

### Contents

President's Letter	1
New s	2
Regional Reports	
Asia Pacific	2
Latin America	3
Europe	6
North America	8
Conference Update	9

### President's Letter

IUSTI's fight against sexually transmitted infections (STIs) continues with new diseases being added to the growing list of recognized STIs. The importance of sexual transmission in the spread of infections has recently been highlighted by outbreaks involving Ebola virus and, in the last few months, Zika virus. Linked with microcephaly in newborn infants, the transmission of Zika virus through Aedes mosquitoes has presented a major public health challenge for some parts of the world, notably French Polynesia (2013) and, more recently, Brazil and Colombia (2015). Individuals infected with Zika virus usually have symptoms that may include mild fever, skin rashes, conjunctivitis, muscle and joint pain, malaise or headache, and symptoms normally last for 2-7 days. As well as congenital infections resulting in microcephaly, the recent Zika virus outbreak in Latin America has also been associated with an increase in the number of individuals presenting with Guillain-Barré syndrome. The WHO estimates that currently four million people may be infected and, by mid-March 2016, Zika virus transmission has been documented in 59 countries and territories. Prevention and control relies on reducing mosquitoes through source reduction (removal and modification of breeding sites) and reduced contact between mosquitoes and people through use of insect repellants and appropriate clothing. As well as transmissions occurring in pregnant travelers from other countries who have visited Latin America, a small number of women have reportedly being infected with Zika virus through sexual intercourse. The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention now recommend that men who have travelled to countries where Zika virus is spreading either abstain from sex or use condoms for sex with their partners on return.



Figure 1. Although mosquito control and limiting mosquito-human contact remains the primary Zika virus prevention strategy, condom use is also advised to prevent sexual transmission.

In terms of broader HIV/STI health policy, world leaders adopted the new United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in late 2015; these goals set the framework for global development policy over the next 15 years. The agenda outlines 17 goals ranging from ending poverty and hunger, to achieving gender equality and combating climate change. The agenda, framed within the 17 new SDGs, builds on the achievements of the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals which were set in 2000 and included a commitment to halt and reverse the AIDS epidemic. With a continued global effort to treat HIV-infected individuals as early as possible and the use of a growing range of HIV prevention tools, UNAIDS anticipates the end the AIDS epidemic by 2030.



Figure 2: The United Nation's 17 Sustainable Development Goals

Realizing the SDG agenda requires a paradigm shift in the way we address global health and the challenges facing member states have been discussed by Buse and Hawkes (Globalization and Health 2015;11:13). The authors argue that the proposed SDGs have moved the world from a focus on the poorest countries, to an approach that is universal and equitable. Whilst this is to be applauded, the authors point out that implementation will require leadership beyond the health sector and greater coordination across sectors, in addition to a great deal of new investment to support the process. Ultimately, the SDGs will only come to fruition if there is a paradigm shift from focusing on treatment to investing in and championing prevention activities.



Figure 3: IUSTI World and Regional Congresses to be held in 2016: Marrakech, Morocco (May, top right); Budapest, Hungary (September, top left); Buenos Aires, Argentina (November, bottom left); Okayama, Japan (December, bottom right)

IUSTI's World and Regional teams continue to work as hard as ever to deliver a series of high quality and regionally-relevant scientific conferences. This year alone, there will be four IUSTI conferences. The 17<sup>th</sup> IUSTI World Congress will take place in Marrakech, Morocco, from 9-12 May ([www.iustimarrakesh2016.com](http://www.iustimarrakesh2016.com)) and will additionally be an IUSTI-Africa regional meeting. The IUSTI-Europe meeting will be held in Budapest, Hungary, from 15-17 September ([www.iusti2016.com](http://www.iusti2016.com)). An International Symposium on Sexually Transmitted Infections, co-organized by the Argentinian Society for the Study of Obstetric and Gynaecological Infection and STI prevention (ASAIGO-ITS) and the IUSTI Regional Branch for Latin America and the Caribbean (IUSTI-LAC), will be held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, from 10-11 November (information available from [asaigoits.ar@gmail.com](mailto:asaigoits.ar@gmail.com)). Lastly, the 19<sup>th</sup> IUSTI-Asia Pacific Conference will be held in Okayama, Japan, from 1-3 December (<http://www.med-gakkai.org/19iusti>). I would like to thank the numerous individuals who are spending many hours of their own time fund-raising for these events, organizing the scientific programmes and undertaking the local organizational activities required to make each of these educational and networking events a success.

