

# ISPOR Inaugural European Conference: An Overview

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A successful ISPOR Inaugural European Conference held 10–12 December 1998 in Cologne, Germany, boasted over 370 participants from academia, the healthcare industry, consulting, healthcare providers, and government. Registration exceeded expectations; in fact, so many exciting abstracts were submitted for consideration that the conference was extended by a half day to accommodate the greater than expected number of presentations. While many conference participants came from the United States and Canada (about 60), the majority attended from European countries (over 300), and some made the long journey from Russia, Asia, or Australia (14).

Thursday morning activities included stimulating and well-attended preconference ISPOR short courses covering Pharmacoeconomics, Decision Analysis in Health Care, Meta-analysis and Other Statistical Methods, and Quality-of-Life Instruments.

In the afternoon, welcoming remarks and presentation of conference objectives were made by Program Committee members: Peter Davey of the University of Dundee, Scotland; Jonathan Cooke of South Manchester University Hospitals, England; and Karl Lauterbach and Thomas Kurscheid, both of the Institute for Health Economics at the University of Cologne, Germany.

Following this introduction, Bernard Genesté of Rhône-Poulenc Rorer, France, moderated a workshop on Presenting Pharmacoeconomic Information to European Policy-makers, where the speakers were Peter Davey, Karl Lauterbach, and Thomas Kurscheid. At the same time, three concurrent podium presentation sessions took place on outcomes research issues and economic and outcomes study results. Oliver Mast of Bayer AG, Germany, moderated presentations on Cancer Research; Jonathan Cooke moderated those on Neurologic and Gastric Disorders; and Koen Torfs of Janssen Pharmaceutica, Belgium, was moderator of talks given on Pulmonary Disorders and Infectious Disease.

On Friday morning, Peter Davey moderated the First General Session, which comprised reports

and discussion about Developing Consensus on Pharmacoeconomic Methodology. Joel Hay of the University of Southern California summarized the discussions and recommendations of the Methodology Advisory Panels (using Clinical Studies, Modeling, and Databases for Pharmacoeconomic Research) from the ISPOR Pharmacoeconomics Consensus Development Conference in February 1998. This was followed by a Summary Report of the HARMET European Commission Project—Harmonization of Methodology for Economic Evaluation of Health Care Technologies in the European Union—given by Joan Rovira of SOIKOS, Department of Economics at the University of Barcelona, Spain. Matthias Graf von Schulenburg of the Centre for Health Economics and Health System at the University of Hannover, Germany, followed with a Summary Report of the EUROMET European Commission Project on Health Care Measurements and Indicators. The session ended with a lively panel discussion of key questions in pharmacoeconomic methodology. Panelists included Jonathan Cooke; Michael Drummond of the Centre for Health Economics at the University of York, England; Livio Garattini of the Centre for Health Economics at the Institute for Pharmacological Research at Ranica, Italy; Bengt Jönsson of the Stockholm School of Economics, Sweden; Karl Lauterbach; and Frank Peys of the Belgian Institute for Health Economics, Belgium.

The Second General Session on Friday afternoon, Using Evidence-Based Medicine to Deliver Cost-Effective Health Care, focused on cardiovascular disease. Karl Lauterbach discussed Controversies with Lipid-lowering Agents, and Ulrich Keil, from the Institute of Epidemiology and Social Medicine at the University of Münster, Germany, discussed a nine-country survey on cardiovascular risk factors.

This session was followed by simultaneous contributed podium presentations of original studies in economic and outcomes research. Topics included Cardiovascular Disease, moderated by

Thomas Kurscheid; Mental Health, moderated by Charlotte McMillan of Wyeth-Ayerst Research in France; and Diabetes and Infectious Disease, moderated by Diana Brixner of Novartis Pharmaceuticals, United States.

On Friday evening, a keynote presentation was made by Professor Gerhard Krueger, Dean, Cologne University Medical School, speaking on the crucial subject of "Why Should the Dean of a Medical School Be Concerned About Managed Care?" Robert Epstein of Merck-Medco Managed Care, United States, and President of ISPOR then spoke of the growth of ISPOR and those challenges that lie ahead.

The meeting ended on Saturday with the Fourth General Session, Using Disease Management to Deliver Cost-Effective Health Care, with a focus on diabetes, moderated by Karl Lauterbach. The first speaker, Gregory Gilmet of Quality and Outcomes Research, Blue Care Network of Michigan, United States, described his organization's Data-Driven Diabetes Disease Management program, a prototype in this field. Andrew Morris, MEMO, Ninewells Hospital and Medical School, Dundee Teaching Hospitals, Scotland, finished the session with his talk, Working at the Population Level: The Future of Diabetes Management.

Two sessions of contributed workshops were fitted into the busy program schedule with 13 presentations in all. These followed the pattern al-

ready well established at the annual ISPOR meetings, with each workshop being presented twice, back-to-back, to allow each conference participant to attend more than one workshop at each session. Presentations were relevant to one of four themes: Decision Support Systems and Models, Guidelines and Standards, Quality of Life Assessment, or Study Methods.

Sixty contributed poster presentations offered original research findings and methodological developments over the 3 days of the meeting in the therapeutic domains of Cancer and AIDS, Cardiovascular Disease, Gastrointestinal and Urinary Tract Disorders, Diabetes, Infectious Disease, Mental Health and Neurologic Disorders, and Pulmonary and Arthritic Disorders, as well as Pharmacoeconomic Methods and Cost of Care Studies.

Exhibitors from around the world provided contract research, software, database, and scientific information.

The conference was an auspicious opening for ISPOR's rapidly growing European presence. The conference admirably fulfilled ISPOR's vision of "translating science into practice" for people of many diverse languages and cultures. The second ISPOR European conference will be held in Edinburgh, Scotland, 10-13 November 1999 (see [www.ispor.org](http://www.ispor.org) for further details).

May it be as exciting and educational as the first European meeting!