



International Society of Travel Medicine

Established 1991

Promoting healthy travel worldwide

TRAVEL MEDICINE News

May 2021

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The arrival of spring and COVID-19 vaccine rollouts are cultivating optimism that we will soon regain some normalcy in the world. The vaccination programs are promising gradual progress where vaccinated persons can get together and can restart travel. Caution remains crucial in order to control COVID-19 worldwide, especially with complications introduced by the variants. Travelers that are fully vaccinated still need to wear masks, avoid crowds, and practice good hand hygiene; many destinations will continue to require testing even for vaccinated travelers.

What an amazing year for ISTM! Thanks to numerous members that volunteered their time and efforts and the ISTM Secretariat's hard work, we have launched many firsts: a new Learning Management System, numerous free webinars, the virtual Travel Medicine Review and Update Course, the online Certificate in Travel Health™ Examination, and the Virtual CISTM17. The website redesign is advancing nicely, and the Executive Board has appointed a Task Force (core members Dipti Patel, Sarah McGuinness and Sarah Kohl, and chair Rebecca Acosta), to spearhead the next dedicated phase.

In May 2020, the Executive Board (EB) formed the COVID-19 Task Force to help address ISTM's response to the pandemic. The COVID-19 Task Force conducted surveys about the impact of COVID-19 on travel clinics and travel medicine providers, and assisted in vetting many online platforms, and formulated Position Statements relevant to travel medicine. [Read the ISTM Call for the Development of a Global Framework for a reliable, equitable, interoperable and globally accepted certification process for Covid-19 vaccination and/or infection status.](#) The co-leaders Rebecca Acosta, Gerard Flaherty, and Jenny Visser have provided important and valuable support to the EB and ISTM programs, for which I am grateful. As the Task Force approaches the end of its one-year term, the co-leaders have recommended that the ISTM addresses all activities with a "COVID-19 perspective". (See [COVID-19 Task Force Report on page 7](#))

As activities and travel reopen, the virtual CISTM17 is the perfect setting to learn about preparing our patients to restart travel safely. Please recommend the event and personally invite your contacts to help let the world know about the splendid content developed by the Scientific Program Committee chaired by Christina Coyle, Gerard Flaherty, Camilla

Rothe, Priscilla Rupali, and Eli Schwartz. The Secretariat is abuzz with preparations – please feel free to circulate our announcement below.



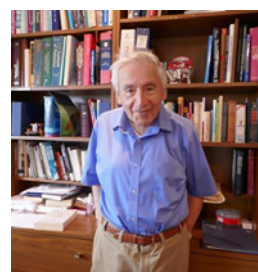
Virtual
17th Conference
of the International Society of
Travel Medicine
19-22 May 2021

Restarting Travel Safely: Upcoming Virtual Travel Medicine Learning

The International Society of Travel Medicine (ISTM) is holding the 17th Biennial Conference (CISTM17) 19-22 May 2021, the largest international gathering of travel medicine specialists and practitioners who collaborate and learn about the latest developments in the field. SARS-CoV-2 has imposed great challenges but added fresh perspectives to travel medicine.

During the conference we will address how to prepare patients to restart travel safely. We have terrific speakers on travel, tropical, and migrant health.

The CISTM17 Theme is: *The Changing Face of Travel Medicine: Anticipating its Global Impact*. Current Scientific Program details, organizing committee, agenda and more information is available on our [website](#).



Remembering Karl Neumann

I am sad to report the loss of our longstanding ISTM founding member, Karl Neumann. Karl was a kind-hearted, highly accomplished, yet down-to-earth colleague. He was among the many friendly leaders of the ISTM and welcomed everyone to the society. This friendliness set ISTM apart from other medical societies.

Karl has inspired many. He contributed generously to the ISTM community as editor of the ISTM Newsletter and his website www.kidstraveldoc.com.

Virtual 17th Conference of the International Society of Travel Medicine

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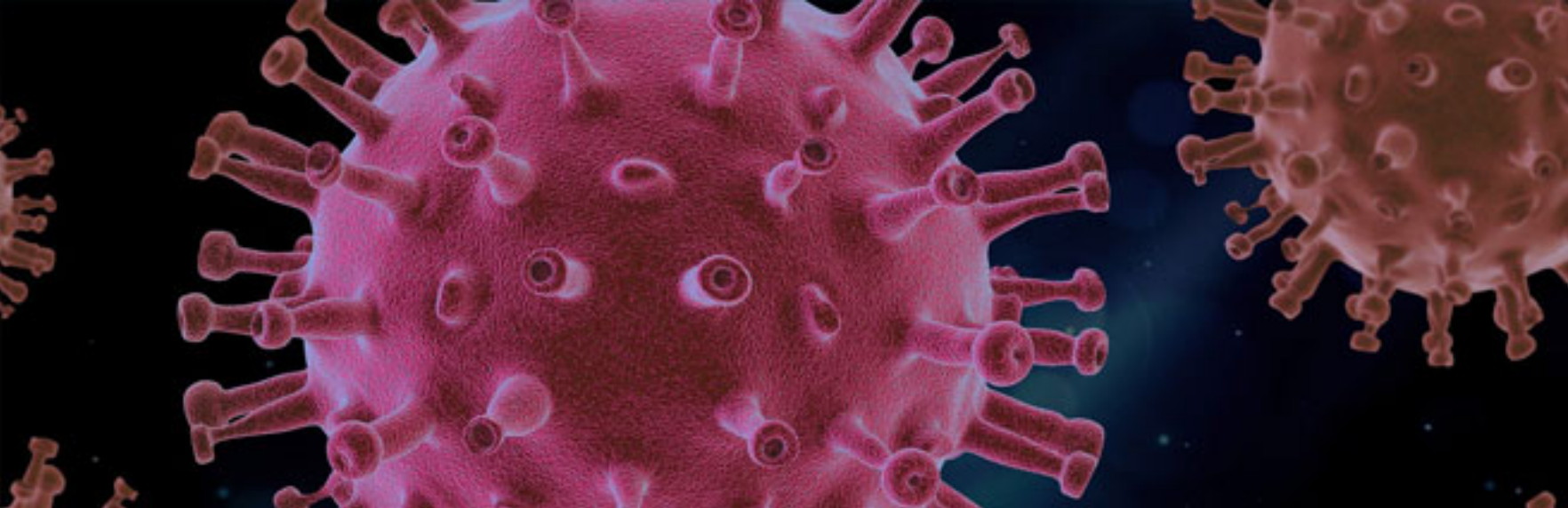
www.istm.org

Many of us remember his touching speech about the holocaust at CISTM17 in Innsbruck in 2007.

Before we knew about Karl's ill health, the ISTM Special Recognitions Committee (SRC, chaired by Charlie Ericsson) and the Executive Board had named Karl to be the inaugural recipient of the ISTM Lifetime Achievement Award. Charlie reported that "the SRC highlighted how Karl facilitated transparency and communication in the early days, in being a leader in communicating pediatric travel medicine issues, and in serving as the society's soul and conscience in his moving address to the society."

