



# INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR ENVIRONMENTAL EPIDEMIOLOGY

Website: [www.iseepi.org](http://www.iseepi.org)

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Irva Hertz-Picciotto, PhD, MPH, *President*  
Bert Brunekreef, PhD, *Past President*  
Tony Fletcher, PhD, *President-elect*  
Dean B. Baker, MD, MPH, *Secretary-Treasurer*

1 July, 2002

To: ISEE members

From: Dean Baker, MD, MPH  
Secretary-Treasurer

Re: Summer 2002 Newsletter

## ***Highlights in this Newsletter***

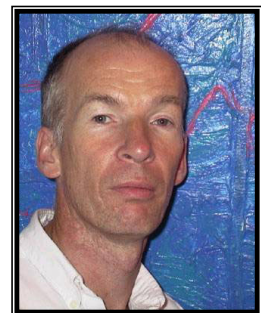
- ❖ *New President-elect and Council members*
- ❖ *Update on Annual Meetings for 2002 to 2005*
- ❖ *Committee and Chapter Reports*

I am pleased to send you the Summer ISEE Newsletter. For the first time, the Newsletter will be distributed primarily by e-mail. This approach will reduce expenses for the Society so we can keep your membership rates as low as possible. We also have received comments that many members would prefer to receive the newsletter in this format. The Society will continue to provide printed editions to any member who does not have access to e-mail and to those who would prefer to receive a printed version. Please contact the Secretariat if you have received this newsletter by e-mail and would like to be mailed a printed version.

## **ELECTIONS**

The annual election for ISEE officers and councilors was conducted with the last membership mailing in January 2002. We had an outstanding group of candidates for the positions. The elections were completed in February and the new officer and councilors assumed their positions in March.

I am pleased to announce that Tony Fletcher was elected President-elect for the term 2002-2003. Tony is Senior Lecturer, Environmental Epidemiology Unit, Department of Public Health and Policy, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, United Kingdom. His principal research interests are environmental epidemiology (predominately on arsenic and drinking water and traffic-related air pollution), occupational epidemiology, and environmental health risk. The councilors elected for the term 2002-2004 were Francesco Forastiere and Stephanie London. Francesco is head of the Analytical Epidemiology Unit, Department of Epidemiology, Lazio Regional Health Authority, Rome, Italy. His research has focused on the application of research findings to a wide range of public policy issues, including air pollution and environmental tobacco smoke. Stephanie is an investigator in the Epidemiology Branch, National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, North Carolina, USA. Her research has focused on genetics and environmental epidemiology. A list of officers and councilors and their terms of service appears on the ISEE web page ([www.iseepi.org](http://www.iseepi.org)).



**Tony Fletcher**

We also offer thanks to outgoing councilors Colin Soskolne and Helena Mussalo-Rauhamaa. Over the years Colin organized an annual conference, served on and chaired committees, and served as a councilor. He participated regularly in the monthly Council conference calls for over ten years, and remains active in committee work and other ISEE activities. Helena served on the Council and remains active as interim chair of the Communications Committee. These individuals have provided significant service to our Society.

At the end of this year, we will need to elect a Secretary-Treasurer and two new councilors. If you are interested in being a candidate for any of these positions, or would like to suggest candidates, please contact President Irva Hertz-Piccio (ihp@ucdavis.edu) or any of the officers or councilors.

## ANNUAL ISEE MEETINGS

	<p><b>Linking Exposures and Health: Innovations and Interactions</b> 14<sup>th</sup> Conference of the ISEE; 12<sup>th</sup> Conference of the ISEA August 11–15, 2002, Vancouver, BC Canada</p>
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**2002.** The next meeting will be held August 11-15, 2002, on the campus of The University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada. Accommodation will be available on the campus and at downtown hotels. The co-chairs are Michael Brauer and Susan Kennedy of the School of Occupational and Environmental Hygiene, University of British Columbia. This will be the first joint conference with the International Society of Exposure Analysis since 1999 and promises to strengthen links between the epidemiological and exposure assessment disciplines. The theme will be "*Linking Exposures and Health: Innovations and Interactions.*" This theme will be explored in keynote presentations that will focus on the public health significance of exposure assessment and epidemiological research and on innovative approaches to assess exposure and evaluate exposure-response relationships. The conference will also promote innovation in environmental and occupational health research by fostering interaction between these disciplines. The conference will have almost forty topical symposia, plus oral, poster-discussion and poster sessions; 886 abstracts were accepted for presentation. The final program will be included in a book of abstracts which will be in the conference kits handed out at the registration desk.

