President’s Letter

World STI&HIV Congress 2021
I’m sure, like me, you are all feeling very positive following the excellent World STI&HIV Congress organised by our colleague Dr Henry de Vries. Henry and his organising team, sensibly, made the decision to hold a virtual congress almost one year ago. It was a brave decision as many people thought it was too early to be making such a choice for July 2021. However, it was definitely the right choice as it gave them plenty of time to plan this virtual meeting with a difference, so that it fulfilled all our expectations, and more!

Everyone I have spoken to has said how much they enjoyed it and how innovative the live sessions were. The talk shows added a new dimension to our conference experience so I’m certain organisers of meetings in the future will include something similar.

Clearly, Henry, the local organising committee, the scientific committee, and the conference organisers worked very hard to ensure it was such a success. Thank you and congratulations!

Dr. Henry de Vries was awarded an IUSTI silver medal in recognition of his outstanding work in delivering the ISSTDR/IUSTI Congress 2021 at the closing ceremony. Unfortunately this had to be a virtual presentation as I was not allowed to travel to The Netherlands without quarantining. I will however present the medal to Henry in person at the next IUSTI conference where we can meet face to face.

The IUSTI Prestigious Lecture this year was a joint Prestigious Lecture with ISSTDR as it was an in memorium lecture, given by Joan Chow, to celebrate the life and work of Dr Julius Schachter who sadly died on 20th December 2020. Julie had been on the IUSTI Executive Committee since 1996.

You may remember I highlighted the paper that Patty Garcia, with other World Executive Committee members, wrote on ‘The role of STI prevention and control programs in reducing gender, sexual and STI stigma’ in the March Global Update.

This paper and highlights from the CDC’s Sexually Transmitted Infections – Adopting a Sexual Health Paradigm, and presentations from all the Regional Directors, were discussed at the STI Policy – Perspectives from Around the World symposium on Saturday 17th July.

Please read Henry’s report of the congress in this STI Global Update.

Finding Committee meetings to select the new members of the World Executive Committee
The Secretary General and I held five Finding Committee meetings on Zoom between March and May 2021 to choose the new members. The new selection process worked well. The details of the changes of the World Executive Committee are below.

Changes to the World Executive Committee 2021
People demitting from their posts as they had served their full terms of office:
Somesh Gupta as Asia-Pacific Regional Director
Airi Poder as Europe Regional Director
Sunil Sethi as Asia-Pacific Elected Member
Keith Radcliffe as Europe Elected Member
Dennis Fortenberry as North America Elected Member
Ned Hook as North America Elected Member

Our thanks go to all of those for their contributions to IUSTI

New members approved by the World Executive Committee on 12th July 2021 and ratified by the IUSTI General Assembly on 16th July 2021

Officers:
Jackie Sherrard as Membership Secretary (co-opted past year pending formal approval)
Remco Peters as Assistant Secretary General (co-opted not elected post)
Regional Directors:
Bradley Stoner as North America Regional Director (co-opted past year pending formal approval)
Pinyu Zhou as Asia-Pacific Regional Director
Claudia Heller-Vitouch as Europe Regional Director
Regional Chairs:
George Sorin Tiplica as Europe Regional Chair
Khaliil Ghanem as North America Regional chair
Regional Elected Members:
Seema Sood as Asia-Pacific Elected Member
Ligang Yang as Asia-Pacific Elected Member
Henry de Vries as Europe Elected Member
Barbara Van Der Pol as North America Elected Member
Ina Park as North America Elected Member
Senior Counsellor:
Somesh Gupta as Senior Counsellor

I look forward to working with them all.

WHO relations and responses at the World Health General Assembly
The World Health Assembly in May 2021 was again held as a virtual meeting. We were able to submit a written statement and we made this in response to Agenda item 26.4 Global strategies and plans of action that are scheduled to expire within one year: The global health sector strategies on, respectively, HIV, viral hepatitis and sexually transmitted infections, for the period 2016–2021. Below is the statement submitted, which went onto the WHO website:

“The International Union against Sexually Transmitted Infections (IUSTI) is fully supportive of the World Health Organisation’s development of global health sector strategies on HIV, viral hepatitis, and sexually transmitted infections (STIs), for the period 2022–2030. Whilst IUSTI’s main focus is international cooperation in the control of STIs, we recognise the importance of integration of care with HIV and viral hepatitis services and we would encourage greater integration of these services in the updated strategies. There have been several areas of success since 2016: the use of combined HIV/syphilis rapid diagnostic tests in antenatal services has led to the elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV and/or syphilis in a number of countries; WHO has published guidelines on the management of syphilis, Chlamydia trachomatis, Neisseria gonorrhoeae and genital herpes to ensure equitable treatment and management through the world; the number of countries performing STI surveillance and gonorrhoea antimicrobial resistance (AMR) monitoring has increased; and WHO has updated its estimated incidence data of chlamydia, gonorrhoea, syphilis and trichomonas. However, despite these achievements, there is still much to be done. Continuing to reduce mother-to-child transmission of HIV and/or syphilis in countries that have not yet achieved elimination status is a priority. A major challenge in the control and management of STIs in low and middle-income countries is the lack of rapid and affordable diagnostic tests for Chlamydia trachomatis, Neisseria gonorrhoeae and Trichomonas vaginalis. Lack of these tests requires STI care to be delivered using syndromic management. The limitations of syndromic management include the inability to detect asymptomatic STIs, and thus prevent their complications and transmission, and the overuse of antibiotics due to the poor positive predictive value of syndromic treatment. Although surveillance for STI AMR has increased, there are still large geographical areas without this. AMR is a global health threat which results in misuse, and overuse, of antimicrobials. The cost of STI AMR to all national economies, and their health systems, is significant as it delays disease resolution, increases complications, and requires more expensive treatments. These, and other, inequalities in sexual health care globally need to be addressed in the development and implementation of the new HIV, viral hepatitis and STI strategies.”

Following the 74th World Health Assembly, WHO is now in the process of developing one single Global Health Sector Strategy for HIV, Viral Hepatitis and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) for 2022-2030. WHO organised a series of virtual regional consultations during May and June 2021 and some of you will have been involved in these. I attended the European Regional Consultation for Developing Global Health Sector Strategies on HIV, Viral Hepatitis and STIs, 2022–2030 on 16-17 June 2021. IUSTI has been invited to make a submission to help inform the 2022-2030 strategy.

IUSTI Officers’ meetings and other meetings
The Officers have been meeting approximately
every 3 months via Zoom. We are delighted to welcome Dr Remco Peters as the new Assistant Secretary General with a particular remit to enhance IUSTI’s social media profile.

Postponed Bangkok World IUSTI Congress 2020 now will be a virtual congress 10th-11th December 2021

The 2020 IUSTI World Congress was due to be held in Bangkok in December 2020. This was initially postponed, due to COVID, until December 2021. However, it is now clear that we will not be able to hold a face to face congress this December, so sadly we have had to cancel the Bangkok Congress.

Instead we will hold a two-day virtual meeting with Somesh Gupta from New Delhi as the Local Organiser working with an event management company, called eventz360, who are very experienced in providing virtual congresses. Bradley Stoner and Suzanne Garland are the Scientific Chairs and they already have a number of confirmed speakers and symposia. The congress will be free to all full paid IUSTI members. The website is currently being created but will be available shortly.

Report on STI&HIV virtual conference from Amsterdam July 14-17, 2021

On behalf of all those involved in the organization of the recently held conference, it is with joy that I present you this report. We can look back on a very successful meeting with lots of inspiration, interaction and food for thought that we can use to improve our research endeavors, our service delivery and sexual health policies for the years ahead. In the light of the COVID-19 pandemic, we had to work under straining conditions. Yet, it is under hardship that innovation flourishes and new “out of the box” ideas emerge. We truly hope that the conference has brought you just that!

The Foreplay

It was 4 years ago with the winning of the bid in Rio de Janeiro to organise the 2021 meeting that we decided we wanted to focus the conference on the role of cities in STI epidemics. We chose sexual diversity & the city as the theme of the meeting, to stage cities not only as focus areas of the STI&HIV epidemics but also as places where solutions can emerge. The second goal was to introduce community engagement into the conference. In many HIV&AIDS conferences communities are part of the meeting. This has grown from the early days of the AIDS epidemic when activist groups such as Act Up & Gay Men’s Health Crisis demanded access to the science and wanted a say in the development of treatment.