Lin Chen,
ISTM President





EDITOR'S NOTE

Welcome to the latest *Travel Medicine News*.

Early hopes for a better 2021 were dashed by increasing numbers of COVID-19 infections and hospitalizations. Lockdown continued in many countries, with no signs of return to pre-pandemic life as we knew it, although flowers popped up to remind us that Spring was around the corner. The UK has had the usual mix of weather, from March record-breaking high temperatures to gales, snow and ice, and everything in between. Unsurprisingly, weather is a normal topic of conversation during daily walks. Now another topic has joined in – COVID-19 vaccines – have you had yours yet, where did you go, have you had one or two doses, which vaccine did you have? Well, who would have thought that a year ago? Obsession with the weather has been turned on its head. The development and roll out of COVID-19 vaccines across the world has been a success story and once again we have hope, although reports of adverse events led some to a pause the program. Further research continues to provide some clarity and reassurance. We owe a debt of gratitude to the researchers and scientists who made it all possible, and to the healthcare workforce delivering the vaccination program. Thank you.

This coronavirus has not gone away, vigilance remains important. International travel re-joined the discussion. Which countries is it "safe" to visit, do we need proof of testing or vaccination, should we quarantine on arrival and on return home? A UK government taskforce was set up to explore the safe return of international travel and has reported back with a series of recommendations, applicable only to England. Recommendations for other countries may differ and be subject to rapid change.

www.gov.uk/government/publications/global-travel-taskforce-safe-return-of-international-travel

Regular travelers are itching to get away and countries are preparing to welcome tourists, but as I write this, with few exceptions, until a review in May, international travel remains illegal from the UK.

Travel medicine education is important. [The Society continues to provide educational support and dedicated Journal articles.](#) The TravelMed forum is picking up again. [See page 12.](#)

Preparations for the virtual CISTM17 are well underway. The agenda and scientific program are now available: www.ISTM.org/CISTM17. Guidance on how to navigate the virtual world is provided through on-boarding sessions. Register for the event and watch the On-Boarding recording if you missed the live sessions (link and password located in the News from the Secretariat on [page 4](#)).

The COVID-19 Task Force is seeking additional feedback in phase two of the member survey. Please take 5-10 minutes to participate. These surveys were emailed to current and recently expired ISTM members; please check your inbox.

I end sadly on a somber note. The ISTM family lost a valued friend and colleague when Pediatrician Professor Karl Neumann succumbed to COVID-19 and passed away in New York in February. I first met Karl at CISTM3 in Paris in 1993 through a conversation about TMN, albeit with its different title back then. As I edited a similar magazine for the RCN at the time, we had a common interest. Nothing was ever too much trouble for Karl who was an avid teacher, traveler, author, and a caring, warm and funny human being. Sincere condolences to his wife Cynthia and his loving family, we will all miss him. Please read Karl Neuman's tribute [here](#).

Thank you to the Secretariat for their unstinting diligence in difficult circumstances and my gratitude to Whitney Alexander and Nancy Pietroski for their support.

Take care and stay safe everyone.

Sandra Grieve,
ISTM Travel Medicine News Editor



TABLE OF CONTENTS

President's Message	1
Editor's Note	2
Secretary-Treasurer's Report	3
Letter From the Secretariat	4
GeoSentinel®	5
CISMT17 SPC Welcome Letter	6
CISTM17 President Welcome Letter	6
Meetings and Conferences	6
COVID-19 Task Force	7
COVID-19 Vaccination Certification Position Statement.....	7
Professional Groups.....	8
Interest Groups	9
Committees	11
Travel Talk	13

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SECRETARY-TREASURER'S REPORT

Light at the end of the tunnel

It has been a great joy to experience the warmth of Spring sunshine and new growth in our garden (backyard!) after a very cold winter! At the weekend we invited our Edinburgh student grandson to join us for a barbeque following a relaxation of lockdown a few days ago and tucked into the best that Costco offers in sweetcorn, steak and Cumberland sausage. The relaxation of lockdown for us has not been mirrored elsewhere and tragically, since I last wrote, 60 million global COVID-19 cases have become 140 million and 1.5 million global deaths have become 4 million. In the UK, case numbers have dropped to incredibly low levels and hospitalizations and deaths have declined steeply, now almost zero in Scotland. We are only too aware however that many countries in Europe, and beyond, are struggling and desperately hope that better times lie ahead for everyone.

It required a lot of personal effort to become involved in the vaccine rollout here in Edinburgh, but it has been incredibly worthwhile. On January 29th I was inducted as Registered Vaccinator, received a first shot of the AZ vaccine, a uniform, and official identification. On February 4th I completed the on-line training modules required by NHS Lothian and swallowed my pride as I was trained to be a vaccinator by a nurse who had given many thousand less vaccinations than I over the last 45 years. Since then, I have worked numerous sessions in four mass vaccination centers around Edinburgh, including a drive-through center where I work in a high viz jacket. I have been signed off for administering the AZ and Pfizer vaccines, with Moderna still to follow. It has been a pleasure to see so many incredibly grateful and relieved vaccinees receive their first shots, and this week second shots, and I always try to inject a little humor alongside the jab.

Our half year financial reports through to end-December 2020 show positive signs of an improvement in reserves and a return to a surplus of income over expenditure despite about \$150,000 of investment in the software platforms that have enabled online activities to develop. An application for a further US Government PPP loan has been approved. The online Travel Medicine Review Course, the Webinars and CTH™

Examination were a great success, and we are all excited by the prospects for CISTM17 on the Virtway platform. Christina Coyle and her colleagues on the Scientific Program Committee have done an amazing job in the most difficult of circumstances, and I pay tribute again to Jodi Metzgar, our Acting ED, and the whole Secretariat Team, Whitney Alexander, Michelle Clark and Michelle Haynes, Kayce Maisel, Hannah Emetulu, Elena Axelrod, and Aisha Rizwan, whose dedicated work has enabled our Society to survive and recover.

We were however surprised and disappointed to hear that Kayce Maisel left the Secretariat at the end of April. We thank her for the technical skills which have added so much to the efficient work of ISTM over the past few years and congratulate her on her new appointment.

ISTM Membership has declined quite steeply. This was expected as travel clinics closed all over the world in 2020 and income in our health care sector went into a nosedive, so there is much work still to do as we continue the road to recovery.

Mike Jones,
Secretary-Treasurer



"It has been a pleasure to see so many
incredibly grateful and relieved vaccinees
receive their first shots, and this
week second shots,"





LETTER FROM THE SECRETARIAT



Dear Colleagues,

Under the guidance of our Scientific Program Committee SPC Chair, Christina Coyle, we are excited to embrace the theme, "The Changing Face of Travel Medicine: Anticipating its Global Impact" at CISTM17! Christina, along with SPC Co-Chair Gerard Flaherty and President Lin H. Chen, have worked diligently to ensure an exceptionally compelling program for our very first virtual CISTM.

We look forward to seeing you in the virtual CISTM17 world. The Secretariat wants to ensure that registered attendees have an optimal experience. If you have not already done so, please follow [these guidelines](#) and download the Virtway Application today. You will need a desktop computer, laptop computer, or iPad device and headphones (wireless headphones are not recommended). If you have university or company issued devices, please note that to enable access, your IT team may have to disable a firewall. Read complete technical information details [here](#).

