

Creation of an International Scientific Committee on Influenza and Homeopathy (ISCHI)

Composition, Brief, Charter and Operation

At the suggestion of the International Foundation for Clinical Homeopathy (IFCH), four learned bodies joined together with the IFCH to organise a day of discussion on the theme of "homeopathic medicine and avian influenza" on 19th November 2005: the Royal London Homeopathic Hospital (RLHH), the European Committee for Homeopathy (ECH), the American Institute of Homeopathy (AIH) and the Indian Institute of Homeopathic Physicians (IIHP). Subsequently, the IIHP has been replaced by a representative of the department of AYUSH, Health Ministry of India.

A Scientific Committee was set up to organise this event and validate its proposals.

Following the international meeting of 19th November 2005, the aforementioned learned bodies and the Scientific Committee decided to pursue their research and evaluation initiatives in homeopathic treatments. The scientific committee was formally named the "International Scientific Committee on Homeopathy and Influenza" (ISCHI). Additional members were added, and the ISCHI currently is made up of the following persons:

- Dr. Peter Fisher, Chairperson (UK)
- Dr. Marie France Bordet, Vice-Chairperson (FR)
- Dr. Michel Van Wassenhoven (BE)
- Dr. Flavio Dantas (BRA)
- Gilles Chaufferin (FR)
- Dr. Robert Mathie (UK)
- Dr. Helmut Roniger (UK)
- Dr. Menachem Oberbaum (ISR)
- Dr. John Ives (USA)
- Dr. Jennifer Jacobs (USA)
- Dr. Philippe Belon (FR)
- Dr. Joyce Frye (USA)
- Dr. Chaturbhujaya Nayak (IND)

SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE BRIEF

ISCHI's brief consists of:

- Initiating research programmes intended to evaluate the use of homeopathic medicine in the prevention and treatment of influenza including avian influenza.
- Promoting and improving the quality of research in the above research area.
- Assessing, examining and evaluating research proposals submitted to it in the above research area.
- Providing financial support for approved proposals, with co-funders where appropriate.
- Offering help and follow-up activities during ongoing supported research projects.
- Supporting publication of results in international peer-reviewed publications.
- Liaising with, advising and making representations to external bodies on important matters within its remit.

ISCHI draws up recommendations based on these activities.

ISCHI CHARTER

This charter describes the responsibilities and allocations of the members of ISCHI. It also clarifies the rules concerning proposal selection.

- Every time a proposal is submitted, Committee members who have a link or interest with said proposal must declare this link or interest to all of the Committee members.
- The members agree to maintain the confidentiality of subjects discussed and of research projects presented. Information exchanged during meetings must not be used for personal or professional purposes and not published without the approval of the ISCHI. Proposals should be submitted in a written form. Proposals will be presented by a nominated member.

COMPOSITION AND OPERATION OF THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

1. Composition and appointment of members:

The ISCHI is currently composed of 13 members. This number can, if necessary, be raised to a maximum of 15 members.

The ISCHI Chairperson is nominated by the Committee members for a (renewable) term of three years by a majority of two-thirds of the members present or represented.

Members are selected based on their experience and knowledge in the area of homeopathic treatments and on their evaluation expertise. New members are elected by a simple majority of the ISCHI members for a period of three years. Members elected in this way must be able to demonstrate both scientific ability and real-world homeopathic knowledge.

ISCHI members who no longer wish to be part of the Committee must address their resignation to the Chairperson.

The ISCHI can proceed on a case-by-case basis with outside experts for specific projects.

2. ISCHI meetings:

The ISCHI members meet on a regular basis. Meetings are called by the Chairperson two months before the meeting date.

The notice of meeting outlines the agenda finalised by the Chairperson. ISCHI members wishing to add one or more points to the agenda must submit these to the Chairperson at least two weeks before the meeting date. Any literature necessary for the treatment of the points of the agenda will be sent to the members one week before the meeting.

A secretary is made available to the Chairperson and members of the ISCHI. The secretary is in charge of organising meetings (writing up the agenda, sending documents, booking meeting rooms and organising travel arrangements for each member). The secretary also maintains efficient communication within the group. Finally, on behalf of the Chairperson, the secretary draws up the draft Committee meeting reports.

3. Research Submission and Decision-making processes:

The process for proposal submission is a formal process involving peer review and occurs in two main stages: an initial short concept proposal to screen research projects to appraise if they are of potential interest and of adequate quality, followed by a full proposal. Proposers of projects which are agreed to be of interest will be invited to submit a full proposal (including modifications suggested by the committee if necessary).

Concept proposals are reviewed internally by the committee and full proposals normally involve external peer review. ISCHI will support and advise on projects which are successful at this stage, but cannot guarantee full funding.

For each research proposal submitted to ISCHI and taking into account the written recommendations of its members, the Chairperson or a designated member submits a general draft recommendation.

Decisions are made by a majority of two-thirds of the members present or represented. In order for these decisions to be valid, a quorum is required, that is at least half of the Committee members must be physically present. The Committee members may delegate in writing another member to represent them during a meeting.

An ISCHI member may not take part in debate and vote for approval of a proposal that he/she has submitted.

REMUNERATION AND TRAVEL EXPENSES

Members are remunerated in the form of fees for the functions they fulfil as a member of the ISCHI. In addition, each member receives remuneration for each Committee meeting and travel expenses paid based on supporting proof for the costs incurred : airplane (Business Class for inter-continental and Economy Class for intra-continental) or train tickets and 3-star hotel accommodation.

Costs incurred in the running of the Committee, in particular the members' travel expenses will be the subject of an annual estimate.

Each member commits to adhering to a code of good practice for travel expenses.

* * * * *