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### President's Letter



#### **Postponement of the World IUSTI Congress from 1-4 December 2020 in Bangkok, Thailand, to 1-4 December 2021**

You will all be aware that our next World IUSTI Congress was due to be held 1-4 December 2020 in Bangkok, Thailand. Unfortunately this has now been postponed until December 2021.



It was a very hard decision to make, but it was becoming increasingly clear that air travel will be severely disrupted for the rest of 2020, and countries' travel and quarantine restrictions will continue for some time. Also, IUSTI colleagues around the world had expressed concerns about the safety of air travel, and the ability to social distance at conferences. Taking all these factors into account, it seemed the most sensible, and safest, thing to postpone the meeting from 2020 to the beginning of December 2021. Dr Chavalit Mangkalaviraj, the local organiser of the congress, has managed to book the same congress venue for the same dates in 2021, so please put them in your diary.

We already have a World Congress set for 2021 - the joint meeting with ISSTD in Amsterdam in July. We can only hold one World Congress per year; however, the World Executive Committee and the IUSTI-Asia Pacific Region have agreed that the meeting in Bangkok will be an IUSTI-AP meeting supported by World IUSTI.

If you have looked at the Bangkok Congress website recently, you will have seen that Bradley Stoner and Suzanne Garland, the Scientific Committee chairs, had already secured a number of exciting speakers for December 2020. We hope that they will understand the circumstances and that most of them will agree to speak at the congress in December 2021.

By December 2021, travel should be possible again and people will be longing to meet friends and colleagues from all over the world, and where better than somewhere as beautiful as Thailand.

I look forward to seeing you all there!

#### **New IUSTI website**

Kit Fairley, our IUSTI Webmaster, and his website IT team led by Mark Chung have redesigned and moved the website so it is no longer dependent on Melbourne Sexual Health Clinic (MSHC). Some aspects of this are not yet complete, and checks still need to be made, so there may be some minor glitches but do check it out as I'm sure you'll appreciate how much more modern and professional it looks and how it is more user friendly.

The key players have been:

- Kit Fairley, Webmaster who scoped the options and initiated the change.
- Mark Chung, the Multimedia Content Coordinator, who has led the changes.
- Afrizal Afrizal and Rashidur Rahman, the MSHC IT team who also worked with ...
- Jonathan Ross, IUSTI Treasurer, and Suzanne Amisano, MSHC Operations Manager, to set up the payment processes.
- Jackie Sherrard, acting Membership Secretary, and Bradley Stoner past Membership Secretary, who have set up the membership registration system.

The improvements include:

- Moving the site to CMS WordPress website (which means the content can be managed by several people from anywhere in the world). The web team will train one person in each region to be able to make their own changes.
- Membership will be easier to manage for both members and the organisation. Members will have their own login and can download their IUSTI certificate.
- IUSTI.org is now mobile compliant making it more accessible.
- Google Translate is available in many more languages.



I know that Kit plans to let everyone know when all the work is complete, and update you on the new features. This has been a major piece of work and I want to thank Kit and his team, on behalf of everyone who uses the IUSTI website, firstly, for managing the website for all these years and now, for moving it into the 21st Century.

### Black lives matter movement

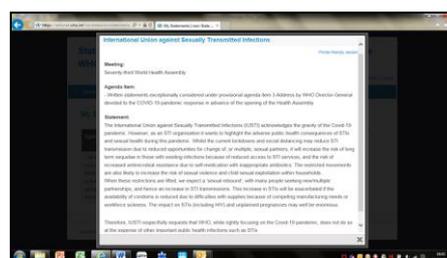
The horrific killing of George Floyd has highlighted the inequalities, and systemic racism, in our societies. The subsequent protests over the past few weeks have demonstrated the public desire for change. There is no place for racism and discrimination in the world, and there is certainly no place for it in IUSTI. We are the stronger for being a global and tolerant organisation and we celebrate and embrace our diversity. Despite this, many of our members, and our patients, will regularly experience racism in different forms and this is something we should all work together to stop. At times like this we must all question our own values and behaviours with people from different backgrounds and ethnicities so that we are able to recognise, and hence then overcome, our conscious, and unconscious, prejudices.

As an STI organisation, IUSTI has been clear in demonstrating its beliefs of equality based on a person's gender, and sexuality, but perhaps not so clear at including race/ethnicity. We now need to make it clear that IUSTI supports the Black Lives Matter movement and seeks to eradicate racism and racial inequalities in all our societies.

### WHO statement

I explained when I became President that one of my strategies was to improve the links between IUSTI and WHO by submitting a statement to, and

attending, the World Health General Assembly in May in Geneva. Of course, this year's Seventy-third World Health General Assembly was a virtual meeting that focussed on the Covid-19 pandemic. However, we did submit a statement which was published on the website as shown below. Thank you to Francis Ndowa for his advice about the content of the statement and to Liz Foley for registering IUSTI for the Assembly and uploading our statement. Hopefully next year I will be able to present our statement in person.



### International advisor to Committee on Prevention and Control of Sexually Transmitted Infections in the United States

In my capacity as President, I had the honour of being invited as an international speaker to the Committee on Prevention and Control of Sexually Transmitted Infections in the United States, at a virtual public meeting via Zoom on May 19, 2020. This particular meeting focused on STI prevention and control efforts from an international perspective. Henry de Vries, the President of ISSTD, was also an invited speaker.

### And lastly, but by no means least ....

Sadly the Covid-19 pandemic continues to rampage throughout the world. Some regions, such as Europe, have seen sustained falling numbers of new infections and excess deaths, allowing the resumption of STI services and training, but others of you are unfortunately still on the upward part of the curve. Our colleagues in Latin America are experiencing sharply rising numbers of new cases and excess deaths. However, that hasn't dampened their resilience or innovation. When you read the Regional Report from Latin America and the Caribbean you will hear of the series of web-seminars on Sexually Transmitted Infections taking place in Brazil. They explain that access to these is free and includes participants from other Latin American countries. The seminars have also been accessed by colleagues from Portugal, and Portuguese-speaking African countries having been publicised by IUSTI-Africa.

However, they have been very modest in the report as I know they had 2,575 people access the seminar on syphilis from 204 Brazilian cities and from 10 different countries (Latin American, Portuguese African and Portugal). This is a fantastic achievement and a wonderful example of

the mutual support and collaboration amongst our IUSTI global family.

*Janet Wilson, IUSTI-World President*

## News

### **IUSTI Website upgrade**

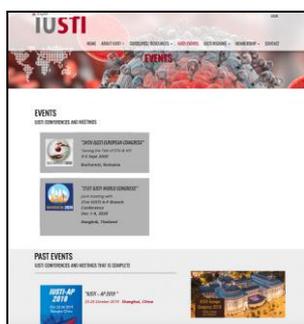


It is with great pleasure that I'd like to introduce our new web site. A great deal of thanks goes to our web and IT team at Melbourne Sexual Health Centre. I'd specifically like to highlight Mark Chung who has lead all these changes. He has been strongly supported by Afrizal Afrizal and Rashidur Rahman. Other important contributors also include; Suzanne Amisano (MSHC Operations manager), Jackie Sherrard, Brad Stoner, Jonathan Ross, Janet Wilson and Liz Foley.

In April 2019 the process to modernise the IUSTI website began. After navigating a very complicated and obstacle ridden path the migration process was complete and became LIVE in April 2020.

What changes have taken place and the benefits you gain:

- the IUSTI website is now mobile compliant - meaning it is accessible and functional on a mobile phone.
- the Content Management System (CMS) has changed to WordPress, which allows content to be edited and updated by contributors with different levels of access.



Membership renewal is automated. An email reminder will be sent to members when their subscription is about to expire. It will also

streamline the membership process, removing a large administrative burden from the ShopManager role.

The availability of extensive analytics data will facilitate a better understanding of our international membership group.

Google translate enables the viewer to read the site in 100 different languages. Please note: Google translate is not recommended when translating medical information for consumers. Professionally translated Treatment Guidelines and Patient Information resources in select languages are available in PDF format under the treatment guidelines section of the site.