We encourage attendees to download the Virtway system now, login with your Username and Password (**LOGIN Username:** firstname_lastname@ISTM, **PASSWORD default:** istm12345), and design your avatar. There are many customizable options in your avatar closet including size, shape, color tones, wardrobe, accessories, and more. If you were unable to attend one of our live On-Boarding sessions, [a recorded version is available to view](#) **Password:** y.bbBo??

ISTM appreciates your trust and willingness to participate in this engaging and exciting virtual platform. Once you finish creating your avatar, we encourage you to explore the Virtway application and practice navigating your way around the virtual world before 19 May. Mark your calendars and be sure to join us at the Member Reception Friday, 21 May at 17.30 for connecting, dancing, and music. It will be a fun, celebratory event you don't want to miss!

COVID-19 has necessitated virtual accommodations for members. In addition to our first virtual CISTM, ISTM has also offered our first virtual Travel Medicine Review and Update Course January 2021 and our first online Certificate in Travel Health™ (CTH®) examination March 2021. These were a great success, and ISTM was glad to offer these programs to a wider international audience. The Review and Update Course recording are available On Demand on our LMS at [learning.ISTM.org](#). Watch for more virtual program offerings in the future!

ISTM Secretariat staff will be available throughout the conference at the ISTM Booth in Exhibit Hall A. Please come by and say hello! Be sure to spin our prize wheel by the booth for your chance to win a prize during Exhibitor Hours.

It is with regret that I inform you of Kayce Maisel's departure. Her last day at ISTM was 30 April 2021. We wish her the best in her endeavors.

Aisha, Elena, Hannah, Michelle C, Michelle H, Whitney, and myself look forward to welcoming you to the virtual world on Wednesday, 19 May!

ISTM Acting Executive Director,
Jodi Metzgar

For more information or to join the ISTM visit our site: [www.ISTM.org](#)



And much more.

Keep Your Membership Current to Continue Receiving These Member Benefits!

The ISTM, with more than 4,300 members in 100 countries, is the largest worldwide organization of travel medicine healthcare professionals. Members include physicians, nurses, and pharmacists from the private sector, academia, and government entities. Join ISTM today to take advantage of these exclusive benefits:

- ✓ Online Member-only community offering access to and discussions with the only worldwide network of people working in travel medicine.
- ✓ Clinic listing in the Online Global Travel Clinic Directory linked to the WHO, CDC, and other government agencies.
- ✓ Weekly medical and safety travel alerts.
- ✓ Member Benefit Webinars and Online Programs as well as informational and educational white papers and case studies free to ISTM Members.
- ✓ Special discounts on products travel medicine professionals use every day, only available to ISTM Members.
- ✓ Access to the Journal of Travel Medicine, a peer-reviewed scientific publication.
- ✓ Eligibility to apply for Research Grants and Bursaries.
- ✓ Member discounts for online and in-person educational programs and conferences.





GEOSENTINEL

The GeoSentinel® Network continues to have a challenging year. The number of travelers and migrants continues to be very low, and many of the clinics at our sites are functioning at a much reduced volume, and in some cases have suspended operations entirely. This has greatly hampered our surveillance capabilities. In addition, COVID-19 has made yet another resurgence in many parts of the world, and many of our site personnel continue to focus their attention on the pandemic, providing clinical care and support to public health, administrative bodies, laboratory services, and urgent research efforts.

Nevertheless, we have been able to make some progress with several projects. At CISTM17 this month, we have 3 scientific presentations, which examine hepatitis A in travelers, illness in travelers to eastern Europe, and complications among those traveling for the purpose of seeking health care abroad. Each analysis has produced interesting and novel findings. We encourage everyone at the meeting to attend these virtual presentations. Many of our network members are deeply involved in all aspects of the conference, on the organizational committee, as speakers, and moderators. As usual, there will be a session devoted to describing the network, our recent activities and future plans, with plenty of time for discussion for those who want to learn more, and perhaps become involved in the network. An analysis of XDR tuberculosis has recently been accepted by the *Journal of Travel Medicine* and additional manuscripts on hepatitis A and XDR typhoid fever in travelers to Pakistan are close to completion.

Our current 5-year funding cycle from the CDC comes to an end August 31, 2021. Our application for a new funding cycle is in, and we expect to continue our efforts for another 5 years, with some major changes. Until now, we have been officially designated as a surveillance network, which greatly restricts the types of projects we have been allowed to perform with these funds. If our application is accepted, we will formally become a "research network", which will be the most important transformation of our activities since the founding of the network 25 years ago.

In anticipation of this new mandate, we are restructuring the network leadership. A committee composed of some of our most accomplished leaders from GeoSentinel®, ISTM, and the CDC is currently evaluating applications for the new leadership positions, and, by September 1, we will be ready to explore new areas of travel health. Here too, the pandemic will have an impact, as projects involving COVID-19 surveillance and response will certainly keep us occupied for some time to come. To help fund our research plans, we are fortunate to have seen the establishment and early success of the GeoSentinel® Foundation. Many philanthropic donors and organizations have already come forward. We are also looking to develop research collaborations with investigators and other networks around the world.

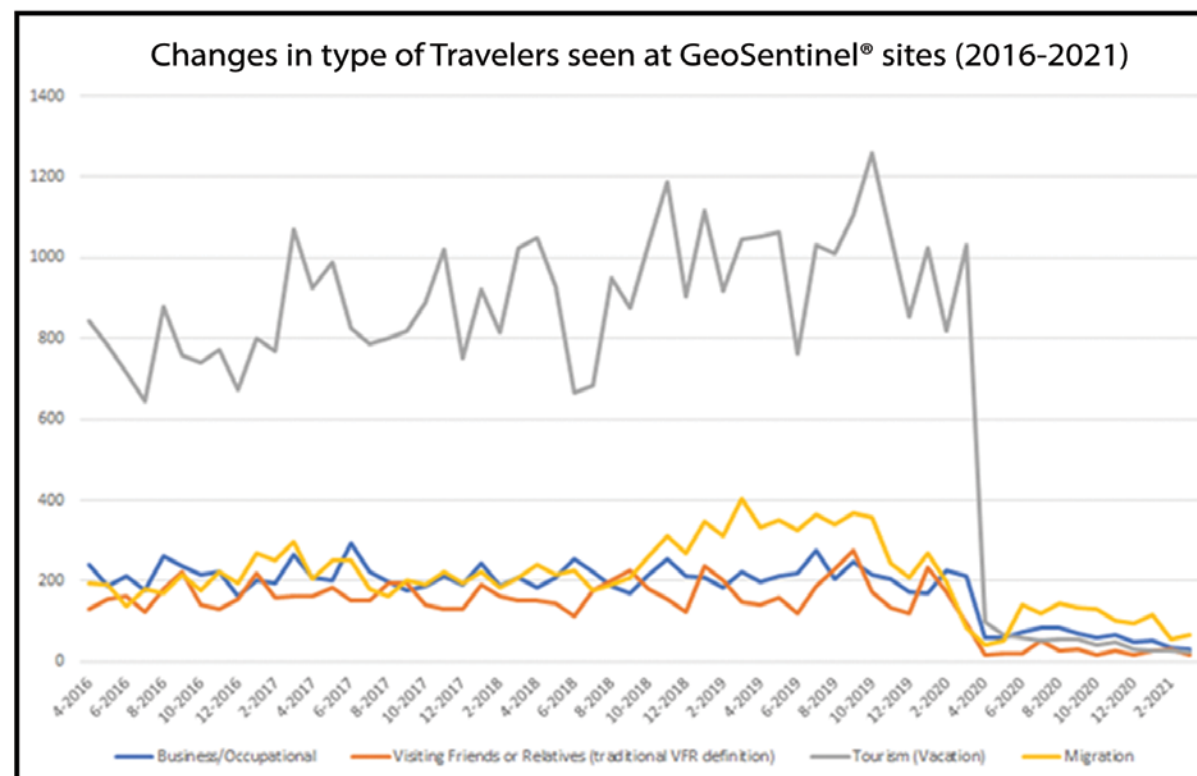
As always, if you are interested in joining our efforts in any capacity, please let us know. Although this has been a difficult year, one result has been wide recognition of the importance of travel-related illness, pandemic preparedness, and surveillance in general. As we begin to imagine putting the worst of this pandemic behind us, these will be exciting times for the GeoSentinel® Surveillance Network.