I do hope as many of you as possible will attend at least one of the above IUSTI conferences this year. In particular, I look forward to welcoming you to the IUSTI World Congress in Marrakech in May - this will be the first time we have held an IUSTI World Congress in North Africa. Given this location, the 17<sup>th</sup> IUSTI World Congress will provide a unique opportunity for IUSTI to reach out to those working in the HIV/STI field in both the African and MENA regions.

*David Lewis, IUSTI President*

## News

### Applications are invited for the post of **Editor-in-Chief, Sexually Transmitted Infections**

Sexually Transmitted Infections, the world's longest running international journal on sexual health, seeks a new Editor-in-Chief. This individual should have stature in the field of sexual health, a distinguished publication record, and editorial experience. They will have responsibility for editorial content and strategy, with support from their appointed editorial team and the BMJ publishing team.

The Editor-in-Chief should expect to spend up to a day in total each week on journal-related activities. Editorial support and training will be provided, as well as an annual honorarium. Joint applications will be considered and applicants need not be based in the UK.

The closing date for applications is 11 April 2016. Interviews will be held in May in central London, UK, or via videoconference. It is envisaged that the outgoing Editor-in-Chief will gradually hand over responsibility for running the journal over the last few months of 2016, with the successful candidate officially taking up the post from 1 January 2017. The term of office will be 5 years in the first instance.

**Further information about the role and how to apply can be found at [sti.bmj.com](http://sti.bmj.com)**

## Regional Reports

### Asia Pacific

**The 1st Assembly of the Regional Network in HIV, Viral Hepatitis and Sexual Health** was held in Bangkok, Thailand from the 15th – 17th January 2016 co-hosted by ASHM, HIVNAT and the Faculty of Medicine, King Chulalongkorn University. Dr. David Lewis, President, IUSTI and Dr. Somesh Gupta, Regional Director for IUSTI-AP attended the meeting as IUSTI Representatives. This was a welcome initiative by Australasian Sexual Health Medicine which was attended by the representatives of clinical societies in the Asia & the Pacific regions with 53 delegates joining from 42 different organisations and societies from 16 countries. Activities were designed to encourage Network member organisations and societies to explore opportunities and challenges in their various national responses to HIV, viral hepatitis and sexual health. The program included two workshops: 1: Research – Operations, Quality, Training, Promulgation by A/Prof Mark Boyd,

ASHM & Dr Nagalingeswaran Kumarasamy, YR Gaitonde Centre for AIDS Research and Education  
 2. Guidelines and Professional Standards, Dr Ying-Ru Jacqueline Lo, WHO, Western Pacific Regional Office and Dr. Maria Isabel E. Melgar, AIDS Society of the Philippines. 3. Identifying professional needs and gaps panel conclusions - Mr David Fowler ASHM, Dr Tawesak Tanwandee CEVHAP, Dr Razia Pendse, WHO Regional Office for South East Asia, Dr Annette Sohn TREAT Asia, Mr Steven Kraus, UNAIDS. 4. What do you need from your laboratory and what it needs from you? Ms. Sasiwimol Ubolyam, HIVNAT and Mr Phillip Cunningham, St Vincents Hospital Sydney.