Early on, we started to collaborate with the International AIDS Society to try and bring our delegates together and learn from one another. Since our meeting was planned the week before the International AIDS Society meeting in Berlin, we envisioned to hire a train compartment to bring over delegates from Amsterdam to Berlin on an STI&HIV night express. Yet, starting early 2020 all our plans had to be revised with the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic and all consequential travel restrictions imposed.

The year before the start of the meeting was a tense year. Could we continue and plan an in-person meeting? In the summer things looked bright with very low numbers of COVID-19 cases and a lift of the lock down measures, at least in The Netherlands. Yet, dark clouds re-emerged in the fall and all hope that an in-person meeting would be possible in 2021 evaporated. By October we decided to focus fully on the organization of a

Other Future World Congresses

See the Africa/MENA regional report about the 23rd IUSTI World Congress 2022, 4-7th September 2022, at Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, and the North America regional report about the World STI&HIV 2023 Congress with ISSTDR, 24th-27th July 2023, in Chicago.

IUSTI Centenary Celebrations 2023

IUSTI was founded in 1923 so will be 100 years old in 2023. Plans are being included for an IUSTI Centenary Celebration at the Chicago Congress in 2023.

Janet Wilson, IUSTI-World President
virtual meeting and try to take advantage of its possibilities, but to also face the down sides of an online meeting with creative solutions.

**The Format**

Due to its size, previous STI&HIV meetings had 4 to 5 parallel session tracks to create space for all presentations. As a result, delegates couldn’t see all the content they would like to. Therefore, we decided to pre-record all scientific content well in advance and make it accessible to the delegates 2 weeks in advance of the opening day of the meeting (Figure: Screenshot of a prerecorded presentation). This gave delegates the opportunity to delve into all presentations & posters whenever and wherever at their own convenience. Moreover, all recordings will remain accessible via the conference platform until October!

To engage communities, early on in the preparation of the conference we established a Community Engagement Committee, and sought Ambassadors as local community representatives. Together with the International Scientific Committee they helped to create the programme. Several community representatives gave plenaries like Shruta Rawat on the importance of community engagement, and Bakita Kashada and participatory practices in research. We encouraged community members working in the field of STI & HIV to submit practice-based abstracts to share their work. Via social media campaigns we invited community representatives to register free of charge and join the conference. We made short video clips comprising of interviews with community members & scientists on a variety of topics like your first STI experience, Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP), sex work, and the future of STI care. You can still see these clips here via the conference website (Figure: Community engagement clip on transgender health).

To engage the delegates, we created live talk shows during the conference. According to a central theme we selected 6 presenters and 3 experts, including a community representative, to discuss topics such as the impact of COVID-19 on STI care, PrEP, transgender health, gonorrhoea & syphilis (Figure: Talk show on HIV testing and care to diverse communities). Each presenter gave a 3-minute recap on their work, followed by a reply from the experts, and a 30 minute Q&A with the live audience. The concept worked really well & has the potential to be incorporated in future editions of the STI&HIV World Conference.

![Community engagement clip on transgender health](image)

**The Figures**

In total just over 1000 delegates registered including 95 community representatives. We had delegates from 64 countries. We prerecorded 18 plenary presentations, 55 invited presenters for 11 symposia, 120 presentations for 20 abstract driven sessions 20, and 300 ePosters.

The live part of the conference comprised of 8 talkshows. We had 2 debates around anti-microbial stewardship in STI management. One debate was on the abandonment of dual therapy in favour of monotherapy for the treatment of uncomplicated gonorrhoea. A majority of the live audience voted to abandon treatment with ceftriaxone plus azithromycin since there is no compelling evidence that it impedes the emergence of ceftriaxone resistance, yet there is evidence that it induces azithromycin resistance in many pathogens. The other debate was on the abandonment of chlamydia screening for asymptomatic persons. A majority voted against this proposition.

