

Creation of an International Scientific Committee for Homeopathic Investigations

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 Subsequently, the IIHP has been replaced by a representative of the department of AYUSH, Health Ministry of India.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 to 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) and additional members were added to the Committee.

At the meeting of 15-17 April, 2010, the Committee was renamed "International Scientific Committee on Homeopathic Investigations" in order to broaden the scope of research initiatives that may be considered and undertaken.

SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE BRIEF

ISCHI's brief consists of:

- Initiating mechanisms for communication regarding its mission and for inviting research programmes intended to evaluate the use of homeopathic medicine.
- Initiating mechanisms for communication regarding contemporaneous homeopathic treatment of epidemic infectious diseases.
- Promoting and improving the quality of research through assessing, examining and evaluating research proposals submitted to it.
- Providing financial support for approved proposals, with co-funders where appropriate.
- Assessing the progress of ongoing supported research projects at regular intervals, offering assistance and follow-up activities as needed and approving release of funds for additional stages of the project.
- Supporting publication of results in international peer-reviewed publications.
- Liaising with, advising and making representations to external bodies on important matters within its remit.

In order to identify appropriate studies for support ISCHI may:

- Perform literature review to identify promising studies for replication.
- Accept unsolicited proposals.
- Call for proposals with guidelines.
- Identify experimental research groups from whom to invite submission of research protocols

- Collaborate with potential research groups on protocol design and study conduct.

ISCHI especially seeks to support research initiatives in the following areas:

- High impact studies.
- Epidemiology, RCTs and basic research.
- Studies deserving of replication.

In assessing research initiatives ISCHI shall take into consideration:

- Objective outcomes.
- Feasibility and duration.
- Appropriately powered.
- Cost-effectiveness of study.
- Type of condition, e.g. epidemic diseases (influenza, dengue, etc.), major chronic diseases.

ISCHI CHARTER

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

For each ISCHI meeting, whether by telephone or in person, all members present shall sign the official ISCHI Conflict of Interest declaration included in Addendum 2.

For all submitted research proposals, Committee members who have a link or interest in said proposal shall specifically declare this link or interest to all of the voting Committee members.

The members agree to maintain the confidentiality of subjects discussed and of research projects presented. Information exchanged during meetings may not be used for personal or professional purposes and may not be published without the approval of the ISCHI. Proposals should be submitted in a written form.

COMPOSITION AND OPERATION OF THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

1. Composition and appointment of members

The ISCHI may be composed of not fewer than ten members. For current membership see Addendum 1.

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 contemporary homeopathic knowledge.

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

The ISCHI may proceed on a case-by-case basis with consultation from outside experts for specific projects. ISCHI may invite observers as required.

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.

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.

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

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 additional external peer review. ISCHI will support and advise on projects that 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.

An ISCHI member who submits a proposal may provide clarification on any items that are unclear in the appraisal process; however (s)he may not take part in debate or vote for approval of a proposal that (s)he has submitted.

4. Budget and financial control

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, for other work on behalf of ISCHI, 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. Each member commits to adhering to a code of good practice for travel expenses

The secretary shall prepare a projected annual budget and financial statement.

Addendum 1

- 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. Joyce Frye (USA)
- Dr. Chaturbhuj Nayak (IND)

Addendum 2

International Scientific Committee on Homeopathic Investigations

Conflict of Interest Statement

I, _____, as a Member of the International Scientific Committee on Homeopathic Investigations (ISCHI), understand the ISCHI requirement that ISCHI be made aware of potential or actual conflicts of interest of its Members with regard to any ISCHI matter that will culminate in a Committee vote or decision. I understand that a conflict of interest occurs whenever a Member has a direct, indirect, or financial interest, or the appearance of a conflict of interest, in the outcome of any matter involving ISCHI. Among other situations, a conflict of interest can arise as a result of employment relationships, consulting arrangements, the receipt of gifts of material value, honoraria or any other funding, or the promise of such future gifts, honoraria, or other funding. A conflict of interest also occurs whenever a Member has a relationship with other parties to such an extent that the relationship might reasonably be expected to affect the judgment of the Member in the particular matter, whether in a manner adverse to ISCHI or favorable to other parties to the transaction.

In keeping with this understanding, during any Committee meeting, I will openly disclose all such potential or actual conflicts of interest in a manner that will allow the conflict to be fully reflected in the meeting minutes, and for the purpose of this meeting I am disclosing the following matters:

Signed:

Date: