

GP-TCM Monthly Newsletter March 2010

Appointment of new GP-TCM Members and changes of membership or labour division:

1. Welcome Prof. Alan Bensoussan (University of Western Sydney, Australia) to join GP-TCM as a non-beneficiary member devoted to WP6 (clinical studies), lead scientist of which is Prof. Kenneth Muir. Prof. Bensoussan has been in clinical practice for over 25 years and is an active researcher, attracting funds from the US National Institutes of Health, the Australian National Health and Medical Research Council, the Department of Education Science and Technology, the Department of Trade and Industry, the UK National Health Service, Commonwealth and State Governments (NSW, QLD, Victoria) and Industry. He has published two books including a review of acupuncture research (1990) and a major government report on the practice of traditional Chinese medicine in Australia (1996), which has led to the passage of the Victorian Chinese Medicine (Practitioner) Registration Act. He has been a lead investigator on numerous high quality clinical trials of Chinese medicine resulting in publications in JAMA, Journal of Gastroenterology and Hepatology and meta-analyses and related reports in Lancet, Archives of Family Medicine, MJA, Journal of Toxicology-Clinical Toxicology, Current Gastroenterology Reports and the Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews. As such he brings methodological experience in clinical investigation of Chinese medicines, including chemical definitions of products, safety and efficacy assessments, contrasting diagnostic approaches and labelling of illness in traditional medicine. **Warmest congratulations, Alan!**

2. Welcome Prof. David Briggs (University of Western Sydney, Australia) to join GP-TCM as a non-beneficiary member devoted to WP7 (research and development), lead scientists of which are Dr. Tai-Ping Fan and Prof. Kelvin Chan. David Briggs is an Adjunct Professor in the Centre for Complementary Medicine Research at the University of Western Sydney, Australia. He is a member of the Scientific Advisory Committee of the National Institute of Complementary Medicine, the International Advisory Board on Hong Kong Chinese *Materia Medica* Standards, and the WHO Expert Advisory Panel on Traditional Medicine. He is also a WHO Temporary Adviser for the development of monographs for herbal medicines. Prof. Briggs has previously worked in a regulatory environment, most recently as Head of the Office of Complementary Medicines in the Australian Therapeutic Goods Administration and was an inaugural member of the Standing Committee of the Western Pacific Regional Forum for the Harmonization of Herbal Medicines. Before taking up his position in the Office of Complementary Medicines, he was Professor and Head of the School of Nutrition and Public Health at Deakin University in Victoria. He has an MSc from the University of Melbourne and a PhD from The School of Pharmacy, University of London. His particular interests are in the quality, safety and regulation of complementary medicines. **Warmest congratulations, David!**

3. Welcome Dr. Atanas G. Atanasov (University of Vienna, Austria) to join GP-TCM as a consortium member devoted to WP4 (Pharmacology in vitro), lead scientists of which are Prof. Peter Hylands and Prof. Verena Dirsch. During his PhD (with Prof. Odermatt at the Department of Clinical Research, Bern, Switzerland) Dr. Atanasov gathered extensive research experience on mechanisms of action of natural compounds as well as environmentally relevant synthetic compounds. Later on during his postdoctoral training at the Division of Immunopathology (Institute of Pathology, Bern, Switzerland), he broadened his knowledge and obtained additional skills in the field of Immunology and Inflammation-related signalling. Since June 2008, he works at the Department of Pharmacognosy at the University of Vienna where he got involved in the supervision of "Molecular Targets" group, and where he intends to accomplish his Habilitation. Major research focus of Dr. Atanasov is currently set on vascular inflammation, as well as mechanisms of anti-inflammatory action of natural compounds. He is actively involved in the execution of the Austrian national network Drug From Nature Targeting Inflammation (DNTI), major focus of which is identification of novel bioactive compounds targeting several inflammation-related transcription factors such as NF- κ B and PPARs. Molecular mechanisms of action of Traditional Chinese Medicines used against Cardiovascular Disease represent another main research focus of Dr. Atanasov that recently obtained financial support from the European Union 7th Framework Programme. **Warmest congratulations, Atanas!**