Avin Choudhary from Fizi islands, Ajith Karawita, President Sri-Lankan College of Venereology, John Millan Director, Papua New Guinea Sexual Health Society, Somesh Gupta, Regional Director of IUSTI-AP, Kiat Ruxrunghan of HIV-NAT Thailand, Tanyaporn Wansom, Clinical Research Physician, AFRIMS (Armed Forces Research Institute of Medical Sciences) at 1st Assembly of the Regional Network in HIV, Viral Hepatitis and Sexual Health



53 delegates joining from 42 different organisations and societies from 16 countries during the 1st Assembly of the Regional Network in HIV, Viral Hepatitis and Sexual Health was held in Bangkok, Thailand.

The 19th IUSTI-Asia-Pacific 2016 conference will held from 1st-3rd December 2016 at Okayama, Japan. The website is now opened: <http://www.med-gakkai.org/19iusti/>. The organizers hope many researchers, physicians, nurses, pharmacists, technicians, educationalist, media representative, students or others who interest in STIs come to Japan. The speakers and topics (tentative) of the plenary lectures are below:  
 Jorgen Skov Jensen, Denmark: Update of M. genitalium infection; David Lewis., Australia, Update for N. gonorrhoeae infection, recent clinical studies and future; Magnus Unemo, Sweden: Update of N. gonorrhoeae, antimicrobial resistance and new antibiotics; Tetsuro Matsumoto, Japan: Gonorrhoea in Japan and Asia Pacific.; Ying-Ru Lo, WHO: HIV in men who sex with men (MSM) and commercial sex workers (CSW) in Asia; Andrew Grulich, Australia: Challenges in the

implementation of biomedical prevention of HIV; Basil Donovan, Australia: Syphilis in men sex with men (MSM); Xiang-Sheng Chen, China: STI in Asia Pacific.

Organizers are planning 10-12 symposium including gonococcal infection, Mycoplasma genitalium, HPV, syphilis, HIV other viral infection, education of prevention for STI, and others. Especially, we are planning the symposium for the trends of N. gonorrhoeae antimicrobial resistance in 7-8 Asian countries.

**HIV Congress** held from 18th to 20th March 2016, in Goa, India was attended by a large number of international faculty as well as delegates. IUSTI was represented by Regional Director for Asia-Pacific, Dr. Somesh Gupta and Chair Elect, Dr. Kaushal K. Verma. The Scientific Program covered epidemiological, clinical, laboratory, public health and social aspects of HIV.



Suzanne Crowe from Australia speaking on Point-of-Care tests for HIV at HIV congress in Goa, India

**Regional STI Reference Research and Training Centre** for surveillance and monitoring of drug resistance of sexually transmitted infections particularly in the High risk groups has been established by Dr. Sunil Sethi Director of centre in PGI, Chandigarh .

**Regional Conference on "Awareness'- Leads the strategy to control STD/STI'** was held in Lucknow , India by Dr. Vinneta Mittal Head of Microbiology which was attended by 200 delegates in february 2016. Dr. Sunil Sethi Hon Secretary spoke about Diagnostic challenges in control of syphilis and bacterial vaginosis and Role of Molecular techniques in diagnosis of STI in India.

Somesh Gupta

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**Latin America**

**Brazil Publications:**

Brazil's *Clinical Protocol and Therapeutic Guidelines for the Comprehensive Care of People with Sexually Transmitted Infections* launched in May 2015, based on extensive review of scientific evidence and on expert consultation, and is the first of its kind for STIs. Its goal is to improve the

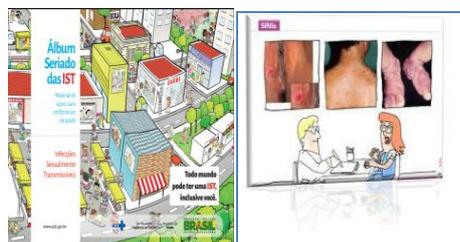
quality of STI care at the public health care system in Brazil.



The *Booklet of Best Practices* for the use of penicillin in primary care for the prevention of congenital syphilis in Brazil, launched in May 2015, in São Paulo. This document for managers and health professionals presents four successful experiences in Brazilian cities that managed to tackle congenital syphilis in a creative way. The idea is to encourage managers and health professionals to implement effective strategies to use penicillin in primary care.



