Minutes of ISPD Lab Techniques SIG
ISPD 15th International Conference, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
July 14, 2010

Despite the early start (8 a.m.) at the last day of the ISPD conference, the meeting was well attended (even though quite a number of attendees dropped in later) with both advanced registered members present and a number of attendees who registered on site. The list of attendees with their email addresses is compiled and will be put on the website too. At the previous meeting (Vancouver 2008) it was requested to add speciality to the list so we could know each other’s field: this possibility was not available in Amsterdam. The need of it was discussed and it was agreed to send a list to which all the members can add their speciality.

The meeting started with a brief personal introduction of chair (Brigitte Faas: BF) and deputy chair (Vincenzo Cirigliano: VC) (see also the ISPD website for the introduction of these).

There was a short agenda of issues to be discussed. The agenda was not sent to the members before the ISPD meeting, as it was only made up during the meeting. Next time, in order to have a more structured and effective meeting, the agenda should be sent to the members before the ISPD meeting.

BF and VC prepared some slides for discussion, but as there were no audiovisual possibilities in the room, the slides were printed and handed out.

**Preconference course 2010:**
The first preconference course organised by our SIG, dealing with fetal DNA in the maternal plasma, was a success. This year it was organised by Lyn Chitty, and she was acknowledged for her efforts. Evaluation forms were handed out during the course and an overview of this will follow.

**Discussion on goals, mission statements and aims (made available on the website):**
In the past two years, mission statement, aims and goals were written and put on the website. These were discussed.

- With regard to the goals, there was a common view that supporting implementation and validation of new techniques definitely falls within the scope of the SIG, while this might not be the case for the ethical and psychological issues. But with the implementation of new techniques, these issues become more and more important and therefore we cannot completely ignore it. Not a main issue, but a sideline issue to go along with the main issues.
- During the Vancouver meeting, writing specific ISPD guidelines was discussed. Many countries already have guidelines in place and there were reluctances to take on board the work of re-writing. When the specific question about the actual need of this was formulated, nobody answered. It was therefore suggested not to try to write worldwide guidelines, but to make the guidelines that are already in place available via links on the website. Prof Baranov from Russia pointed out there are no guidelines for cytogenetics in Russia and he was keen to translate and adapt existing guidelines and propose their implementation.
- It was suggested to compile detailed information on diagnostic kits available in each country and labs using these as it could facilitate technical training in other labs.

**Discussion on Education and Vancouver meeting minutes:**
- At the Vancouver meeting it was suggested to have a yearly meeting of the SIG which should be attached to a conference other than the ISPD. The suggestion of the ISPD board of having a SIG Laboratory Techniques meeting in conjunction with the IPSG meeting (Barcelona June 2011) was discussed; there was general consensus on proposing to have the meeting in conjunction with the ESHG conference as most members will most likely attend this meeting.
• Proposed topic of the next course/training was “Practical issues of array in prenatal diagnosis”. This would suit in conjunction with ESHG as most speakers and participants will already be attending that meeting. As an alternative it should be left for the next ISPD conference in Miami 2012, or the 2011 meeting should be more educational for IPSG attendees who are not familiar with technical aspects of array. Purificacao Tavares from Portugal offered help in organising the meeting.

• Information obtained after the meeting: the issue of “attaching” the SIG meeting to e.g. the ESHG was discussed with the board. The board agreed there should at least be a meeting once a year where all the SIGs are present. For 2011 it was decided that this should be at the IPSG meeting in Barcelona. Other meetings in conjunction with other conferences might also be organised by the SIGs, but first some coordinating work should be done to make that possible. So for 2011, the SIG course/training will be in conjunction with the IPSG. This might influence the topic or type of meeting that was suggested (see above), as array in prenatal diagnosis might not be the main issue of interest for the attendees of the IPSG meeting. Either another subject should be chosen, or the meeting should be more educational.

• Instead of compiling a new list of labs performing diagnostic tests, it was proposed to add links to existing databases (Genetest, Eurogentest) on the ISPD web page.

• Ken Song from USA proposed to include the email list of members to facilitate contacts between groups. Email communication was also preferred to the open forum on the web as this is much faster without the need of login. Still needs to be decided which links can be put on the open ISPD site and what should go in the member only area (see below).

• Before the meeting, BF already was in contact with Jiong Tao and Bian Xuming from China, as in Vancouver they offered to host a basic training course in China. During the meeting, the needs were discussed. It was obvious that there is a broad education need. VC has broad experience in organising QF-PCR courses and this experience might be of help in organising a course in China. This course might be broader than QF-PCR alone, depending on the needs. Financial support from the ISPD will probably be limited (if even), but VC’s experience is that expenses are mostly covered by registration fees and industrial partners. In 2010, there are no possibilities for a training course anymore, 2011 might be an option. Professor Bian Xuming and Baosheng Zhu will contact BF and VC for this.

• During the Vancouver meeting it was proposed that minutes of the complete ISPD meeting could be composed, as not everyone can attend all sessions and a summary of sessions might be of interest to everyone. David Chitayat’s name was mentioned as volunteer in the minutes of Vancouver and BF contacted him before the meeting. He is still available, but during the 2010 meeting it became clear that most will be available on the website anyway and presenters are encouraged to submit an article for a special ISPD issue. Therefore, this proposal was not taken into account anymore.

Miscellaneous:
On the ISPD website, the SIG information is available in the “members only” area. During the meeting the question arose whether this could be in an “unlocked” area of the website. This is closely related to the question whether or not SIG members should be ISPD members. This issue was discussed in the board meeting of September 20, 2010, and it was agreed that SIG members indeed should be ISPD members too. But an effort should be made to have at least some SIG information available to ISPD non-members.

There was a discussion whether this SIG meeting is scheduled at an effective time during the conference. There was a general agreement that a time change for next meeting was preferred. It was suggested to have the SIG meeting directly after the preconference courses or in the afternoon of the first day. During the ISPD member meeting later that day BF raised this issue and it will be taken into account for next meeting.
Furthermore, this SG meeting was not announced to the members, except for including it in the programme of the ISPD conference. Please announce it to the members next time. This can along with the agenda (see above).

VC / BF, November 2010