GP-TCM Monthly Newsletter March 2010

4. Appointment of Dr. Alessandro Buriani (University of Padova, Italy) as a WP4 Assistant Coordinator: Following WP4 Coordinator Prof. Peter Hylands' recommendation and invitation, Dr. Alessandro Buriani has been promoted as the new WP4 Assistant Coordinator, who has been an actively contributing to many discussions/activities across the work package and the consortium. Previous Assistant Coordinator, Dr. Tai-Ping Fan, stepped down from this position to be able to attend his other consortium duties including Consortium Deputy Coordinator and CO Member, WP7 Co-Coordinator, WP9 Deputy Coordinator, Website and Newsletter Editor-in-Chief. **Warmest congratulations, Alessandro!**

5. Appointment of Steering Committee, Technical Advisory Committee, and Ethics Panel members: Following a closed voting session, Coordination Office Members and SOP Panel Co-Chairs have elected members for vacant positions of the aforementioned committees during February 2010. The elected members have accepted to take part in these groups and have indicated their willingness to contribute to these committees actively. **Warmest congratulations go to all elected Committee and Panel Members!**

Please see below for the details of these committees and their associated members:

Steering Committee:

- In charge of the scientific and technical direction of the project.
- Comprises all 10 WP coordinators and around 5 senior Consortium members or experts nominated by the CO.
- It's the authority for making all technical decisions within the project and has direct control of all scientific activities.
- Responsible for reviewing external deliverables and publications and is responsible for the technical quality assurance of all project outputs including deliverables, publications, demonstrations, and so on.
- All official documents to be delivered to the Commission or submitted for publication must be internally reviewed by the Steering Committee. These feedback documents will form the basis for guiding revision and approval by the CO.
- Members of the Committee: Prof. Rudi Bauer, Prof. Alberto Dias, Prof. De-an Guo, Prof. Brigitte Kopp, Prof. Elisabeth M. Williamson, Prof. Monique Simmonds (WP1), Prof. Peter Proksch (WP2), Prof. Pierre Duez (WP3 co-coordinator), Prof. Xinmin Liu (WP3 co-coordinator), Prof. Peter Hylands (WP4), Prof. Javier Lucio-Cazaña (WP5), Prof. Kenneth Muir (WP6), Dr. Tai-Ping Fan (WP7 co-coordinator), Prof. Kelvin Chan (WP7 co-coordinator), Prof. Xiao-Min Wang (WP8), Prof. Rob Verpoorte (WP9), and Dr. Qihe Xu (WP10).

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC):

- Composed of 5 members, elected from the Consortium members and experts and approved by the Steering Committee
- Responsible to advise the Steering Committee and provide support to the CO as far as technical management is concerned
- Responsible for implementation of long-term strategies of technical issues, choice of techniques (especially functional genomics and other emerging new technologies), quality control of techniques and appropriate interpretation of results.
- TAC to be provided with a progress report every six months by each Work Package. These progress reports will be delivered to the CO via the Project Manager, and will contain sufficient technical information to enable the CO to be assured that work is progressing according to plan. The TAC is entitled to request additional reports and remedial actions where appropriate.
- The TAC to submit a report to the CO at each Steering Committee meeting describing the status of the technical work, including work progress, resources consumed, current goals, future work, and other relevant information.
- All five nominees of the TAC will be submitted to the Steering Committee for their approval.
- Members of the Committee: Prof. Pierre Duez, Prof. Peter Hylands, Prof. Peter Proksch, Prof. Monique Simmonds, and Prof. Rob Verpoorte.

GP-TCM Monthly Newsletter March 2010

Ethics Panel:

- The Ethics Panel will be appointed by the CO among consortium members and experts who are familiar to the ethical issues related to attempts at integrating Western and Chinese medical philosophies.
- The committee to work closely with the TAC helping Steering Committee, and ultimately the CO, to monitor research direction and coordinate research progress for each WP and across the Consortium.
- Members of the Panel: Prof. Kelvin Chan, Prof. Xinmin Liu, Dr. Ning Wang, and Prof. Sue Watson.

Consortium Events:

1. The 1st Plant Lists Discussion Teleconference was held on 18th February 2010. The meeting was attended by Kelvin Chan, Pierre Duez, Javier Lucio-Cazaña, Kenneth Muir, Jandirk Sendker, Debbie Shaw, Monique Simmonds (chair), Halil Uzuner (host), and Rob Verpoorte. The teleconference aimed to gather key GP-TCM members, whom are working towards producing plant lists in their WPs, with an attempt to agree on how to coordinate the different lists of species of plants being generated by various WPs within the consortium. Plant lists discussed during the meeting included “**WP1 Priority Plants list**” (by Monique Simmonds), “**Commonly Used Chinese Herbs and Formula in the UK**” and “**Top 15 CMM & PCM sold in EU**” (by Kelvin Chan), and **WP3 - lists of plants** (by Pierre Duez). Each plant list was summarised and discussed by the attendees, and further collaboration between various WPs have been agreed. The group has also agreed to produce a joint journal paper to be published at the Journal of Ethnopharmacology (coordinated by Monique Simmonds). Currently, a follow-up teleconference is being scheduled to be held in April 2010. Please contact Halil Uzuner for further details (halil.uzuner@kcl.ac.uk).