The *Sexually Transmitted Infection Series Album* is now being printed and will be distributed to all 27 Brazilian states to enable public health professionals to discuss STI prevention, diagnosis and treatment.



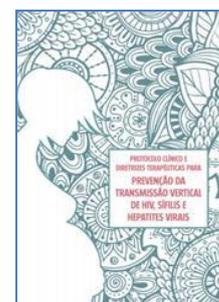
The *Sexually Transmitted Infections Folder* is now being printed and will be distributed to all 27 Brazilian states in order to raise awareness about STI prevention.



Released in May 2015, Brazil's *Epidemiological Bulletin for Syphilis 2015* aims to provide data to support managers and health professionals as to the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of strategies to control syphilis in Brazil.



Brazil's *Clinical Protocol and Therapeutic Guidelines for the Prevention of Vertical Transmission of HIV, Syphilis and Hepatitis Viral* was released in September 2015 during the 10<sup>th</sup> Brazilian Congress on HIV/AIDS and 3<sup>rd</sup> Brazilian Congress on Hepatitis.



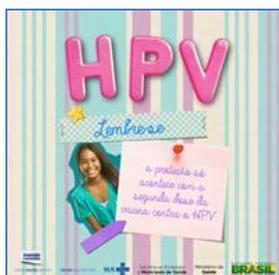
**Congresses:**

The 10<sup>th</sup> Brazilian Congress of the Brazilian STD Society and the 6<sup>th</sup> Brazilian Congress on Aids, held in May 2015 in São Paulo, were the result of a partnership between Brazil's Ministry of Health and its Health Surveillance Secretariat (SVS) and Department of STD, AIDS and Viral Hepatitis (DDAHV) with the Brazilian STD Society. The following topics were highlights: pediatric antiretroviral therapy, combination prevention, vulnerability, compliance, 90-90-90 targets, health care network, PEP, STI management, surveillance, epidemiology, prevention, vertical transmission, changes in the new B and C viral hepatitis

protocols, TB/HIV coinfection, access and adherence for key populations and vulnerable people, penicillin use in primary care, interpretation of tests, HPV vaccination and rapid tests.

**HPV vaccination:**

Vaccine deployment for children between 9 and 13 years old and also for all women living with HIV/AIDS, in order to minimize HPV complications and implement primary prevention, offering better quality of life for women living with HIV/AIDS.



**Paraguay**  
**The Paraguayan Society of Sexually Transmitted Infections (Sociedad Paraguaya de Infecciones de Transmision Sexual [SOPITS])**



The Paraguayan Society of Sexually Transmitted Infections (Sociedad Paraguaya De Infecciones de Transmisi3n Sexual [SOPITS]) was established on November 10, 2015, so as to promote national and international cooperation in the prevention and control of STIs, including HIV and AIDS. SOPITS members are also part of IUSTI Latin America – and the Society’s main goal is to encourage development in the fields of prevention, health education, diagnosis, treatment, and research for STI control throughout the Republic of Paraguay.

**Project: prevalence of HIV and syphilis, and knowledge, practices and attitudes of the indigenous population according to language families in Paraguay, 2105**

The observational, descriptive cross-sectional study *Prevalence of HIV and Syphilis and Knowledge, Practices and Attitudes of the Indigenous Population According to Language Families in Paraguay, 2015 (Prevalencia de VIH, Sifilis y los conocimientos, pr3cticas y actitudes de la Poblaci3n Indígena segùn familias lingüísticas en el Paraguay, Año 2015)* has been occurring since November 2015, ending in May 2016. Since

indigenous populations’ access to health services and education to prevent HIV and other STIs is extremely limited, it is crucial to give them information that can enable them to pressure decision-makers and governments to improve this access. Moreover, HIV and other STIs among indigenous populations are some of the most visible expressions of this inequality in access to health. The research results will enable work towards a true intercultural policy capable of impacting the field of health and education. The direct involvement of the indigenous populations themselves in the process of designing and implementing research may ultimately help support the national HIV/AIDS response in the indigenous population.



**Workshop to share successful experiences and lessons learned in indigenous studies: October 11, 2015**

To share and discuss with key stakeholders the progress in health research with emphasis on sexually transmitted infections, contributing to the understanding of health problems and their determinants in Paraguay.

To promote a broad understanding of the complex issues that are related to the health field in Paraguay, seeking to identify innovative solutions for the prevention, diagnosis and management of health problems that are locally relevant.

To establish dialogue with national and international experts to set priorities and new approaches in research.



**Bolivia**

DUO Rapid Test (Syphilis/HIV) Project- 1000 pregnant women in the El Alto region



## Argentina

Adele Benzaken

## Europe

IUSTI is in for an interesting year. There will be several intriguing conferences, several guidelines will be revised and there will even be a summer school. Let's hope we can keep up the good work.

### Activities of the Council of IUSTI- Europe

The first months of this year featured a lively discussion between IUSTI-Europe Council members with the aim to finalize the Memorandum for future organizers of IUSTI-Europe conferences. According to the Memorandum, IUSTI-Europe conferences will be held in September, starting on a Thursday and ending on Saturday. Additionally, the Memorandum will set the minimum requirements of what a conference's organizer must ensure. The final version of the Memorandum will be discussed and reviewed on the next IUSTI-Europe Council meeting in Budapest.

### STI Guidelines project

The most recent Editorial Board teleconference was held on 22 December 2015. Currently the following guidelines are in the process of revision: epididymo-orchitis, genital herpes, scabies, pediculosis pubis, chancroid, donovanosis, hepatitis. Additionally, two new guidelines are currently at an advanced stage of development: vulva disease and Mycoplasma genitalium.

Dr Jackie Sherrard (Oxford, UK) continues to lead on producing patient information on all the European guidelines as they are produced or updated. All the guidelines and patient information are accessible at:

<http://www.iusti.org/regions/Europe/euroguidelines.htm>

An updated guideline on non-gonococcal urethritis (NGU) has been completed and published on the IUSTI Guidelines website.

Dr Marti Vall Mayans (Barcelona, Spain) represented the Editorial Board at an STI/ HIV surveillance meeting organised by the ECDC in Bratislava, Slovakia, on 8-9 March 2016 and prepared a report.

Dr Andy Winter (Glasgow, UK) has agreed to join the IUSTI Scientific Advisory Council as the representative of the Editorial Board in order to provide input into the scientific programmes of future IUSTI Europe conferences.

The next Editorial Board teleconference will take place on 22 March 2016. Any comments on the work of the European STI Guidelines Project would be welcome. Please send them to the Editor-in-Chief at: [Keith.Radcliffe@uhb.nhs.uk](mailto:Keith.Radcliffe@uhb.nhs.uk)

### State of the art preparation of 30th IUSTI-Europe Conference

The 30th IUSTI-Europe Conference will take place on 15-17 September, 2016 in Budapest.

After the 29th IUSTI-Europe in Sitges, Budapest Conference Chair Dr. Viktoria Varkonyi, Vice-chair Dr. Karoly Nagy and Chairman of the International Scientific Committee Dr. Marco Cusini (Milan) finalized the topics of main Program points (Opening speeches, 2 Plenary lectures, 6 Symposia, 8 Workshops, Free lectures) coordinated with the Board of IUSTI-Europe. International and local experts had been asked to Chair of the relevant programs.

Chairs have now started to organize programs involving internationally renowned experts as speakers. ECDC also accepted an invitation for organizing a lecture. More and more sponsors indicated their willingness to be present in Budapest. The main patrons of the Conference are Zsuzsanna Jakab, Regional Director of WHO Regional Office for Europe, and Dr. László Lovasz, President of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. The First Announcement was prepared and distributed to the relevant participants online, and also for the Board members of IUSTI-Europe and the Alps-Danube-Adriatic STD Conferences. Official website of the Conference is now active since February 2016: [www.iusti2016.org](http://www.iusti2016.org). Registration, and abstract submission are also open. Further information can be found on the website.

