

EDITORIAL

Working together

The number of health professionals and scientists committed to improving drug therapy for children worldwide is small. Organisations such as the European Society for Developmental, Perinatal and Paediatric Pharmacology (ESDP) and the Neonatal and Paediatric Pharmacists Group (NPPG) have relatively few members compared to comparable groups interested in therapeutics in adults, and worldwide, there are few paediatric clinical pharmacologists¹. Despite the small numbers, however, the last ten years have seen major advances in improving drug therapy for children. Legislation to encourage clinical trials in children has been passed in the USA and Europe^{2,3}. Research networks are being established in several countries and training programmes in paediatric clinical pharmacology are being developed.

One of the strengths of those committed to improve drug therapy in children has been their ability to collaborate. Efforts to improve drug therapy for children are strengthened by individuals working together in an open collaborative manner⁴. This open collaborative approach has resulted in large organisations such as the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health in the UK working alongside the relatively small NPPG to produce formularies such as Medicines for Children and the BNF for Children. There is currently greater awareness of the need for more research in medicines by the organisations representing paediatric health professionals.

The last six months have seen successful international educational meetings focusing on different aspects of paediatric clinical pharmacology in three different continents. In June, the ESDP held its 10th Congress in Stockholm⁵. A month later,

IUPHAR held a successful satellite symposium on paediatric clinical pharmacology in Shanghai. In September, this journal, in conjunction with the Association of Clinical Research Professionals, held an international workshop on paediatric clinical trials in Toronto which had excellent representation from both Canada and the United States⁶. There are active and on-going discussions on the development of a formal international consortium for Medicines in Children. It is to be hoped that these meetings will result in more international cooperation to improve drug therapy for children throughout the world.

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