2. The 10th Coordination Office (CO) Teleconference: The teleconference was held on 23rd February 2010 as a Skype meeting and gathered eight CO members, and one Literature Review Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) Panel Co-Chair. Issues discussed at the meeting included WP-based review proposals for the GP-TCM Special Issue at the Journal of Ethnopharmacology, finalisation of the consortium committee/panel memberships, and SOP panel activity review.

3. The 1st Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) Panel Teleconference: The SOP for literature review was initially devised by the CO to help different WPs to address central questions and give guidelines and support for literature review and data collection. The SOP Panel Teleconference was held on 4th March 2010 as a Skype session. The event was chaired by Pierre Duez and was attended by 5 additional Panel members, namely Liz Williamson, Debbie Shaw, Monique Simmonds, Rob Verpoorte, and Qihe Xu. The attendees reviewed the past work of the Panel, discussed a number of issues including current opportunities and challenges, outstanding issues, WP central questions, review proposals from each WP for the publication of a GP-TCM special issue in Journal of Ethnopharmacology, etc. It has been agreed that, the SOP will continue to be run as a specialised group of GP-TCM to guide consortium activities. It will be brought under the supervision of the Steering Committee and Technological Advisory Committee, in addition to the CO. Members of these committees, especially WP leads should be encouraged to be more and more involved in devising the Consortium SOP and implement them in their WP and committee activities. It was proposed that, with increasing scientific activities unrolling throughout the Consortium, future CO teleconferences should be broadened into online Management and Science Meetings (e-MSM) so that discussions on management and science can be better integrated. It was also agreed that the SOP issue will become a standing issue in future e-MSMs and a special session on SOP will be arranged in the 4th MSM and the 1st Annual Meeting of GP-TCM, to be held in Henley-upon-Thames, UK. It was recommended that the CO should ask each WP to update their WP central questions and abstract proposals for the Journal of Ethnopharmacology so that they can be passed on to the Steering Committee and TAC for review. The agreed WP central questions will be included in the next version of SOP to guide the work of GP-TCM WPs.

GP-TCM Monthly Newsletter March 2010

Suggested Reading:

1. **“China boosts medical research”**, by Lin Guo, The Lancet, Volume 375, Issue 9716, Page 711, 27 February 2010, <http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140673610602887/fulltext?rss=yes>.
2. **“Evidence-based medicine in China”**, by Jiyao Wang, The Lancet, Volume 375, Issue 9714, Pages 532 - 533, 13 February 2010, [http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(09\)62131-0/fulltext](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(09)62131-0/fulltext).
3. **“Random thoughts- Reflections on East-West Convergence”** by Man Fong Mei, Chairman, Chinese Medical Institute & Register, London (UK).
<http://www.cmir.org.uk/index.php?mact=News.cntnt01.detail,0&cntnt01articleid=59&cntnt01returnid=15>
<http://www.cmir.org.uk/index.php?page=news-letter>.
4. **“Hot topics in Chinese herbal drugs research documented in PubMed/MEDLINE by authors inside China and outside of China in the past 10 years: based on co-word cluster analysis”** by Li H.Y., Cui L., Cui M., The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine, 15(7), Pages:779-8, July 2009, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/19534611>.

Editor's Choice:

Analysis of the adverse reactions induced by natural product-derived drugs published in Br J Pharmacol (March 2010): Zeng Z-P and Jiang J-G

In this review 3122 cases of adverse drug reactions (ADRs) of traditional Chinese medicines (TCM) published in the past 10 years are evaluated. Statistical analysis was carried out regarding the distribution of administration routes and time of the occurrence of ADRs, the prognosis of ADRs, sex and age factors, types and clinical symptoms of ADRs, and drugs involved in ADRs. In addition, occurrence and influencing factors of TCM-induced diseases are also analysed, including swapped species, processing drugs improperly, toxic components, long-term medication, improper concerted application, interaction of TCM and Western medicine. For more details: <http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/journal/123309033/abstract>

Acknowledgements

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