from Berlin has joined the editorial board to strengthen liaison with the EDF.

Marti Vall Mayans continues to work on producing a “pocket summary” of the major recommendations in all the European STI guidelines.

All the guidelines that are produced are freely available on the IUSTI-Europe website, and are published in a peer-reviewed journal, either the International Journal of STD and AIDS (IJSA) or in the Journal of the European Academy of Dermatology and Venereology (JEADV).

Work is ongoing on updating the following guidelines: Hepatitis B and C, Gonorrhoea, Genital warts, Pelvic inflammatory disease, Vaginal discharge, Organising an STI consultation, A position statement on genital mycoplasmas (other than *Mycoplasma genitalium*).

The membership of the editorial board, the methodology, and all the European guidelines and patient information are freely available on the IUSTI-Europe website. Jackie Sherrard acts as liaison to the IUSTI webmaster who is based in Australia.

There continues to be interest in translating the European guidelines into languages other than English. It is necessary to obtain permission to do this from the publishing houses who publish the guidelines. To date this has been forthcoming - the publishers have so far not had any issue with these requests as long as the translated guidelines are used purely for educational, and not for commercial, purposes. The Polish association has translated the guidelines on gonorrhoea, chlamydia and syphilis. IUSTI-Russia has expressed interest in producing translations, as has the Armenian Association of Dermatologists and Venereologists.

Harald Moi has stepped down from his position on the editorial board and I should like to express my profound gratitude to him for the enormous contribution he has made the work of the European STI Guidelines Project over many years. I am pleased to report that Prof. Norbert Brockmeyer from Germany has agreed to replace him on the board.

I should like to express my personal sadness at the news of the recent death of Dr Pieter van Voorst Vader from the Netherlands. Pieter and Keith were co-editors of the first European guidelines which was published in 2001. The continued existence and utility of the guidelines forms part of Pieter's legacy.

*5<sup>th</sup> International Symposium: Sexually Transmitted Infections - New Horizons, Brijuni Islands, Croatia, September 22-24, 2017*

The 5<sup>th</sup> International Symposium: SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS – NEW HORIZONS traditionally took place in Brijuni Islands, Croatia, September 22-24, 2017, organized by the Croatian Society for Sexually Transmitted Diseases and the Croatian Dermatovenereological Society of the Croatian Medical Association, and, as usual so far, supported by IUSTI - International Union Against

Sexually Transmitted Infections - European Branch. Mihael Skerlev was the Symposium President, and Suzana Ljubojević Hadžavdić and Lidija Žele-Starčević the Symposium Secretaries.



The latest and most relevant findings in the scientific domain of sexually transmitted infections were discussed and the problems encountered in everyday practice were highlighted. News in the research of molecular biology, implications of new aetiological factors, more precise diagnostic tools and the role of vaccination in the domain of sexually transmitted infections were presented. Topics included contemporary trends in Regional, European and World epidemiology of STIs:

- HPV update – from basics to vaccine
- Recent approach to 'new and old' bacterial STIs
- Antimicrobial resistance
- Viral STIs
- HIV - reasonable threat?
- Genital dermatology
- Public health and sexual education
- Free communications

During the Opening lecture, Dr Airi Pöder from Estonia, Regional Director of IUSTI Europe, emphasized the changes in global trends of STIs in Europe. Prof. Branka Marinović from Croatia, the Head of Department of Dermatovenereology, Clinical Hospital Centre Zagreb and Zagreb University School of Medicine spoke about syphilis treatment dilemmas today.

Given the importance of the HPV infections and the implementation of vaccines, two sections and a special symposium were devoted to this problem. In the first section HPV from basic to vaccine, emerging issues concerning the oncogenic and colposcopic aspects of HPV infections, treatment of genital warts in dermatovenereological practice and experience with vaccination programs were presented. In the other HPV section problems regarding new diagnostic possibilities and different clinical presentations of HPV infections were most interactively discussed.

In the special Symposium, Prof. Mihael Skerlev, one of the experts for HPV infections in male population, and Prof. Hrvoje Vrčić, gynaecologist, a prominent expert especially in vitro fertilization talked about nonavalent HPV vaccine. The addition of the five HPV genotypes included in the nonavalent HPV vaccine (HPV 31/33/45/52/58) could result in the new HPV vaccine preventing 94.7% of CIN2/3 and ICC occurrences.