David Hamer,
GeoSentinel®
Co-Principal Investigator



Michael Libman,
GeoSentinel®
Co-Principal Investigator

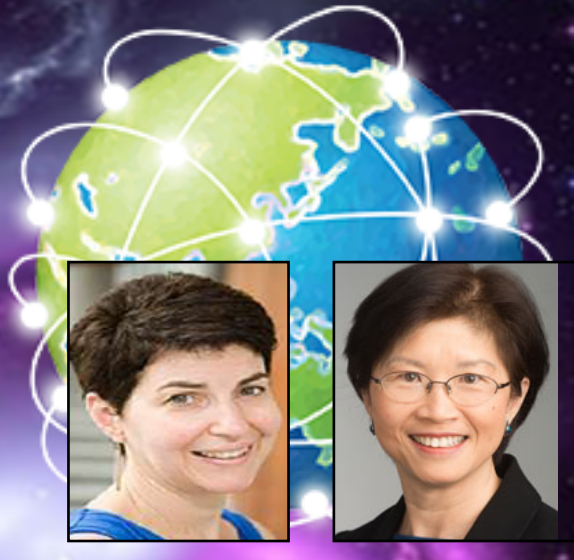


"As always, if you are interested in joining our efforts in any capacity, please let us know."



Virtual 17th Conference

International Society of Travel Medicine
19-22 May 2021



CISTM SPC CHAIR WELCOME LETTER

Dear Colleagues,

It is my pleasure to invite you to the first virtual conference of the ISTM! Travel has been upended by the pandemic this year in ways that no one could imagine. Across the world we have felt the impact of COVID-19 personally and professionally. During the entirety of this past year ISTM has adapted, innovated, and provided a space for travel medicine providers to connect.

The theme of the conference is the "The Changing Face of Travel Medicine: Anticipating its Global Impact." It was originally chosen for the fluidity of the rapidly changing landscape of travel medicine, which is clearly more relevant than ever today. Although we are covering traditional topics in travel medicine this year, we will also be addressing rapidly expanding fields including antimicrobial resistance, new diagnostic tools, emerging vaccines, and of course, COVID-19.

The Scientific Program Committee has been hard at work developing a full and comprehensive program including global health security, the severe impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on travel medicine, technology and digital transformation of travel health, and OneHealth for the plenary sessions. We are lucky that Dr. Terrie Taylor, Distinguished Professor of Tropical Medicine at MSUCOM, will join us as the Alan Magill Memorial Lecturer. She will present groundbreaking findings from her team in Malawi, which have helped unravel the pathogenesis of cerebral malaria in children in sub-Saharan Africa.

Our workshops will cover clinical presentations of the returning traveler, tropical diseases, medical care abroad, and migrant medicine, among other topics. This year, we introduce two special sessions: a "Deep Dive" into Schistosomiasis: A Disease of Many Faces" and a "Deep Dive" into Eosinophilia in Returned Travelers and Migrants."

We will be using a very exciting and immersive virtual platform for the conference and look forward to showing you its impressive features.

Sincerely, Christina M. Coyle

Chair, 17th Annual Conference of the International Society of Travel Medicine

CISTM PRESIDENT WELCOME LETTER

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

It is a real pleasure to invite you to the 17th Conference of the ISTM that will be held virtually 19-22 May 2021.

Our world has transformed dramatically. We are confronting the SARS-CoV-2 threat with the rapid development of diagnostics, therapeutics, and vaccines. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought travel to a standstill but showed how integral travel is in our lives. It has illustrated the connectedness of travel with our health, and the role of travel in global health security. The digital revolution and mobile technology are charging ahead in a way we hardly can imagine. And the concerns regarding climate change, migrant health, and equity in health have risen to new levels. So much has happened since the last Conference in 2019 that impacts travel medicine, and there is much to learn about the changing epidemiology of diseases, migrant health, re-starting travel, and innovations in travel medicine.

How can we practice travel medicine wisely and in a sustainable way in this evolving COVID-19 crisis?

The Scientific Program Committee has built a superb program that addresses many of these issues. We hope we can share this wonderful event with you. We also look forward to your participation and discussions.

Despite all desires and efforts to hold the ISTM Conference for the first time in Asia (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia), we realize that it is unsafe to meet in person at this time. However, the pandemic has taught us to keep pace with innovation, take advantage of technology, to 'teleport' ourselves and gather to learn.

So we look forward to "seeing" you in the Virtual World of CISTM17!

Lin Chen,
ISTM President

MEETINGS AND CONFERENCES

» **Wilderness Medical Society WMS Virtual Summer Conference**

27 June – 1 July 2021

wms.org/conferences/virtualsummer21

» **31st Virtual European Congress of Clinical Microbiology & Infectious Diseases (ECCMID)**

9-12 July 2021

www.eccmid.org

» **South African Society of Travel Medicine (SASTM) Pan African Travel Medicine Congress 2021**

Kruger National Park, South Africa

13-16 October 2021

sastm.glueup.com/event/pan-african-travel-medicine-congress-kruger-national-park-2021-14199

» **American Society of Tropical Medicine & Hygiene ASTMH 2021 70th Annual Meeting**

National Harbor, Maryland, United States of America

17-21 November 2021

www.astmh.org/annual-meeting

» **Northern European Conference on Travel Medicine (NECTM)**

Rotterdam, the Netherlands

Early-mid 2022

www.Nectm8.com



NEWS FROM THE ISTM COVID-19 TASK FORCE

The COVID-19 Task Force (TF) was launched by the Executive Board in May 2020. Its primary responsibilities were to monitor the impact of the pandemic on the ISTM membership and the travel medicine community, and to help the Society to adjust activities to continue to support its membership during the pandemic and immediate post-pandemic phase. In the previous issue of TMN we reported on TF initiatives in 2020 including: a pilot membership survey; additions to the Global Travel Clinic directory to highlight COVID-19 testing availability; review of the new Learning Management System (LMS) which serves as an essential platform for virtual education; and outreach, and support to Professional and Interest Groups to encourage COVID-19 focused and other initiatives.