Editorial changes and updates to the site are decentralised, allowing approved editors to directly make changes.



*Mark Chung*

Future changes in style and function of the site will be an easier and faster process.

*Kit Fairley and Mark Chung*

## Regional Reports

### Latin America

The Brazilian Society of Sexually Transmitted Diseases (SBDST) holds, in partnership with the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and the Brazilian Ministry of Health a series of web-seminars on Sexually Transmitted Infections. There will be 16 sessions from May to August 2020. The idea of conducting the *web seminars* is to disclose the Clinical Protocol and Therapeutic Guidelines for STI (PCDT IST) and discuss the diagnostic and treatment procedures proposed in the document with health professionals. In addition, we intend to maintain a health network attentive to the control of STI even in times of covid-19. The broadcast is free and we have participants from other Latin American countries and Portuguese-speaking African countries. IUSTI Africa helped to publicize the seminars. The content is available in an open repository for those

who are unable to follow the virtual meetings on the available dates, so that all health professionals can have access to updates to the STI protocol. The online address is:  
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC5zrGPQoOUVOsdIJDZzhJSQ>



**ASAIGO-Its Activities 2020 – Argentina**



The Argentine Association for the Study of Infections in Gynecology and Obstetrics and Control of Sexually Transmitted Infections (ASAIGO-ITS) started, in May 2020, a Virtual Course on Updating in Obs Gyn and Sexually Transmitted Infections ([www.campusasaigo.com](http://www.campusasaigo.com)). The course consists of three modules with 37 classes that cover a wide range of infections in women, with discussion of clinical cases, update material and a discussion forum. Up to now, 120 health professionals have been enrolled including some from others Latin America countries.

During the first semester of 2020, members of ASAIGO-ITS (Miguel Tilli, Silvina Vulcano and Patricia Galarza) have participated in the online activities of other scientific societies, lecturing on STIs.

Unfortunately, other activities planned by our Society had to be postponed during these COVID times.

*Adele Benzaken*

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**Asia Pacific**

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought the world to a stand still and dozens of conferences across the world have been cancelled since the global spread of SARS-CoV-2 infection. The 21st IUSTI World Congress, which was scheduled to be held in Bangkok, Thailand from December 1-4, 2020 has been cancelled due to restrictions to travel and fear of quarantine in many countries. Thailand and the whole of Southeast Asia are relatively less affected by the pandemic, however many colleagues in other countries had expressed an inability to join due to rigid quarantine rules in their respective countries.

However, all is not lost. IUSTI-World EXCO has decided to organize a Regional IUSTI Congress along with IUSTI-AP Congress in 2021. The same scientific committee under the leadership of Bradley Stoner and Suzanne Garland will develop the scientific program for this Regional Congress. The theme will remain the same- "Sex, crime, drug, alcohol, and violence: Confronting the challenges of STIs-HIV prevention and control." The dates for this congress are December 1-4 2021, and the venue will be True Icon Siam convention centre, Bangkok, Thailand. Since this year's IUSTI-AP congress was combined with the proposed IUSTI World meeting, there will be no IUSTI-AP congress this year.

*Somesh Gupta*

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**Europe**

**34<sup>th</sup> IUSTI- Europe Congress on Sexually Transmitted Infections, 3-5 September 2020 in Bucharest, Romania**

Organising a conference is always a demanding task. Doing this at the time of a global pandemic it is a near impossible challenge. The brave organising team of the IUSTI-Europe Congress Bucharest 2020 led by the Congress President George Sorin Tiplica and the Chair of the International Scientific Committee Martí Vall-Mayans following the consultations and discussions with IUSTI-Europe board members and Officers, decided to go ahead as planned against all odds. There are no plans for cancellation or postponement of the conference at the moment.

Infection numbers all over Europe are carefully monitored, borders are re-opening, travel restrictions are being dropped, and flights can be booked. The organising team is having as a guiding principle the safety and well-being of the Congress-attendees, partners and staff as well as

the responsibility, which we all share as healthcare professionals, in protecting ourselves and those around us.