One of the most visited sections was dedicated to the HIV virus. Particularly valuable data in patients with HIV infection were presented by Prof. Josip Begovac, a leading expert in the field.

The 59 invited lecturers from 13 countries have greatly contributed to the memorable scientific level of the Symposium. The symposium was attended by 140 participants of different profiles (dermatovenereologists, gynaecologists, infective diseases specialists, microbiologists, urologists, epidemiologists and others) dealing with the STIs problems.

The Brijuni Islands, known as the “*Pearl of the Northern Mediterranean*”, an Adriatic Sea paradise, reserved only for great presidents, royalties and celebrities in the near past were perfect scenery for the Symposium participants on this occasion, with the memorable setting of the Welcome Networking event by the sea with the Mediterranean breeze, pine trees scent and 'a capella' state-of-art singers. We believe that each of these contributed also to the friendly and relaxing atmosphere among the Symposium participants, our dear friends!

See you at Brijuni Islands next time!

Mihael Skerlev  
Suzana Ljubojević Hadžavdić  
Lidija Žele-Starčević

*Council Meeting of the IUSTI Europe Council 2019*  
During the IUSTI Europe Conference 2019 in Helsinki the Council Meeting took place. One of the most important questions were the election of the Officers of IUSTI Europe for the next 3 years.

The structure of the Council of the IUSTI Europe 2017-2020 is:

- Airi Põder – Director of IUSTI-Europe
- Claudia Heller – Chair of the Council of IUSTI-Europe
- Jackie Sherrard – Secretary General of the Council of IUSTI-Europe
- Mikhail Gomberg – Treasurer
- Keith Radcliffe – Chief Editor of the IUSTI-Europe STI Guidelines
- Derek Freedman – Chair of the Committee of the Scientific Policy
- Mihael Skerlev – Chair of the Committee of the International Development
- Angelika Stary and Marco Cusini – Chairs of the Committee of the Education

- Andy Winter – Chair of the Committee of the Communication

And, additionally, national representatives from different European countries.



Council of IUSTI-Europe

*Airi Põder*

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### **North America**

*Rising to the Occasion*



The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently released its 2016 STD Surveillance Report. The news is not good: compared to 2015, chlamydia rates are up 4.5%, gonorrhea rates are up 18.5%, and primary and secondary syphilis 18%. While the current syphilis epidemic in the U.S. has been largely occurring among men having sex with men, early syphilis increased by 36% among women between 2015 and 2016, and congenital syphilis rates are up 28%. What's worse, while STI rates have been rising for the past 5 years, the Trump administration has proposed to slash CDC's STD prevention budget by 17%. Par for the course for an administration that promises health care for all by taking away people's health insurance, aims to reduce the government deficit by giving tax breaks to the rich, and promotes world peace by inviting nuclear war.

What is one to do? In the face of so much adversity, why not hang your head low, knowing that things will get (a lot) worse before they get better? Thankfully, most in our field are used to swimming upstream and bad news as cited above seems to do more to energize than defeat us. However, it is critical at this juncture that we come together with like-minded people and forge our shared passion into collaborations aimed at developing and supporting more effective public health policies and programs that promote sexual health and STI prevention.

A few years ago, ASTDA/IUSTI North America initiated formal collaborations with its sister agencies, the American Sexual Health Association (ASHA) and the National Coalition of STD Directors (NCSd) by creating ex-officio memberships for these organizations on the ASTDA Executive Committee. While ASTDA's constituency is primarily comprised of STD clinicians and academics, NCSd represents STD public health programs, and ASHA advocates for the sexual health of the general public. In addition, an ex-officio membership was also created for the newly-formed IUSTI Canada branch, thus strengthening collaboration with our northern neighbors. The immediate result has been a closer connection between individuals involved with the different organizations, a free flow of information among participants and a stronger combined effort in mutually beneficial projects, especially the biennial National STD Prevention Conference.

The collaboration was brought to a new level when NCSd invited its partners for a meeting in Washington DC on October 5, 2017. Besides NCSd, ASHA, and ASTDA, there was also representation from the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO), the National Network of STD Prevention Training Centers (NNPTC), the California Disease Intervention Services Training Centers, and the University of Washington Public Health Capacity Building Center. The initial purpose of the meeting was to map out and identify overlaps and gaps in technical assistance resources that each of these partners provides in support of STD prevention nationally. However, the daylong meeting quickly evolved into a higher-level discussion on national capacity building for sexual health promotion and STD prevention, including training and technical assistance. At the end of the day, three topics emerged for further collaborative work: stimulate a national discourse on sexual health vs. sexual disease, design a common policy agenda, and develop a joint communication strategy.

