

Minutes of IEA European regional business meeting 2011

Wednesday 19 August 18.00

Edinburgh International Conference Centre

In attendance 15 members

Summary of activities 2009 - 11 (Robert West)

Board meetings were held on 27 August 2009 in Warsaw, 8 April 2010 in Cardiff, 8 November 2010 in Florence and 7 August 2011 in Edinburgh. Minutes are on the IEA Europe / EEF website.

Conferences were run by the Polish epidemiological association in August 2009 in Warsaw and by the Italian epidemiological association in November 2010 in Florence. Conference programmes and abstracts were published by European J Epidemiology and Epidemiologia e Prevenzione respectively. Both were well organised and well attended and we wish to thank both associations for managing these conferences.

The website has few visits and as the discussion board attracted no discussion that feature was discontinued. We wish to record our thanks to Charles Florey for managing the website and thereby ensuring continued visibility of IEA EEF and epidemiological activities in Europe.

The European Epidemiological Federation had been registered as a 'non governmental organisation' (NGO) at the European Union through lawyers 'Medlaw' in Netherlands for a trial period of three years. Funding for this came from five national societies. However the contact provided little of interest, with few newsletters each requiring considerable editing (by Hans-Werner Hense). The subscription was discontinued.

To develop the 'federation' element of national epidemiological societies (in EEF) and increase the resources available to fund regional activities, like subsidising conferences managed by 'poorer' societies (for example in Eastern Europe) we investigated small financial contributions annually by affiliated societies. As a majority of societies were unwilling to contribute even a small regular 'tithe', the proposal was dropped. The European region remains wholly an IEA region, and 'federation' in name.

A survey of teaching and training yielded a poor response, disappointing from epidemiologists and of little help to young epidemiologists.

The young epidemiologist group 'EYE' is now well established, with 'second generation' of appointments of chair, vice-chair and representative on the EEF board, a website and uses 'facebook' and 'twitter'. Such an 'informal' (no subscription) group encourages young and early career researchers to pursue careers in epidemiology and to membership of established societies and associations including IEA. Following the example of EYE in Europe the concept of encouraging early career researcher groups with 'a seat at the table' has extended into of national societies and internationally in IEA.

A possible link with the European Journal of Epidemiology has been explored. This English language journal has published supplements for IEA European / EEF conferences, could encourage wider submission of research by non-native English speakers into English language journals, could 'advertise' EEF (IEA European

region) and in turn increase IEA membership. Potential conflict of interest with IEA's own journal, *International Journal of Epidemiology*, with its leading citation index / impact factor (and high rejection rate) needs careful consideration. Council will discuss before a link with EJE is taken further.

The 'joint membership' scheme offered by IEA (and taken up successfully in Australia and a number of other countries) was described to member societies of EEF. Only Finland persevered through much correspondence over many practical problems associated with the process and several new joint members state that they are unlikely to renew; Germany, Netherlands, Spain and UK declined on grounds of complicated process, extra work for secretariats of national societies, legal considerations of data-sharing and financial transfers between individuals and three organisations (national society, OUP and IEA). EEF wrote to council (and later RW described to council) a simplified process, whereby individual members of (recognized) national societies apply directly to IEA for membership of IEA at 'joint membership' rates (without any administrative, secretarial or financial involvement of the national society).

Finances; The board voted 2000 Euro towards the projected deficit (loss) of the EUROPEI 2010 conference in Florence (deficit and subsidy by the Italian association later confirmed). The board voted contribution of £1000 to the World conference in Edinburgh for presentation and poster prizes to young investigators (following the EYE 'definition of the younger of PhD plus 3 years or age 35) to encourage young investigator abstract submissions and presentations, The organizing committee had no plans for prizes previously and warmly welcomed EEF's initiative and offer. Six prizes for presentations and six for posters will be awarded in the six conference themes. The annual contribution of IEA central funds to European region during 2008 – 2011 (individual European members pay enhanced annual subscriptions) met outgoings, the accrued funds (balance received from Germany and to be passed on to Italy) is almost entirely attributable to profits of two conferences held in collaboration with Society for Social Medicine (Oxford and Cork).

Plans 2011 – 14 (Adele Seniori)

While epidemiology is well developed in most European countries, differences exist and Eastern European countries are less well represented within the EEF. Action; 1) Seek to attract epidemiologists, in particular young epidemiologists, from Eastern European countries to give all European epidemiologists opportunities for sharing ideas and experiences in order to identify research priorities with a whole European perspective. 2) Ask young epidemiologists (via EYE) about their skills, interests and training needs. 3) Assist IEA Council to evaluate possibilities in training addressed specifically to those countries, particularly in Eastern Europe, where there are few opportunities of education in epidemiology.

A second English language journal specifically directed at the European region could represent a further opportunity for scientific debate and encourage submission of research by epidemiologists in Europe and particularly from countries without their own epidemiological journals.

In order to maintain continuity on European regional board it seems suitable to co-opt to the board the past chair, if willing.

Any other business; none

Meeting closed at 18.45