With 2021 well underway and with the ongoing influence of the COVID-19 pandemic on all aspects of life including travel, the TF is continuing to work with the society on various projects. A follow-up membership (phase 2) survey was launched in April to gauge the ongoing impact of the pandemic on our members and ways that the society can respond. The second phase of the survey has received ethics approval from the Clinical Research Ethics Committee of Galway University Hospitals. This will allow the data to be published in an academic journal. We encourage all members to participate so that your valuable feedback can help the society navigate and respond through the pandemic and beyond. Please look out for the email inviting members to participate in the survey.

As pressure builds to return to travel, the TF has assisted the Executive Board in developing a position statement on COVID-19 vaccination certificates. This complex and politically charged issue is gaining increased attention, and it is important for the society to have a position in support of just, equitable, and secure solutions. The position statement is being published in this issue of Travel Medicine News and will be archived on the ISTM website [here](#).

The Task Force is also working with the Secretariat and Digital Communications Committee (DCC) on ways to highlight COVID-19 content on the website and encourage Committees, Professional and Interest Groups to update their materials posted on the website. As CISTM17 approaches, the society has an opportunity to draw additional interest and members. Our website serves as our virtual home and showcase, now more than ever during the pandemic.

As 2021 moves along, we anticipate that the focused efforts of the COVID-19 TF will no longer be necessary. Although COVID-19 will continue to impact on all activities for some time, it will be necessary, during the foreseeable future, for the Society and travel medicine/health professionals to view all activities with a COVID-19 perspective. The society has proven to be strong, responsive, and resilient throughout this very challenging period. It has been our honor and pleasure to work with the Executive Board, Secretariat and so many colleagues during this time. We remain very optimistic for a bright future for travel medicine and for the ISTM.

Rebecca Acosta, United States of America
Gerard Flaherty, Ireland
Jenny Visser, New Zealand

COVID-19 VACCINATION CERTIFICATION POSITION STATEMENT

ISTM Position Statement: Call for the Development of a Global Framework for a reliable, equitable, interoperable, and globally accepted certification process for COVID-19 vaccination and/or infection status.

With the ongoing roll-out of COVID-19 vaccines, there is increasing attention being given to the use of COVID-19 vaccination certificates or "vaccine passports" to help support the safer return to activities including international travel. As an international organization dedicated to promoting healthy, safe, and responsible travel and movement of all people crossing borders, the International Society

of Travel Medicine (ISTM) calls for the development of a global framework for a reliable, equitable, interoperable, and globally accepted certification process. The Society awaits the outcomes and recommendations of the WHO's Smart Vaccination Certificate Working Group.

In the absence of a global framework to document vaccination as well as COVID-19 testing and "recovered from infection" status, countries, businesses, and organizations will continue to address the issue of COVID-19 certificates as the demand for these increases. At this time of uncertainty, the ISTM encourages members and partners to remain aware of the fundamental issues that need to be addressed in pursuit of an effective, secure, fair, and global solution for COVID-19 vaccine certification. Considerations and areas of uncertainty include:

- » Widespread and equitable access to COVID-19 vaccination
- » What security and authentication features are included and who has access to the data?
- » Certification/authorization: by whom, how, and in what format (digital and/or paper)?
- » What is the durability of vaccination protection and durability of the certificate?
- » What information must be included on the certificate for it to be considered valid?
- » Does the certification process differ across jurisdictions for different COVID-19 vaccines?
- » Can exemption certificates be deployed? If so, issued by whom and on what grounds?
- » Can certificates coordinate vaccination with testing and "recovered from infection" status?
- » What is the policy around re-issuing of lost certificates?

Proof of COVID-19 vaccination is already required by some airlines and for entry into certain countries. The ISTM accepts that some form of vaccination certification for travelers is inevitable and will be desirable. Many jurisdictions have developed their own certification but a global framework for the process will greatly facilitate travel in the future.

At the same time, the ISTM supports all efforts to ensure vaccine equity and access, including the [COVAX initiative](#), and it will continue to advocate for this. The lack of vaccine equity and access, especially in low- and middle-income countries, is one reason why the World Health Organization currently opposes the requirement for proof of vaccination, in accordance with the International Health Regulations (IHRs), to facilitate travel across international borders (1). When COVID-19 vaccines are available worldwide, vaccination requirement for travel may become the norm.

Data are rapidly emerging regarding vaccine effectiveness, immunity following "recovery from infection", and the degree of "immune escape" that variants possess. Health authorities will continue to update guidance. The ISTM will monitor progress on COVID-19 vaccination certification carefully in the time ahead, and it stands ready to contribute to policy discussions.

(1) World Health Organization. Interim position paper: [considerations regarding proof of COVID-19 vaccination for international travellers](#). 5th Feb 2021.



PROFESSIONAL GROUPS

NURSING

As I write this review it has been over a year since WHO declared COVID-19 a global pandemic. In many parts of the world a third wave is now being predicted and countries are working overtime to distribute the vaccine supplies they have been able to procure. With the vaccine comes the hope that we will travel again but there are varying predictions on what that will look like. However travel presents itself in the coming months, the practice of travel health/medicine will need knowledgeable and skilled practitioners using an evidence based approach.

The NPG steering committee realizes that many of our nurses have been redeployed to other areas this past year and for this reason we are pleased to announce that through a generous grant from VALNEVA we are able to offer registration scholarships for nurses to attend CISTM17, our first virtual conference, which will take place 19-22 May 2021. It is the committee's hope that attendance at the conference will boost our member's knowledge and confidence to return to the practice of travel health/medicine. For more information, please see [the NPG webpage](#). We will be updating our webpage with information on the conference as it becomes available.

It is my very great pleasure to introduce two new members to the NPG Steering Committee: Tara Lombardo from Canada and Alexandra Stillwell from the UK. Tara started in travel medicine/health in 2010 at Medisys Travel Health and trained with Dr. Jay Keystone. In 2014 she helped to establish the Dawson Travel and Immunization Clinic in Guelph, Ontario, which she currently manages. Tara is passionate about building a stronger knowledge base within her community of nurses. Alexandra started her career in travel medicine in 2000 as a staff nurse in the Travel Clinic and Outpatient Department Hospital for Tropical Diseases in London. In 2002 she started working for NaTHNaC as a specialist nurse and remains there at the present time. In 2006 she became a member, and is now a Fellow of the Faculty of Travel Medicine at the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow. Alexandra is also passionate about building a stronger knowledge base in travel medicine with general nurses who provide the service of travel health in the UK. We welcome Tara and Alexandra and look forward to their contributions on the committee.