Together with the International AIDS Society we organised 2 joint ISSTDR/IAS sessions during the
STI&HIV conference and a joint session the week after during the IAS meeting from Berlin. We had 7 Satellite Workshops on the last day of the conference, including the launch of the new WHO guideline for the syndromic management of symptomatic STI infections. There was a BASHH symposium and a highly successful IUSTI Europe Advanced Course which attracted over 750 delegates. The ASTDA held their traditional Awards Luncheon during which Kees Rietmeijer received his life time achievement award.

We had 67 scholarship recipients for which we organised 2 dedicated scholarship webinars on writing a scientific paper with contributions from Bill Miller, chief editor of STD journal, and on obtaining research grants with the help of Carolyn Deal from NIH (Figure: Scholar webinar on how to successfully obtain a research grant). To accommodate all scholars in the various time zones, each webinar was repeated 3 times.

![Scholar webinar on how to successfully obtain a research grant](image)

The Future

So, what can we learn from this meeting for the future? I would like to highlight 4 main topics: Antimicrobial resistance (AMR), PrEP, Person Centered Healthcare & sex positive provider attitude, and the impact of COVID-19 on STI services.

With the emergence of antimicrobial resistance, we are like bunnies looking into the head lights of a fast approaching car. There is growing concern, especially where it involves gonorrhoea resistance for ceftriaxone, our last empirical first line option. Not only was this addressed in the above-mentioned debates, but also in the WHO launch of the new symptomatic STI management guideline. We see a shift from syndromic towards presumptive STI management. The use of rapid diagnostics (where available) should lead to a more rational use of antibiotics, instead of having to rely on symptoms only. The call for user friendly, affordable and reliable rapid tests is urgent, especially for gonorrhoea, trichomoniasis and chlamydia.

The introduction of PrEP has had a big impact on STI service delivery. Apart from the strong effect on HIV prevention, PrEP offers the opportunity for long term person centered STI & sexual health care delivery with emphasis on syndemic components including substance use & mental health. Many persons indicated for PrEP suffer from discrimination, stigma and violence; topics that should be addressed holistically. There were a lot of studies presented on the implementation of PrEP including the first 3 of the 5 stages of the PrEP care continuum: awareness, acceptability and uptake. Yet, to make PrEP truly sustainable, more research is required into the last 2 steps: adherence & retention. Also, most PrEP research focused on cis-gender men who have sex with men & too little on other groups such as cis-gender women and trans-gender persons.

Overall, the advocacy from the community representatives to normalize STI was strong. Having an STI can be part of a happy sex life and a sex positive attitude should be part of a healthcare providers’ perspective. This implies the need for person centered non-judgmental sexual health services & research focused on the needs & wishes of key populations. This was especially felt for trans-gender sexual health care. Depathologizing transgenderism, training and more awareness of healthcare providers is required to fully support trans gender persons. In particular this also applies to key populations of colour who are far more likely to face violence, inequity in access to healthcare, be it trans-gender persons, men who have sex with men, or sex workers.

The most popular talk show was on COVID-19 and its impact on service delivery. Moreover, we dedicated 3 recorded sessions to this topic. COVID-19 has brought us a lot of misery, like disrupted services & compromised access to care. COVID-19 further increased the socio-legal impact and criminalization of marginalized populations with a negative impact on health seeking behaviour and access to care. Yet, the upside of the pandemic is that it revolutionized healthcare provision. As far as e-health online consultations and home-based testing it brought is many years ahead in a few months’ time. This potentially might also open opportunities towards care provision of so called “hard-to-reach” populations. Yet, digital illiteracy is a big hurdle, that could deepen the gap between those online & offline. Finally, there were good studies on the behavioral impact of COVID-19 on an individual level: loneliness, homebased gender violence & mental health issues. Again, this is a call for person centered care, where these side effects are probably best addressed.
The future is unpredictable. It sounds like an open door, but this is what the COVID-19 pandemic has again taught us. We don't know how things will evolve and what lockdown measures will be required in the coming period. When will we be able to meet again in-person? Will this include us all, or only those who have the tremendous luxury to get vaccinated, which is absolutely not the case in every region of the world? Let’s hope we can have an in-person STI&HIV World meeting in 2 years’ time in Chicago (Figure: Studio setting with ISSTDR President Bobbie van der Poll and past ISSTDR President Henry de Vries). One thing is for sure, it will never be like the ones before the pandemic. We have learned so much in the past 2 years that should be implemented and improve the way we organise our conferences.