In terms of communication, specific recommendations were made on directions for the ASTDA journal *Sexually Transmitted Diseases*, including publication of best practices and op-eds directly aimed at clinical and STD prevention providers, the stimulation of publications from the field through publication "boot camps" at conferences, and linkage of the journal to other organizations, for example by providing "digests" from key papers. To be sure, the *journal* has already taken a number of steps in this direction. Two key articles in the [October issue of the Journal](#), one on a logic model to promote sexual health and the other on modernizing partner services are cases in point. Another example is the regular series "[The Real World of STD Prevention](#)" in which free-access papers appear that are of special interest to the STD prevention field. Furthermore, ASTDA in collaboration with the

*journal* editor, has sponsored special sessions at past national and international conferences that specifically focus on grant writing and the publication process for young investigators and is planning on conducting similar workshops at the IUSTI World Congress in Dublin (June 27-30, 2018) and the U.S. National STD Prevention Conference in Washington, DC (August 27-30, 2018).

Under the leadership of president Dennis Fortenberry and president-elect Bobbie van der Pol, ASTDA is working to organize a workshop tentatively entitled: "Navigating the Intersections of Public Health, Academic Research and Industry". This workshop invites junior investigators who plan careers in STD research to discuss the different perspectives of academia, public health and industry, as well as have conversations about non-academic health care. More information on the workshop will follow. In the meantime, please take a moment to listen to a brief [podcast interview](#) we did a short while ago.

Kees Rietmeijer – Director North American Region IUSTI

Dennis Fortenberry – President, ASTDA

Bobbie van der Pol – President-Elect, ASTDA

#### ASHA Updates



World Sexual Health Day was September 4<sup>th</sup> and featured a theme of *Love, Bonding, and Intimacy*. For the observation ASHA debuted a [podcast](#) with Eli Coleman, PhD, director of the Program in Human Sexuality at the University of Minnesota and a former member of ASHA's board of directors, featuring his insights on the need to develop a broader view of sexual health that goes beyond merely having sex with another person.

Also in September the National Cervical Cancer Coalition, a program of ASHA, recognized Gynecologic Cancer Awareness Day with activities including a [new podcast](#) discussing gynecologic cancer treatment modalities with Mamta Singhvi, MD, a radiation oncologist and ASHA board member.

With both observations we developed social media campaigns and featured resources including [Ten Questions to Ask about Sexual Health](#) and [Ten Things to Know about HPV](#).

The section of our website for health professionals expanded to include additional checklists for use in treating young patients. These tools are designed to trigger questions and topics to spur discussions with male and female patients, with specific resources for ages 9-14 and age 15 through young adult years, respectively. There are companion

patient tools to prep young people for clinic visits and to encourage them to bring up topics of discussion with their providers. These checklists and self-assessment forms are freely available to [download](#).

Lynn Barclay and Fred Wyand  
American Sexual Health Association

### *IUSTI Canada*

The Canadian Preventive Services Task Force has recently published new guidelines on hepatitis C screening. The full document is available at [this link](#). Other resources, including a 2-page FAQ for primary care physicians, and details on the methodology, can also be accessed here.

Version 2.0 of the mobile application for the Canadian Guidelines on Sexually Transmitted Infections was released at the end of May 2017. It is available for both Apple and Android devices, and it is free! The app is interactive and provides quick and easy access to diagnosis and management information on sexually transmitted infections. More information on the app and how to download can be found [here](#).

### *STD Prevention Online at 10*



STD Prevention Online went live 10 years ago on November 2, 2007. This free networking site was specifically designed for the STI workforce and allows users to upload and download a variety of resources. Over the years, the site has attracted a wide variety of national and international users. For its anniversary, STPDO features 3 new podcasts: Derek Freedman and Henry de Vries on the upcoming IUSTI World Congress in Dublin next June; David Harvey, the Executive Director of the National Coalition of STD Directors (NCS) on what's going on with his organization; and the already mentioned podcast with Dennis Fortenberry and Bobbie van der Pol on ASTDA's young investigator initiatives. All and more on <http://www.stdpreventiononline.org>.

### *From the IUSTI North America Director*

On behalf of IUSTI North America, I was invited to speak at the IUSTI Europe meeting in Helsinki last August on the changing world of STI care.