### Scientific Council of IUSTI-Europe conferences

The establishment of an IUSTI-Europe Advisory Scientific Council was approved by the IUSTI-E

council meeting in 2014 in Malta.

The basic remit is to establish a number of Topic related groups of specialists, whose task would be to advise members of developments in their field over the previous year, and to inform the scientific committee of potential speakers and topics for forthcoming congresses. Membership would be of 1-2 established experts, plus 1-2 'up and coming' workers in the field. The aim is to widen the base of IUSTI-E membership, and participation.

Additionally, to increase IUSTI involvement and importance amongst our European coworkers, and have IUSTI-E seen as their main organisation for presenting their work and for multinational cooperation.

One of our tasks is to produce an annual one page report of development in the topic, with emphasis on European work. This could be published on the IUSTI-E website. We also wish to advise IUSTI Scientific Committees of potential topics:

HIV Out patient Management	Genital Herpes	Public Health
HIV/AIDS End Stage Management	HPV-associated diseases	Epidemiology
HIV Prevention Strategies	Vaginitis	Trial Methodology
Syphilis	Balanitis	Clinic Management
Hepatitis B, C +A	Genital Infestations	Vaccination
Gonorrhoea	Genital Dermatology	Media
Chlamydia	Pelvic/Regional Pain	Psychosexual disorders
M. Genitium	Prostatitis	Special Groups: LGBT
Urethritis	Guidelines	Special Groups: Young People
LGV	Diagnostic Tests	Special Groups: Migrants
PID		Special Groups: Sex Workers

### IUSTI-Europe Summer School in Bertinoro

This basic course is part of the educational activities of IUSTI as the IUSTI- Europe Summer School, and follows on from the advanced course held in Vienna in 2015. Previous courses ran in 2012 and in 2014 organized by the Italian Society of Clinical microbiology (AMCLI) and supported by IUSTI.

The location is Bertinoro, which is a beautiful medieval Italian village at the top of a hill close to Rimini and the Adriatic Sea and to Bologna. The location is an old castle with modern facilities used by the University of Bologna for several events. The programme is scheduled on three and a half day and will cover the spectrum of the main STIs.

The course aims to provide a European overview about management of STI with an insight to epidemiology, epidemiological tools and public health policy and to give a clinical overview on the main STIs and to describe the diagnostic process from the patient to the lab and back to the patient for a correct treatment. Additionally, it will feature interactive case discussion, examining clinical, diagnostic, and psychological aspects in the context of a public health intervention directed to prevent disease complications and transmission.

The local organizers will be Maria Agnese Latino from AMCLI and Marco Cusini (IUSTI). The faculty is composed of 31 members, 18 of whom are active members of IUSTI.

The course is open to 50 registrants with about 50% people coming from Italy and the rest from Europe. IUSTI and other national societies will provide some fellowships for young residents.

Additional information and registration is available at: <http://www.ceub.it> or [mmichelacci@ceub.it](mailto:mmichelacci@ceub.it)

The summer school will provide an excellent overview of venereology. Please forward this information to organizations related to the field of STI diagnostics and treatment so it can reach those who wish to renew or enhance their knowledge on the subject.

### European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control STI and HIV Network Meetings

IUSTI Europe was kindly invited by the ECDC to give a presentation at the STI and HIV Network Meetings that were held in Bratislava, Slovakia 8-9 March 2016. The aim of those meetings was to provide a platform for expert discussion among nominated ECDC contact points for STI and HIV to improve the understanding of STI and HIV in the region, differences across EU/EEA Member States, and exchange best practices in surveillance, monitoring, prevention and control. The meeting was to serve to provide strategic guidance to ECDC in developing future activities in order to support Member States.

Participants included 80 nominated contact points for STI microbiology, STI and HIV epidemiology from the EU and EEA Member States, EU enlargement countries and some European Neighbourhood Policy countries, as well as 7 experts from ECDC and 32 representatives from the European Commission, EMCDDA, CDC Atlanta, the Public Health Agency of Canada, UNAIDS, the EU Civil Society Forum, the WHO Regional Office for Europe, IUSTI Europe, European projects and HIV cohorts and invited speakers.