While CISTM17 will be different from the conference in Washington DC, I look forward to seeing my colleagues from around the world and perhaps some new faces that have never had the chance to experience these fantastic learning opportunities!

Heather Connor,
Nursing Professional Group Chair



PHARMACIST

As for many other groups, the impact of COVID-19 has impacted and adjusted the members' involvement in traditional travel medicine practice. As we return to a new normal, the PPG members have continued to deliver their projects and have been involved in a wider context working with other groups within and outside of ISTM.

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The PPG members have delivered projects on the review of travel health apps, maintained a strong working relationship with the NPG, and continued with co-working with the International Federation of Pharmacies to establish the minimum working guidelines for the practice of travel health in pharmacies.

As Chair, it has been a pleasure to note that in these uncertain times the PPG has continued with the delivery of a specialist paper looking at the pharmacology and impact on travelers of Ayahuasca, due for publication next year. In addition, the group has initiated the protocols for the first ISTM pharmacist awards to be made for travel medicine, and special thanks to chair-elect Karl Hess for his work in establishing a student chapter trial

to attract undergraduates into the world of travel medicine and hopefully expand the concept to other professions.

In response to the ISTM President's support of the COVID-19 Task Force, the PPG members have been involved in the production of clinical information on proposed medication for treatment of symptoms. Most recently we trialed the new Learning Management System (LMS platform) with the Professional Education Committee PEC. This effort supported the new Clinical Cases presentation aimed at post-CTH® members that can allow accumulation of evidence towards re-accreditation of CTH®.

This year has been unprecedented in the global changes to travel health and travel medicine. The new norm for the future will inevitably involve travel assessments and will not only be about vaccines and antimalarials but also the proof of a negative COVID-19 infection or immunity whether following a test or proof of vaccination. Travel medicine pharmacists can have a role in supporting the individual traveler and also in public health campaigns where mass vaccination is required.

As my term of office draws towards the end, I wish to thank those members of the PPG who will be stepping down and welcome new members who will be joining us. Finally, I also welcome and wish every success to the new leadership coming under the current chair-elect, Dr. Karl Hess, when he takes up office as chair at the virtual conference in 2021.

Derek Evans,
Pharmacists Professional Group Chair



INTEREST GROUPS

MIGRANT AND REFUGEE HEALTH

STM Migrant Health Interest Group is committed to educating travel medicine providers about migration medicine through educational sessions at travel medicine meetings, webinars, and professional updates. In the next coming weeks, you should be receiving a survey that assesses knowledge and educational needs on migration medicine. The results of this survey will help us better identify the areas of educational needs and will inform the preparation of practice guidelines and focus training. Please take a few minutes to answer the survey as your input is very important to us. Our group is currently working on updating our website by bringing together resources and guidelines on migration medicine, and the results of our survey will assist us with this process.

We look forward to seeing you and your avatar in the virtual CISTM17 world! Join us on Wednesday May 19th from 9AM to 10AM in the virtual workshop "Separate Ways-Refugee and Migrant Medicine" where we will be discussing pre- and post-departure screening in migrants.

Do not hesitate to reach out to us if you have questions regarding our group or ideas and projects you would like to discuss.

Stay safe and healthy,

Sapha Barkati,
Migrant and Refugee Health Interest Group Chair



MILITARY TRAVEL



We hope you are all doing well during these troubled times. As you may know, we received no applications for the future leadership committee of our group. As a result, the remaining 3 of us are still on board and we are looking for 2 candidates (out of whom one at least should be from Asia) to complete the council.

We would like to meet those of you who will be attending the virtual CISTM, on the final day 22 May 2021 at 17:00 just after the closing ceremony. The meeting place will be specified by then through our group's mailing list.

Olivier Aoun,
Military Travel Interest Group Chair



RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL

Tourism and travel, globally and domestically, was significantly impacted by the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many industries were affected. Hotels, airlines, car rental agencies, and restaurants were forced to close. Combined with border closures, the tourism industry in many destinations domestically and internationally found themselves struggling at the peak of the season.

There was no way of rebounding and resuming trade to recuperate revenue. Uncertainty and insecurity for the future were issues raised. These included health, finances, education, family life, employment, and social life.

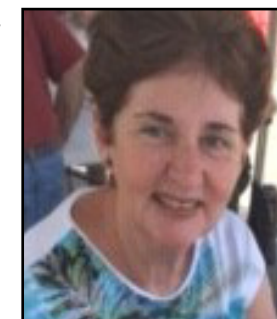
The Responsible Travel Group has long championed for raising awareness amongst tourists about some of the issues caused by travel and tourism to destinations. Travel clinic practitioners are encouraged to continue to raise this during consultations. Anecdotal information has been reported from some providers that they are facing some vaccine resistance and hesitancy at times.

The Responsible Travel Group is currently exploring some identified Sustainable Development Goals that we can be especially active on and share our insights regarding responsible travel and identified concerns.

One of our Responsible Travel Interest Group steering council members, Tullia Marcolongo, has also been working on a draft proposal infographic sketch for a health footprint. We will update you in due course.

If you have an interest in Responsible Travel, please do sign up with our group and consider applying for steering council positions as they become vacant.

Trish Smith,
Responsible Travel Interest Group Chair



continued on next page



INTEREST GROUPS CONTINUED



TRAVEL FOR WORK

After many months of COVID-19 induced “silence” among our TFW IG Council members as we dealt with COVID-19 within our own countries, we recently have been meeting more frequently. We would like to share a couple of our accomplishments, next steps, and our virtual meetings at the upcoming ISTM virtual conference.

In March, the TFW IG council members shared a concern regarding countries using a negative PCR test as criterion for entry or on arrival. As many of you are aware, a positive PCR test may be found in persons long after they have had COVID-19 and may not indicate persisting infection, re-infection, or being infectious. This means that using a PCR in persons after recovery from COVID-19 may unduly stop these people from traveling if a negative PCR is a requirement to travel or enter a destination country. It may also expose them to unnecessary isolation for prolonged periods if the country of destination requires a PCR upon arrival. It may also expose companion travelers or fellow passengers and crew to unnecessary quarantine if they were in close contact during a voyage after which the person is found to have a positive PCR test long after having had COVID-19. We drafted a position statement to the ISTM executive leadership team to request the WHO to include the following in their recommendations: SARS-CoV-2 RNA PCR testing should not be done on immune competent travelers who have proof of a laboratory confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19 between 10 days and 90 days ago. We were informed that our statement was shared with the WHO International Travel and Health Guideline Development Group (WHO ITH GDG)

Last month, the TFW IG council members created a document regarding COVID-19 and Travel for Work to help guide travel health and occupational medicine specialists regarding COVID-19 specific issues to consider and measures to discuss with the traveler. This document is now posted on the [Travel for Work Website](#).

During the upcoming ISTM virtual meeting we will be having two virtual meetings to discuss next steps, new council members, exchange of ideas and issues, and come up with priorities as we navigate through these

challenging times. As we are separated by multiple time zones, we will be holding the meetings on 18 May at 0700 US Eastern Time Zone and 1700 US Eastern Time Zone. Zoom links will be sent to all TFW IG members. Members may join regardless of whether not they are attending the conference.