Henry de Vries

Regional Reports

North America

From the American STD Association (ASTDA)

- This year, ASTDA recognized three outstanding individuals to receive Recognition Awards at the ISSTDR 2021 Meeting in Amsterdam.
  - The Distinguished Career Award was given to Dr. Kees Rietmeijer.
  - The Achievement Award was given to Dr. William Miller.
  - The Young Investigator Award was given to Dr. Anna Cope.

Videotaped award presentations are posted on the ASTDA website. Many congratulations to these deserving awardees.

- The ASTDA Board met in-person in May, 2021 in Chicago. It was the first in-person meeting that most board members had attended since the start of the COVID pandemic. The Board celebrated the accomplishments of Bobbie Van der Pol who is now Past President. Bobbie has done an incredible job with ASTDA over the past three years – under her leadership, ASTDA developed a Mission Statement, updated its objectives, and launched a new enhanced website. The ASTDA Constitution and Bylaws were updated, and several new initiatives were conceived. Khalil Ghanem took over as ASTDA President and IUSTI North America Regional Chair.

- Also in May, ASTDA held its 4th annual ASTDA Collaborative Workshop, with attendees including early career stage investigators, mentoring faculty, industry and public health/government representatives.

- ASTDA announced it will be launching a Summer Fellowship Program during summer 2022 for 5 fellows (trainees). Each fellow will receive a stipend, as will their mentor. The goal is to promote enthusiasm for the STI field by trainees with broad STI-related interests (e.g. research, clinical work, public health, policy, etc.). ASTDA has also increased support for the Small Project Assistance Program (mentioned above), to provide up to $5,000 to young investigators for projects related to STIs. As well, ASTDA was pleased to provide $5,000 to fund scholarships for ISSTDR 2021 Meeting in Amsterdam.

- ASTDA will be hiring a communications intern to help promote the work of the Association. Dr. Beth Meyerson, who chairs the Communications Committee for ASTDA, and the committee members will be working with the intern to develop a comprehensive communication plan.

- ASTDA released two Position Papers/Statements. The latest is "Direct-to-Consumer STI Testing Services."

- Two ASTDA members (Bobbie Van Der Pol and Ina Park) were elected to represent North America as Members of the IUSTI-World Executive Committee.
Finally, ASTDA/IUSTI-North America is pleased to host the joint ISSTDR/IUSTI STI & HIV 2023 World Congress in Chicago, July 24-27, 2023. The theme of the conference is Local Engagement / Global Impact. This will be the 50th year of ISSTDR, and the 100th anniversary of IUSTI-World. The conference will be held in conjunction with the National Sexual Health Conference. The Scientific Committee will be chaired by Drs. Patricia Kissinger and Andrew Winter.