Dr Martí Vall-Mayans on behalf of IUSTI Europe gave the talk "International Union against Sexually Transmitted Infections: increasing collaboration with ECDC and Member States" during the STI Network Meeting. The presentation made emphasis on the recognized STI expertise of IUSTI Europe members especially in the management of patients in the frontline. The fact that National Representatives are in the IUSTI Europe Council facilitates a direct connection with specialized Societies across Europe with direct links with professionals working in the field that are well suited for STI surveillance. It was stressed the importance of the IUSTI Guidelines as a key STI reference for Europe and the convenience to have the support from ECDC to this project. It is to be welcomed the growing links between IUSTI Europe and the ECDC.

*Airi Põder*

## North America

The past few months have been very busy for the IUSTI North American Region.

First, a proposal by our Canadian colleagues to form a Canadian IUSTI Branch as part of the North American Region was approved by the IUSTI World Executive Committee at their meeting in Brisbane last September (see below). Our thanks and congratulations go out to our Canadian colleagues Jo-Anne Dillon and Marc Steben who put in the effort and make it work!

This development, however, precipitated another. For many years, the American Sexually Transmitted Diseases Association (ASTDA) informally represented the North American IUSTI Region. The establishment of the Canadian Branch prompted ASTDA to more formally recognize the relationship with IUSTI by changing its bylaws to describe the relationship and create permanent seats on its Executive Committee for the North American Region director and the president/chair of the Canadian Branch. These changes were put to a vote and approved by the ASTDA membership last January.

We used the opportunity of changing the ASTDA bylaws to also create permanent membership to the ASTDA Executive Committee for the President of the American Sexual Health Association (ASHA) and the Executive Director of the (U.S.) National Coalition of STD Directors (NCSD). These changes reflect the long-standing relationship between ASTDA, ASHA and NCSD and a desire by ASTDA/IUSTI North America to closely work with its partners on common objectives and to mutually strengthen each organization. These changes were also approved by the ASTDA membership.

Historically, ASTDA has pursued three main objectives: to disseminate authoritative STI-related information through its journal *Sexually Transmitted Diseases*, to support young investigators through its developmental grants, and to acknowledge excellence among its membership through its recognition awards.

When Dr. Julius Schachter retired as the Editor in Chief of *Sexually Transmitted Diseases* in January 2015, his position was taken over by Dr. Bill Miller an epidemiology professor, then at the University of North Carolina, and now the head of the Department of Epidemiology at Ohio State University. While building on Dr. Schachter's strong tenure, Dr. Miller has also proposed new directions for the journal, including a stronger emphasis on program science and young investigators.

To support these initiatives, ASTDA sponsored a symposium at last year's STI/HIV World Congress and International Society of Sexually Transmitted Diseases Research (ISSTDR) meeting in Brisbane under the banner "Surviving and Thriving", that

focused on the development and mentoring of young investigators where Dr. Miller gave the keynote speech. This session was very well received and ASTDA plans to organize similar sessions at the upcoming IUSTI World Congress in Marrakesh in May and at the STD Prevention Conference, in Atlanta in September.

Besides the STD journal, ASTDA is also the main sponsor of the professional networking site [STDPreventionOnline](http://STDPreventionOnline.com), now in its 9<sup>th</sup> year.

Since 2008, ASTDA has been awarding two-year (\$50,000 per year) developmental grants to young investigators in a variety of STI-related research topics. To date, 12 investigators have received a total of U.S. \$2.4 million in the past 8 years. A recent evaluation of this program has demonstrated that the grants have been instrumental for these investigators to establish a career in STIs and HIV. At its annual meeting last January, the ASTDA Executive Committee therefore decided to continue this program with one award scheduled for 2016. A request for proposals will be issued early April 2016.