As a member of the IUSTI World Executive Committee I was asked to chair the scientific committee of the 2018 IUSTI World Congress – a task I am sharing with Prof. Henry de Vries from the Amsterdam Health Department and the Academic Medical Center. Preparations are in full swing and we are looking forward seeing many of our colleagues in Dublin, June 27-30, 2018. More information elsewhere in this newsletter and on the

Congress website [www.iusti2018.com](http://www.iusti2018.com), where registration and abstract submission has just opened.

*Kees Rietmeijer*

### **Asia Pacific**

*22nd Annual Scientific Sessions of Sri Lanka College of Sexual Health and HIV Medicine held together with IUSTI-AP Regional Symposium*

The above conference was held in collaboration with the International Union against STI (IUSTI – Asia Pacific) from the 5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> of October in Hilton, Colombo, Sri Lanka.



Inaugural Ceremony. From Left-to-Right- Dr. Vindya Kaluarachchi (Secretary), Prof. Harendra de Silva (Chief Guest), Dr. Darshani Wijayawickrama (President), and Dr. Philip Hay (Guest of Honour)

The pre congress was held on the 5<sup>th</sup> on TB/HIV co-infection and included following presentations. 'An introduction to the co-infection: Epidemiology and control measures', 'Identifying TB HIV co-infection: New approaches' and 'Clinical aspects of TB/HIV co-infection'.



IUSTI Symposium's first session. From Left-to-Right: Dr. Somesh Gupta (RD, IUSTI-AP), Prof. Jane S. Hocking (University of Melbourne), Prof. David Lewis (Immediate Past President, IUSTI World), Dr. Sunil Sethi (Vice-Chairman, IUSTI-AP), Dr. Phillip Hay (St. George's University, London), Dr. Ajith Karawita (Immediate Past President of Sri Lanka College)

First day of the congress was held in collaboration with the IUSTI-Asia Pacific on the 6<sup>th</sup> of October with about 120 participants. There were three symposia on STIs. The three symposia were co-chaired by three IUSTI members- Prof Somesh Gupa, Prof. David Lewis and Dr. Chavalit Mangkaliviraj. Prof Jane S. Hocking, Prof. David A. Lewis, Prof. Sunil Sethi, Prof. Kaushal Verma, Dr Anne Robertson, Prof. Seema Sood, Prof.

Christopher K Fairley and Prof . Somesh Gupta were among the speakers on day one.



Dr. Phillip Hay (London), Dr. David Lewis (Melbourne), Dr. Kaushal Verma (Delhi), Dr. Anne Robertson (New Zealand) during a symposium session.

Prof. Graham Taylor, Dr. Philip Hay, Dr. Veerakathy Haindra and Dr. Anchalee Avihingsanon were the other foreign speakers. Local speakers in the congress were Dr. Chintana Hapuachchige, Dr. Ayodhya Malalagama and Dr. Patricia Weerakoon.



IUSTI and other faculty during a social event. From Left-to-Right- Dr. David Lewis (Melbourne), Dr. Phil Hay (London), Dr. Somesh Gupta (New Delhi), Dr. Sunil Sethi (Chandigarh, India), Dr. Ajith Karawita (Sri Lanka), Dr Chavalit Mangkalaviraj (Bangkok)

The Second day of the congress had a free paper session and two symposia on sexual health and HIV.



Traditional Sri Lankan Dinner during the conference

#### *Newer STI Diagnostics in South Asia*

Sexually transmitted infections (STI's) continue to be major health issue in the developing world. STI's have profound effect on sexual and reproductive health including infertility, HIV risk,

cervical cancer and fetal/neonatal death. High morbidity and economic burden associated with STIs necessitates the need for development of different detection modalities. Substantial progress has been made in diagnostics for STI's but only a few are appropriate for use in developing countries where reliance is placed on syndromic management. This approach does not include asymptomatic populations and leads to overtreatment with antibiotics. Most laboratories in resource constrained settings employ direct detection methods which include microscopy following appropriate staining or wet preparation to visualize pathogens. Culture is also widely used to identify the causal organism but it is time consuming. Other tests employed detect microbial metabolites like biogenic amines (whiff test for detection of bacterial vaginosis) or the change in pH of secretions. However, these tests are not specific. Newly adopted diagnostic methods include molecular tests conducted by some laboratories of South Asia for detection of STIs. Amplification based assays, e.g., qualitative PCR is used for confirmation of *Chlamydia trachomatis* and *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* and real time PCR for detection of Human papilloma virus. Many laboratories use In-house tests. The commercially available NAAT assays have a high sensitivity and specificity but beyond the reach of most laboratories in this region due to the cost and the requirement for equipment. Other recent diagnostic tests for STI's like syphilis, HIV and HSV are based on detection of the host response to infection. POCTs utilizing Immune-chromatography (ICT) have been used successfully for detection of antibodies against some of these STIs. Most countries have policies for universal screening of syphilis during pregnancy for prevention of congenital syphilis.