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From IUSTI-Canada

- IUSTI-Canada held its Annual General Meeting (AGM) virtually via WebEx on July 14, 2021. Jo-Anne Dillon, the founding and inaugural president, reported that IUSTI-Canada was recognized by the IUSTI-World Executive Committee in July 2015 after several years of work in establishing affiliations and memoranda of understanding with IUSTI World and IUSTI-North America, and the first AGM was held in 2019. The work of the Canadian Public Health Organization (CPHA) in acting as the IUSTI-Canada secretariat has been a cornerstone for IUSTI-Canada endeavours.
- The IUSTI-Canada Executive and CPHA continued to meet regularly by Zoom throughout the period since the last AGM. Major achievements have included:
  - Membership: ongoing efforts have focused on maintaining contact with the membership and updating the IUSTI-Canada website.
  - Webinar Series: In partnership with CPHA, the IUSTI-Canada Webinar Series was initiated in the fall of 2020. The first speakers included Drs Gina Ogilvie - University of British Columbia (Charting a career in reproductive and sexual health: Lessons from a Black Canadian Female Scientist) and Ameeta Singh - University of Alberta (Reflections on how to address the resurgence of syphilis in Canada). These webinars attracted registrants from many countries (e.g., Canada, USA, Brazil, Congo, Sudan, Ghana, Nigeria). IUSTI-Canada is working to sponsor further webinars and other meeting formats on various topics pertaining to STIs to provide opportunities for Canadian STI experts to interact. Future webinar topics will include Writing for STI prevention, The potential role of Men B vaccine on control of gonorrhea, Self-service STI testing services, and more.
  - ASTDA engagement: IUSTI-Canada Vice-President (and incoming President) Marc Steben represented IUSTI-Canada on the ASTDA Board (Ex officio). IUSTI-Canada also held a Zoom meeting with ASTDA Board members to discuss relationship between organizations and fee structures. These talks are on-going. IUSTI-Canada and ASTDA continue to work closely together to discuss issues of mutual concern.
  - COVID questionnaire: The impact of the COVID pandemic has been severe and, especially in the early part of the pandemic, affected many STI efforts in all areas. IUSTI-Canada, in partnership with the CPHA and the Canadian AIDS Treatment Information Exchange (CATIE), developed an online questionnaire to ascertain the impact of the pandemic on STI efforts in several different areas. The questionnaire was distributed to member lists held by both CPHA, which includes IUSTI-Canada, and CATIE. Sadly, the response to questionnaire was low and meaningful conclusions could not be determined.

IUSTI-Canada is hosting the World! Bienvenue! Welcome! to Montréal 2025

- Marc Steben was pleased to report that IUSTI-Canada was successful in
its bid to host the 2025 ISSTDR/IUSTI World Congress in Montreal and will serve as ISSTDR President after the Chicago Conference. Congratulations to Marc and the bidding team for putting this successful application together.

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From the CDC Division of STD Prevention (DSTDP)

**New Director of CDC’s Division of STD Prevention** – Dr. Leandro Mena joined the Division on August 2, 2021. Dr. Mena brings an extensive portfolio of experience in STD and HIV prevention to the new role. Welcome aboard, Dr. Mena!

- **Awarding the Next Round of Ending the HIV Epidemic Initiative in the US (EHE) Funding for STD Clinics** – On July 27th, CDC announced Year Two funding to scale up quality HIV prevention services in STD clinics. This award will be made to 19 recipients (an increase from the seven recipients in year one) through Component C of the funding opportunity PS20-2010: Integrated HIV Programs for Health Departments to Support Ending the HIV Epidemic in the United States. It is a part of the nation’s ongoing federal initiative, Ending the HIV Epidemic in the US (EHE).
- **Updated STI Treatment Guidelines** – On July 22, CDC published Sexually Transmitted Infections Treatment Guidelines, 2021, which provides current evidence-based diagnostic, management, and treatment recommendations, and serves as a source of clinical guidance for managing STIs.
- **$1.13 Billion Invested in Strengthening the DIS Workforce** – In May, the White House announced a historic investment in the DIS workforce. CDC is collaborating with STD PCHD recipients to implement the funding.

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From the American Sexual Health Association (ASHA)

- ASHA participated in public health observations including Cervical Health Awareness Month (January); National Condom Month (February); Sexual Pleasure Month (March); STI Awareness Month (April); Women’s Health Month (May); and Men’s Health Month (June). ASHA collaborated with stakeholders for each observation and activities included social media campaigns and developing landing pages online to serve as hubs for content. For Women’s Health Month, ASHA hosted a series of cervical cancer education and support webinars.
- ASHA signed on to testimony to the US House Appropriations Committee in support of funding for the Title X family planning program, as part of the Family Planning Coalition. ASHA also submitted comments on the draft STI National Strategic Plan.
- ASHA produced new episodes of our Sex+Health podcast and covered topics including bacterial vaginosis (BV), the patient journey with cervical cancer and head and neck cancer, respectively, and updates on contraceptive options. ASHA podcasts may be streamed or downloaded on Soundcloud and through iTunes.
- ASHA also released new videos including Find the Condom with the Right Fit and Feel for You and Birth Control - Choose What’s Right for Your Life. These and other ASHA videos are available on the ASHA YouTube Channel.