Michael Holzer
Travel for Work Interest Group Chair

shout **OUT!**

The ISTM greatly appreciates the contributions of time and expertise provided by the Scientific Program Committee to the 17th Conference of the International Society of Travel Medicine.

Chair: Christina Coyle, United States of America

Co-Chair: Gerard Flaherty, Ireland

Associate Chairs:

Camilla Rothe, Germany

Priscilla Rupali, India

Eli Schwartz, Israel

Members:

Seif Al-Abri, Oman

Lee Baker, South Africa

Miguel Cabada, United States of America

Francesco Castelli, Italy

Jasper Chan, Hong Kong

Jan Fehr, Switzerland

Federico Gobbi, Italy

Sandra Grieve, United Kingdom

Martin Grobusch, The Netherlands

Martin Haditsch, Austria

David Hamer, United States of America

Ian Heslop, Australia

Tomas Jelinek, Germany

Anu Kantele, Finland

Kwee Choy “James” Koh, Malaysia

Regina LaRocque, United States of America

Colleen Lau, Australia

Karin Leder, Australia

Poh Lian Lim, Singapore

Susana Lloveras, Argentina

Susanna Maybin, United Kingdom

Anne McCarthy, Canada

Sarah McGuinness, Australia

Israel Molina, Spain

Caroline Nash, Australia

Dipti Patel, United Kingdom

Watcharapong Piyaphanee, Thailand

Shasheela A/P Sri La Sri Ponnampalavanar, Malaysia

Christophe Rapp, France

Chris Sanford, United States of America

Sheila Seed, United Kingdom

Zamberi Sekawi, Malaysia

Tadashi Shinozuka, Japan

Asma Sohail, Malaysia

D. A. P. Sri Masyeni, Indonesia

Paul Tambayah, Singapore

Joe Torresi, Australia

Mugen Ujiie, Japan

Leo G. Visser, The Netherlands

Joon Sup Yeom, South Korea

Yukiro Yoshimura, Japan Organisation



COMMITTEES



DIGITAL COMMUNICATION COMMITTEE

We've all become more familiar with digital communication in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic (another Zoom meeting anyone?). With lockdown measures and travel restrictions still in place, digital communication continues to be pivotal to keeping us socially and professionally connected.

2021 heralds a leap forward in digital communication for the ISTM, with the society set to hold its first fully virtual online conference in May. The conference will be hosted on a virtual reality platform (Virtway) designed to recreate a live conference experience in a 3D virtual world. The technology allows users to create their own virtual characters ("Avatars") and use them to explore the virtual conference center, sit in live sessions, and interact with friends and colleagues from around the globe. We know that many are skeptical about venturing into this brave new world, but we encourage you to take the plunge and learn some new digital skills. Once you're immersed in it, you'll find that the Virtway world offers great opportunities to interact with other attendees and get over your "Zoom fatigue". During the conference, we encourage you to tune into what is sure to be a fascinating Plenary on the Future Role of Technology in Travel Medicine and join us on social media to share new discoveries and insights using the conference hashtag #CISTM17.

The much-awaited overhaul of the ISTM website is happening in 2021 – vendors have been selected and we have established a small website taskforce to oversee the development of the new site. We will be looking for a group of engaged ISTM members to test out the new site before it goes live later this year – please email the ISTM secretariat at ISTM@ISTM.org if you would be interested in being part of this group.

Sarah McGuiness,
Digital Communication Committee Chair



PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The Professional Education Committee (PEC) has remained active during the pandemic. We launched the inaugural online Travel Medicine Review and Update Course (TMRUC) in mid-January 2021. Based upon the ISTM body of knowledge, experts from around the globe presented classes and discussion forums on topics in travel medicine. The course is available on-demand (link here) until 2022 when we will offer our yearly updated version of the TMRUC.

The PEC continues to explore new ways to promote professional education through a variety of offerings including webinars, on-demand courses, and self-study guides. In the future, we plan to return to in-person learning and launch a podcast where we explore the stories behind the science.

Sarah Kohl,
Professional Education Committee Chair



PUBLICATIONS OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

The Publications Oversight Committee was saddened by the recent passing of the legendary Dr. Karl Neumann. While we all admired and respected Karl's work, some members of the committee were close personal friends of Karl and his wife, Cynthia, and they recalled enjoying many happy occasions together at CISTM conferences over the years. Chris Van Tilburg reminded us that Karl was his and Sandra Grieves' predecessor as Editor-in-Chief of the Travel Medicine News newsletter. Karl has left an enduring legacy of scholarship in travel medicine and loyal service to the ISTM. *Nanos gigantum humeris insidentes.*

The committee has been hard at work in selecting articles from the 2019 and 2020 volumes of Journal of Travel Medicine, to be shortlisted for the Members' Choice Article Awards. This is the first time that members will be invited to choose the winning article from a shortlist of 10 papers in each of four categories – Original Article, Review, Perspective, and Clinical Pearls. The winning papers will be announced at the CISTM17 virtual conference. The committee spent considerable time developing the shortlists, based on rigorous quality criteria. I think you will enjoy reading the shortlisted articles, and I hope you will enjoy voting for the articles that most impressed you with their standard of communication, and implications for travel medicine knowledge and practice. Look out for an invitation from the ISTM Secretariat to view the articles and to cast your votes in time for our conference.

Finally, on behalf of the Publications Oversight Committee, I would like to take this opportunity to thank our President, Lin Chen, and the outgoing ISTM Executive Board for all their support over the past two years. It has been a pleasure working with them. We look forward to serving our incoming President, Peter Leggatt, and the new Board in due course. Chris Van Tilburg has stepped down from the committee, after a long period of service and leadership, to focus on other commitments. I thank Chris sincerely for his contributions over many years, and I wish him every success with his new ventures. We are currently seeking nominations from accomplished individuals to fill two vacancies on the committee.

Gerard Flaherty, *Publications Oversight Committee Chair*



COMMITTEES

CONTINUED

RESEARCH AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

On behalf of the whole Research and Awards Committee, we would like to thank you all for time, effort and excellent ideas you brought forward in overall 10 proposals of good-to-excellent quality and reflective of the attractiveness of this funding scheme.

With the competition for limited funding having been fierce, we are able to fund the following five proposals:

1. **JEVID - Japanese Encephalitis Vaccination via IntraDermal route** – Luis Furuva-Kanamori, Australia, Principal Investigator.
2. **Are Neglected Zoonotic Arthropod-Borne Viruses on the Move?** – Francesca Frentiu, Australia, Principal Investigator.
3. **Chagas Disease in Metro Atlanta and Rural Georgia: A Hidden Affliction Among Latin American Immigrants?** – Divya Bhamidipati, United States, Principal Investigator.
4. **Time independent alterations in human serum protein expression depending on different altitude levels to analyse hypobaric hypoxia signalling pathways** – Jochen Hinkelbein, Germany, Principal Investigator.
5. **Genetic diversity of SARS-CoV-2 at Arbreen mass gathering in Iraq** – Harunor Rashid, Australia, Principal Investigator.