Some of the above mentioned tests lack specificity, have long turnaround times leading to loss to follow up, require complex infrastructure or are expensive. These laboratory-based diagnostics might not be suitable for use in resource-limited settings where diagnostic access and delivery are difficult. Therefore, there is a need to develop new tests for STI diagnosis. Development of cost effective tests requiring no laboratory infrastructure would greatly reduce the burden of STI's in developing countries where these infections are stigmatized. Rapid on-site diagnosis of STI's will reduce the requirement of reattendance thereby facilitating treatment initiation at the first visit.

Seema Sood

#### *1st International Forum on Gonococcal Infections and Resistance in Shenzhen*

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) has become a major global health threat. As a country consuming around half of the antibiotics consumed worldwide, China has responded to this issue and launched the National Action Plan to Contain Antimicrobial

Resistance (2016-2020) in August 2016. The rise in AMR to *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* and the threat of untreatable gonococcal infection are focusing attention on strategies to limit the spread of drug-resistant gonorrhoea. In order to update knowledge on epidemiology of AMR of *N. gonorrhoeae*, share experience in responses to the AMR, discuss possible challenges for research, practice and policy, and explore possibilities for research collaboration, the National Center for Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) Control (Institute of Dermatology, Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences) in Nanjing organized the inaugural 2017 International Forum on Gonococcal Infections and Resistance (2017 IFGIR) on 17-19 September 2017 in Shenzhen. Professor Xiang-Sheng Chen was Chair of the Forum and the meeting was attended by a large number of world experts in the gonorrhoea field, from a wide range of disciplines (basic science, diagnostics, clinical and public health) as well as many local Chinese scientists. It is planned to have the 2<sup>nd</sup> IFGIR in China in 2019 (venue to be decided).

David Lewis



Prof Xiang-Sheng Chen (Forum Chair) and Prof David Lewis (IUSTI-World Immediate Past President) co-chairing the opening session of the 1<sup>st</sup> International Forum on Gonococcal Infections and Resistance in Shenzhen'

*Somesh Gupta*

## Conference Update

### **IUSTI Events:**

19th IUSTI 2018 World and Europe Congress

Dates: June 27-30, 2018

Location: Dublin, Ireland

Website: <http://iusti.org/events/default.htm>

23rd ISSTD & 20th World IUSTI Joint Meeting

Dates: July 14-17, 2019

Location: Vancouver, Canada

Website: [www.STIHIV2019vancouver.com](http://www.STIHIV2019vancouver.com)

21st IUSTI World Congress

Dates: November 2020

Location: Bangkok, Thailand

Website: TBA

### **Other STI or Related Meetings/Congresses/Courses:**

ICASA 2017: International Conference on HIV/AIDS and STI's in Africa

Dates: December 4, 2017 – December 9, 2017

Location: Cote d'Ivoire

Website: <http://emtct-iatt.org/event/icasa-2017-international-conference-on-hiv-aids-and-stis-in-africa/>

22nd International AIDS Conference (AIDS 2018)

Dates: July 22-27, 2018

Location: Amsterdam, the Netherlands

Website: [www.aids2018.org](http://www.aids2018.org)

*The 32nd International Papillomavirus Conference in Sydney, Australia*

Dates: October 1-6, 2018

Location: Sydney, Australia

Website: <http://www.ipvsoc.org/conferences>

*Somesh Gupta*

*STI Global Update* is published by the International Union against Sexually Transmitted Infections. Its aims are to provide an international perspective on the management and control of sexually acquired infections. Regular contributions from the regional directors of IUSTI and feedback from conferences is supplemented by short reviews of relevant topics and input from the Center for Disease Control (US), Health Protection Agency (UK), European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, and the World Health Organisation.

*Prof. Jonathan Ross, Editor*

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Further information on the activities of IUSTI available at

[www.iusti.org](http://www.iusti.org)