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From the National Coalition of STD Directors (NCSD)

STD Engage Update: Due to developments within our field regarding expanded funding to rebuild the...
DIS workforce, the NCSD board of directors recently decided to cancel STD Engage 2021. In coordination with the Division of STD Prevention and our STD Engage planning committee, NCSD is in the process of exploring different ways to provide technical assistance to our field, which will likely take the form of virtual activities taking place in the fall or winter over several weeks to allow a more user-friendly virtual experience.

Clinic+ Connect Community Conference 2021: NCSD hosted its first annual Clinic+ Connect Community Conference on July 7, 2021. Sexual health clinic colleagues from across the country were convened to explore current issues facing clinics and innovative best practices.

COVID-19’s Impact on PrEP/PEP and Sexual Health Services: NCSD, in collaboration with NASTAD, published a report that examined the impact COVID-19 has had on PrEP/PEP and sexual health services, particularly in the Southern US.

Asia Pacific

Current IUSTI-AP EXCO

Somesh Gupta has completed his two terms as Regional Director of IUSTI-AP. His successor will be Zhou Pingyu from China. Since Zhou Pingyu was also an IUSTI-AP member for IUSTI World EXCO, that position fell vacant. Sunil Sethi has completed his two terms as a Member of IUSTI-AP for IUSTI World EXCO. These two positions are filled by Seema Sood from India and Ligang Yang from China. Somesh Gupta was made a Senior Counsellor for IUSTI World EXCO.

Virtual IUSTI-AP Regional Congress, supported by IUSTI-World

The Local Organizing Committee, chaired by Dr. Somesh Gupta, and the Scientific Committee, chaired by Dr. Bradley Stoner, welcome you to attend the Postponed 21st IUSTI World with Asia-Pacific Region Congress, which will be held VIRTUALLY on December 10-11, 2021. Would you please join us for this exciting scientific conference?

Jointly sponsored by IUSTI-World and IUSTI-Asia Pacific Region, the Congress will provide state-of-the-art presentations on sexually transmitted infection (STI) research, clinical care, and prevention, including HIV. Five Scientific Tracks contribute to the conference program in Epidemiology, Basic Science, Behavioral Science, Clinical Science, and Policy and Implementation. The conference features high-quality keynote speeches, plenary lectures, symposia, and debates on cutting-edge topics in the field of sexually transmitted infections. The conference is being delivered free of charge to all current, paid-up Full Members of IUSTI in any region of the world. Plan to attend stimulating science and exciting research presentations. For regular updates, please visit the congress website https://iusti2021.org/

Bid adieu- Regional Director, IUSTI-AP

Water in-flow and monk on the move, stay clean-An Indian proverb.

It is time to move on…

My first introduction to IUSTI was through my mentor, Prof. Bhushan Kumar, who was the Department of Dermatology & Venereology Chair at a tertiary care university hospital in Chandigarh, in North India. He had organized the IUSTI-Asia-Pacific conference in Chandigarh in the year 1999. Having worked in an area with a high prevalence of curable STIs, the specialty always fascinated me. So, my first overseas visit was to Vienna to attend IUSTI Europe in 2002, where I met Dr. Raj Patel, who was the acting Secretary-General at that time. He, along with the then President, Dr. James Bingham, asked me to set up the IUSTI website and start a membership program as Membership Secretary, which I continued from 2003 to 2013. I worked with excellent, affectionate, and very active presidents – Dr. James Bingham, Dr. Frank Judson, Dr. Angelika Stary, Dr. King K. Holmes, Dr. Raj Patel, Dr. David Lewis, Dr. Charlotte Gaydos, and Dr. Janet Wilson. Since 2013, I have continued as IUSTI-AP Regional Director, and during this period, we lost a few very active members. I want to mention two of them here- Dr. H.K. Doshi from Malaysia and Dr. Kamal Four from UAE. Their demise was a significant loss to IUSTI AP. Both of them organized excellent regional conferences in their respective countries.
I had organized the 12th World Congress of Sexually Transmitted Infections in New Delhi in November 2011, when King K. Holmes was the President. This was attended by over 600 delegates from all over the world. All in IUSTI extended their love and affection towards me, and I can’t thank enough to IUSTI for my career advancement.