Prof. Tiplica is in close contact with health authorities to watch the local situation and will provide you with information about further developments on the conference webpage on a regular basis. The congress venue – the Palace of Parliament – is the biggest building in Europe. Its big halls allow the possibility of social distancing between participants. The conference organizers will strictly observe and take all measures to prevent the spread of COVID 19 virus in accordance with the rules and regulations imposed by the authorities, in force at the time of the conference.

The scientific programme will be outstanding, the focus being on interactive exchange of knowledge and scientific news. CME credits will be available. The early bird registration has been prolonged until July 15, 2020. We would like to encourage you to register for the conference as soon as possible. We are open to receive abstracts for presentation at IUSTI Bucharest 2020. This may be the only opportunity to present work at an International STI Congress this year.

It is a personal decision as to whether one is ready to attend a scientific meeting this year. Everybody has a personal responsibility concerning safe behaviour. The organising team will do their utmost to provide you with a safe Congress and a start to return to normality after the crisis. They look forward to welcoming you all to Bucharest and a memorable Congress.

For more information:  
[www.iustibucharest2020.com](http://www.iustibucharest2020.com).



Airi Poder

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## North America

### From the American STD Association (ASTDA)



We are pleased to announce the 2020 ASTDA Recognition Awards recipients:

- Gail Bolan (CDC) is the recipient of the Distinguished Career Award
- Gina Ogilvie is the recipient of the Achievement Award
- Claire Bristow is the recipient of the Young Investigator Award

More information can be found here <https://www.astda.org/recognition-awards/>. Many congratulations to these deserving awardees.

Elections to the ASTDA Board have been completed. For the first time ever, we have two elected Board members intentionally selected from a pool of early career stage investigators (denoted below with an \*) in order to guarantee that we have fresh new perspectives on the Board:

- Beth Meyerson (Arizona University)
- Preeti Pathela (NYC Health Department)
- Arlene Seña (University of North Carolina)
- Olusegun (SO) Soge (University of Washington – Seattle)
- \*Teresa Batteiger (Indiana University)
- \*Sue Tuddenham (Johns Hopkins University)

Congratulations to these individuals on their election.

ASTDA has created a process for position statements and papers to be published in *Sexually Transmitted Diseases* (the association's journal). Look for the first one to appear in the journal in the next month or so. These statements/papers are intended to reflect the opinions and recommendations of the ASTDA on important issues relevant to the prevention and control of sexually transmitted infections. Position papers and statements encompass policy issues as well as clinical and scientific topics. For information on how to propose a position piece, please follow this link: <https://www.astda.org/position-papers/>

Finally, ASTDA expresses a continuing commitment to career development and public health-academia-industry collaborations which we addressed during our annual workshop. This year we held the workshop in Santa Fe in January (one of the last trips many of us made this year!). If CoVID has taught us anything, hopefully one of the lessons learned is that all sectors MUST

collaborate in order for us to mount a successful campaign against any infectious disease. In keeping with that principle, we have created the first industry fellowship with SpeeDx Ltd and Quest. Other activities are in development that we hope will be responsive to the needs of today's STI control efforts.

### From the CDC Division of STD Prevention (DSTDP)

#### *Missed Opportunities for Prevention of Congenital Syphilis - MMWR*



A [new CDC report](#) finds 1 in 2 newborn syphilis cases in the United States occur due to gaps in testing and treatment during prenatal care. Researchers analyzed these and other commonly missed opportunities that prevent congenital syphilis, or syphilis passed from mother-to-baby during pregnancy. Data show cases occur when moms:

- are not tested early during prenatal care (10%);
- are diagnosed but not adequately treated for syphilis (31%); or
- have acquired syphilis later in pregnancy after an initial negative test (11%).

While most failures occur while women are receiving some level of prenatal care, 1 in 4 cases occur when mothers have no timely prenatal care. Commonly missed opportunities also differed by region, which underscores the importance of tailoring prevention solutions to the needs of affected communities.

Despite the [dramatic rise in congenital syphilis cases](#) (up 261% from 2013-18) and deaths (94 in 2018 alone), simple testing and treatment saves lives. Closing the prevention gaps will require coordinated action from CDC, health departments, healthcare providers, community leaders, universities and industry, individuals, and the healthcare system at large.