Low Middle Income Country (LMIC) Research Award

1. **COVID-19 Antibody Seroconversion Post Vaccination Among Hotel Staff in Bali: Effort to Revive Bali Tourism Post Pandemic** – Dewa Ayu Putri Sri Masyeni, Indonesia, Principal Investigator.

Many thanks to the outgoing committee members listed below. We appreciate your tireless work, engagement and dedication.

- » Martin Grobusch
- » Elizabeth Barnett
- » David Hamer
- » Eskild Petersen

Please join us in welcoming these incoming members:

- » Luis Furuya Kanamori
- » Susan Hills
- » Francesca Norman
- » Harunor Rashid

Martin Grobusch,
Research and Awards Committee Chair



SPECIAL RECOGNITION COMMITTEE

We are excited to announce that a number of new fellows will be announced at the virtual CISTM coming up. Only a couple of applicants were turned down. While they were qualified in many ways, they simply had not participated in ISTM activities in a manner that defines an ISTM fellow. Proctoring an exam, for instance, is a worthy start, but the SRC is looking for participation in committee or interest group activities and ideally a leadership role. We feel confident the disappointed candidates will easily remedy this deficiency and almost assuredly they will be acceptable on the next go-around. The SRC also discussed advancement of a Fellow to Distinguished Fellow status. After considerable debate about many worthy candidates, a single recommendation was forwarded to the Executive Board for consideration. That person will be announced at the next CISTM.

The SRC recommended and the Board agreed that we should consider and award for Lifetime Achievements. While there can be little doubt that eventually the grandfather of travel medicine, Robert Steffen, will be given this award, the SRC decided instead to give the award posthumously to Karl Neumann for his booming-voice educational activities in the practice of pediatric travel medicine, and his service and uncompromising devotion to transparency as editor of NewsShare. As exemplified by his heartfelt lecture in Innsbruck, Karl was quite simply the soul of ISTM and will be missed sorely.

Finally, I am displeased to announce that the Jay Keystone Award for education in travel medicine has had no applicants forwarded by either the general membership, the ISTM education committee or the nurses and pharmacists' interest groups. Please visit our website or contact [Jodi Metzgar](#) if you need to review the criteria for the award. We hope to have candidates to consider at the next CISTM.

Respectfully submitted,

Charles Ericson,
Special Recognition Committee Chair



ISTM SLIDE SET

The ISTM Slide Set was updated in 2017 and split into four chapters:

- Chapter 1:** Introduction to Travel Medicine
- Chapter 2:** Travel Topics and Special Conditions
- Chapter 3:** Travel Vaccines
- Chapter 4:** Vector-borne Diseases

Members can purchase one or all four at a discount. Visit the ISTM Website at www.ISTM.org for more information.

We would like to thank the ISTM Professional Education Committee for updating these slides.



TRAVEL TALK: A BRIEF HISTORY OF IVERMECTIN: FROM CATTLE TO COVID-19

In late February, a member posted on *TravelMed*: "Interested in research and publications regarding the use of ivermectin for preventing COVID-19. Best practices on evidence based use and any perspectives from NIH, WHO and the CDC." This can be found under the thread "[Ivermectin Research and Experience for COVID Prevention](#)". While there were only a handful of responses to this question, there has been a fair amount of research on ivermectin lately for COVID-19, and because it has such an interesting history and a seemingly endless variety of uses in tropical and travel medicine, this short review will cover this.

Ivermectin truly embodies the concept of "Old Drug, New Tricks". Discovered by a microbiologist in a soil sample from a golf course in Japan in 1970, the gram-positive bacterium *Streptomyces avermitilis* (ivermectin is the active component) was sent to the pharmaceutical company Merck. Because it was potent against endoparasites (live inside the host, eg, tapeworms) and ectoparasites (live outside the host, eg, fleas and lice), it was first developed for livestock and companion animal health applications in 1981, including canine heartworm, which should be familiar to anyone who doses their dog monthly with the delicious liver-flavored Heartgard chew. Merck developed the drug for human use first for the Mectizan Donation Program in 1987 for the goal of eliminating onchocerciasis (river blindness) and lymphatic filariasis (aka elephantiasis; in combination with albendazole); it is now being distributed in 33 countries. The drug is also used for a wide array of other parasitic diseases, both approved and off-label, including: strongyloidiasis, scabies, cutaneous larva migrans, soil-transmitted helminths, urinary myiasis, and has shown activity *in vitro* against viruses such as dengue, HIV, Zika, and yellow fever; the list goes on. It also has a very intriguing role in vector control, by killing the tsetse fly, responsible for the agent that causes African sleeping sickness (*Glossinia palpalis gambiensis*), and the mosquito *Anopheles gambiae*, which transmits *P. falciparum*, which is exciting news in controlling malaria, however, further studies are needed in this area.

Interestingly, the drug may act as an anti-inflammatory agent in skin conditions such as atopic dermatitis, has been shown to decrease glucose and cholesterol levels, may have activity against cancer-causing cells, may have anti-mycobacterial and antiviral activity; the list goes on. It has a low potential for serious toxicity as it works through glutamate-gated chloride

channels, which are not present in vertebrates (like livestock, domestic animals, and humans). But, the doses needed for some of the proposed actions mentioned above may be too high for human tolerability.

This brings us to ivermectin and COVID-19. The [COVID-19 treatment Guidelines Panel NIH](#) recently posted their summary of the use of ivermectin in the treatment of COVID-19. [last updated 11feb2021] While the drug has varied mechanisms of action against SARS-CoV-2 - inhibiting replication of the virus in cell cultures, inhibiting viral transport proteins, interfering with attachment of the virus' spike protein in human cells, and potential anti-inflammatory properties, the Panel concluded that it "cannot draw definitive conclusions on the clinical efficacy of ivermectin for the treatment of COVID-19. Results from adequately powered, well-designed, and well-conducted clinical trials are needed to provide further guidance on the role of ivermectin in the treatment of COVID-19."

A search on clinicaltrials.gov [accessed 15may2021] on COVID-19 and ivermectin found 68 clinical trials that are either completed, recruiting, or not yet recruiting. There are various formulations of the drug being tested: oral, inhaled, injectable, topical, nasal spray, and impregnated masks. The drug is being tested alone or in combination with a diverse array of other agents, including: doxycycline, nitoxanide, hydroxychloroquine, azithromycin/ribavirin/paracetamol, ribavirin, camostat mesilate, aspirin, fluvoxamine, metformin, ART (anti-retroviral therapy), montelukast, artesunate, losartan, dexamethasone, enoxaparin, povidone-iodine, zinc, vitamin C, vitamin D3, and iota-carrageenan. Perhaps ivermectin will find yet another exciting application, although this remains to be determined. We await the results from ongoing clinical trials with great interest. Our readers may wish to read the excellent systematic review from Eli Schwartz and colleagues in Israel, published recently as an [Editor's Choice article in Journal of Travel Medicine](#), on the use of anti-parasitic agents, including ivermectin, in the prevention and treatment of COVID-19.

Nancy Pietroski,
Travel Medicine News Associate Editor