Somesh Gupta

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Europe

The last six months were very busy in the European branch. Following the good experience arising from the 34th IUSTI-Europe Virtual Congress in 2020, a series of webinars were initiated by Derek Freedman and George-Sorin Tiplica. They were joined by Andy Winter, Airi Poder, Claudia Heller-Vitouch and Eija Hiltun to form a Steering Group. With the support of BASHH, including the encouragement of John McSorley BASHH President and the assistance of Claire Dewsnap, the activities ran smoothly. Four monthly webinars were organized and all of them were well received, with registrants from more than 60 countries. The high number of participants was a clear sign of appreciation and interest:

- Webinar 1. COVID-19 Impact on STI's and Services in Europe: 236 participants;
- Webinar 2. Chronic Viral STI’s – How to ease the Psychological Burden: 432 participants;
- Webinar 3. The new CDC 2021 STI Guidelines: 304 participants;

The webinars will continue between September 2021 and May 2022.

With the support of Claudia Heller-Vitouch, a dedicated IUSTI-Europe webpage has been set-up at www.iusti-europe.eu. This webpage is linked to the IUSTI World website and viewers will find recordings from the webinars and updates from IUSTI-Europe (Figure 1).

More than 340 participants from European countries participated at The STI & HIV 2021 World Congress produced as a virtual event by ISSTDR and IUSTI World and hosted by our colleagues from the Nederland. Henry de Vries, President of the Congress, excellently managed to address diversity, health and sexuality in the urban context.

We are pleased to announce that Claudia Heller-Vitouch is the new Regional Director of IUSTI-Europe Region. A skilful dermato-venereologist from Vienna (Austria), with a vast experience in IUSTI-Europe leadership, she was the perfect choice for this position. Previously acting as Secretary General and as Chair of the Council of IUSTI-Europe (2013-2021) she was involved in the development of our association. Airi Poder, the immediate past Regional Director, was warmly thanked for her dedicated work in the benefit of IUSTI-Europe. She will continue to contribute as an officer to the further development of our branch. Henry de Vries from Amsterdam (Nederland) will join the team of IUSTI-Europe representatives in the Executive Committee of IUSTI World. The Czech Republic will be represented in the IUSTI-Europe Council by Jana Třešňák Hercogová from Prague. George-Sorin Tiplica from Bucharest (Romania) was elected by the national representatives as the new Chair of the IUSTI-Europe Council. His proposed priorities are (1) to give value to the previous activities by organizing an on-line archive; (2) to up-date the region’s rules and regulations to increase the efficiency of activities; (3) to support and develop research activities.

Figure 1. IUSTI-Europe webpage at www.iusti-europe.eu

www.iusti.org
IUSTI Europe is confidently looking to the future and is making preparations for the 35th Congress which will be organized in Tbilisi (Georgia) between 29 September – 01 October 2022 (Figure 2). The President of the event is our experienced colleague Josephe Kobakhidze. The Chair of the scientific committee is Arne Wikström who will work together with the co-chairs Magnus Unemo and Valeska Padovese in order to provide an exquisite program. The theme of the congress is: “STIs at the crossroads after COVID-19”.

George Sorin Tiplica

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Latin America

From June 20 to 22 of 2021, the XII Congress of the Brazilian STD Society was held online together with the IX Brazilian Congress on AIDS and the IV Latin American Congress of IUSTI on STD / HIV and AIDS with 913 participants and 121 speakers. We also had 307 e-posters and 11 oral presentations.

Adele Benzaken

Conference Update

IUSTI Events:

Virtual IUSTI-AP Regional Congress, supported by IUSTI-World
December 10-11, 2021
https://iusti2021.org/

IUSTI- Europe Congress
29 September – 01 October 2022
Tbilisi, Georgia
www.iusti-europe.eu

ISSTDR/IUSTI STI & HIV 2023 World Congress
July 24-27 2022
Chicago

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Further information on the activities of IUSTI available at www.iusti.org