*2020 STD Prevention Conference:*



As the situation with COVID-19 has evolved, the 2020 STD Prevention Conference Planning Committee has decided the 2020 STD Prevention

Conference will no longer take place in-person but will be moved to a virtual platform. Since we are not able to safely convene large groups for the foreseeable future as a result of the pandemic, the committee is taking these necessary precautions to ensure the health and safety of attendees, speakers, exhibitors and all staff involved per guidance from the World Health Organization and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

At this time, the committee intends to extend the dates of the conference to September 14-24, 2020 to ensure a successful virtual program and are working on the final logistics.

#### *STI Treatment Guidelines*

CDC's next iteration of the STI Treatment Guidelines is still in development. The guidelines will complete evidence-based review this summer and will continue on for final reviews.

*CDC clinical guidance when in-person patient-clinician contact is limited*



In two letters to the field – one issued in [April](#) and a follow-up issued in [May](#) - DSTDP leadership provided guidance about effective STD prevention and care when facility-based services and in-person patient-clinician contact is limited during the current COVID-19 pandemic. The letters include guidance on patient prioritization, phone or telemedicine-based triage and leveraging other clinics and/or pharmacies to ensure patients continue to receive needed treatment, as well as additional clarification on the use of expedited partner therapy (EPT). CDC has developed [a webpage](#) containing these letters as well as other relevant resources to help clinicians provide their patients with the best possible care during this time.

### From the National Coalition of STD Directors (NCSDD)



[STD Engage 2020](#) December 1-4, 2020. NCSDD's Annual Meeting is the U.S.'s only national meeting that brings together state and local STD prevention and sexual health professionals, and their community-based partners and allies. STD Engage is an opportunity to expand your professional skills and knowledge base in current and emerging STD science, research, policy and best practices. **The abstract submission deadline has been extended to Wednesday, July 1, 2020 at 11:59**

pm ET. Please consider submitting an abstract.



[COVID-19 and the State of the STD Field](#) NCSO published a summary of findings from surveys of U.S. health department STD programs, Disease Intervention Specialists, and U.S. STD clinics in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. NCSO found that emergency response to COVID-19 continues to cause mass scale disruptions to the STD prevention field and to STD clinical services in the U.S. amid worsening STD epidemics.

#### [COVID-19 Command Center for STD Programs](#)

NCSO created a repository for STD resources as they pertain to COVID-19 response. This page links to resources, news, and updates to help STD programs and the STD prevention field in their emergency response to coronavirus (COVID-19), and provides examples of how programs are maintaining or updating STD services to meet local needs.

#### **From the American Sexual Health Association (ASHA)**



ASHA recognizes a suite of monthly observations each spring including [Sexual Pleasure Month](#) (March); [STI Awareness Month](#) (April); and [Women's Health Month](#) (May), highlighting relevant resources and social media campaigns balancing medical/clinical information with messaging designed to reduce the stigma and shame

surrounding discussions of sex, pleasure, and health.

ASHA has also developed resources in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including an [open letter](#) from President/CEO Lynn Barclay about love, sex, and relationships in the era of COVID with a special focus on the need to safeguard one's mental health during such stressful times. [Sex in the Time of COVID-19](#) addresses transmission of the novel coronavirus, the consensus around the risk of sexual transmission, and relationship tips during a time of lockdown.

*Brad Stoner*

## **Conference Update**

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

IUSTI-Europe 2020 Congress  
 Dates: 3-5 September 2020  
 Locations: Bucharest, Romania  
 Website: [www.iustibucharest2020.com](http://www.iustibucharest2020.com)

IUSTI Asia-Pacific Congress  
 Dates: 1-4 December 2021  
 Location: Bangkok, Thailand  
 Website: To be confirmed

*STI Global Update* is published by the International Union against Sexually Transmitted Infections. Its aims are to provide an international perspective on the management and control of sexually acquired infections.

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Further information on the activities of IUSTI available at [www.iusti.org](http://www.iusti.org)