At a previous meeting, the ASTDA Executive Committee also approved a motion to link ASTDA and IUSTI memberships, with the possibility to opt-out (i.e., ASTDA members can decide not be IUSTI members). The combined membership will be effectuated by the end of this year.



Every year, ASTDA recognizes excellence among its members. At the World STI/HIV Congress in Brisbane (see photo right to left), the annual Distinguished Career Award was presented to Dr. Anna Wald of the University of Washington; Dr. Jeanne Marrazzo, also of the University of Washington (but now at the University of Alabama) received the annual Achievement Award, and Dr. Bob Kirkcaldy of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention received the Young Investigator Award.

For the next 6 months, ASTDA/IUSTI North America will keep up the pace. ASTDA has collaborated with CDC to organize the HIV Diagnostics Conference held in Atlanta, March 24-27 and co-chairs the National STD Prevention Conference in Atlanta, September 20-23. ASTDA will also provide sponsoring for scholarships at the upcoming IUSTI World Congress in Morocco. Meanwhile the ASTDA memberships will be busy in electing a new ASTDA Executive Committee in the spring of 2016.



I must end this report on a sad note. On March 17, Dr. Willard Cates, Jr. died after a long battle with cancer. Ward was a cherished ASTDA member, and a recipient of its highest honor in 2003. He was a mentor and friend to many of us and a lifelong inspiration to all. His enthusiasm, endless energy, and humor will not be forgotten. Our thoughts are with his wife and children.

*Kees Rietmeijer*



### **IUSTI Canada**

The newest member of the IUSTI family was formally welcomed and recognized by the World IUSTI and IUST North America in September 2015 at the Board meetings in Brisbane. It has been several decades since a distinctive Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) section was included as part of the Canadian Public Health Association (CPHA). Since then, Canadian health researchers, in the STI field, have met mostly at various international meetings. While there are many excellent venues for HIV researchers to gather and exchange ideas within Canada, there are few opportunities for those working in other STI's to discuss trends and engage each other in research, patient engagement and management, behavioural interventions for prevention, program science and much more. Over the past four years a number of positive conversations have taken place about developing an IUSTI-Canada branch within the IUSTI-North America Region. This would reflect similar structures within IUSTI-Europe. A Canadian group would give a profile to the broad spectrum of Canadian success in the areas of STIs and HIV and present a forum for discussion within Canada reflecting all sectors of interest. As a result, IUSTI Canada has come to life through the perseverance and hard work of Jo-Anne Dillon (University of Saskatchewan) and Marc Steben (Medical advisor, STI unit, Institut national de santé publique du Québec) with the support of Greg Penney (Director, National Programs, Canadian Public Health Association). The Canadian Public

Health Association will act as host and secretariat for IUSTI Canada. We thank the World IUSTI and IUSTI North American for their support and we look forward to engaging colleagues in Canada and around the world!

IUSTI Canada's plans for 2016 include:

- Recruiting a small executive to plan for building IUSTI Canada including:
  - set member fees, recruit members, identify working groups (as needed), identify meeting opportunities, develop work plans, and establish the process for filling Executive and Member positions on IUSTI Canada.
  - Review the Terms of Reference (ToR) and seek approval from members
- Holding regular conference calls
- Planning a face-to-face meeting/planning session
- Planning for a Canadian STI Workshop/Conference

*Jo-Anne Dillon and Marc Steban*

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## **Conference Update**

### ***IUSTI Events:***

2016 World IUSTI Congress

Dates: May 9-12, 2016

Location: Morocco

Website: <http://www.iusti.org/events/default.htm>

IUSTI Europe 2016

Dates: September 15-17, 2016

Location: Budapest, Hungary

Website: <http://www.iusti2016.com/>

World STI & HIV Congress 2017

Dates: TBA

Location: Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Website: <http://www.isstdr.org/future-meetings.php>

### ***Other STI or Related***

#### ***Meetings/Congresses/Courses:***

21st International AIDS Conference

Dates: July 17-22, 2016

Location: Durban, South Africa

Website: <http://www.aids2016.org/>

*Somesh Gupta*

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