Vancouver is a cosmopolitan city with numerous natural and cultural attractions. The area is ideal for pre- or post-conference travel, particularly for the outdoor enthusiast. It is close to the Whistler/Blackcomb all season recreation area, a short and scenic ferry ride away from the Gulf Islands and Vancouver Island, and also serves as the departure point for cruises to Alaska. I encourage you to make plans to attend the conference and enjoy a vacation in the Vancouver area. The conference Website ([www.conferences.ubc.ca/iseaisee2002](http://www.conferences.ubc.ca/iseaisee2002)) contains information regarding the scientific program, location, registration and accommodations.

**2003.** The University of Western Australia will host the 2003 ISEE conference September 24-26, 2003, in Perth, Western Australia. The conference venue will be the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Perth. The conference title is "*Traversing Boundaries*" and the main themes will be: *Modified Environments, Practical Applications of Environmental Epidemiology* and *Community Health and Advocacy*. Proposed topics include applications of epidemiology in policy development, modified environments and environmental health, food and sustainable health, communities, health and advocacy, emerging diseases, air quality, water quality and scarcity, indigenous health and pediatric environmental health. A number of satellite meetings will be offered. A "call for abstracts and symposia" will be distributed at the Vancouver conference. For more information, please visit the conference Website at [www.eventedge.com.au/isee/index.html](http://www.eventedge.com.au/isee/index.html) or contact Andrea Hinwood ([andrea.hinwood@environ.wa.gov.au](mailto:andrea.hinwood@environ.wa.gov.au)) or Jane Heyworth ([heyworth@dph.uwa.edu.au](mailto:heyworth@dph.uwa.edu.au)).

**2004.** The Executive Council recently approved an initial proposal for New York University to host the 2004 ISEE conference in New York City, New York, USA, during the first week of August 2004. The conference organizer will be George Thurston of New York University. The proposed theme will be “*Addressing Urban Environmental Problems.*” The conference venue will be a new conference center at New York University. Lodging will be available in the University dormitories, as well as conference hotels in New York City. The organizers are developing a full proposal for presentation at the Vancouver meeting.

**2005.** The Executive Council also recently approved a proposal for a consortium group headed by the University of Pretoria to host the 2005 ISEE conference in Pretoria, South Africa, during September 25-29, 2005. Dr. Kuku Voyi of the University of Pretoria will lead the conference organizing committee. Colin Soskolne will serve as a liaison for the conference organizers. The proposed theme is “*Sustaining World Health through Environmental Epidemiology: Setting a New Global Research Agenda.*” Plenary themes will include Inequity and Health, Health Emergencies in Large Populations, Sustainable Development and Health, Health Implications of Consumption and Waste, Health Implications of Technology, Traditional Medicine and Health, Indigenous Knowledge, Urban Renewal Environment and Health, Ecosystem Health, Reproductive Health, Emerging Concerns in Environment and Health, and Ethics.

The conference venue will be the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) Conference Centre in Pretoria. The CSIR campus is set on rolling hills, located in the suburbs of Pretoria in park-like surroundings, with remarkable bird and animal life roaming free. Sport facilities include swimming, tennis, squash, weights and a gymnasium. A number of hotels and guesthouses are located in close proximity to the conference venue. Accommodation rates will be quite reasonable by international standards.

## **RELATED SOCIETY CONFERENCE**

### **Conference to Commemorate the 1952 London Smog**

A major international conference entitled, “*The Big Smoke: Fifty Years After The 1952 London Smog,*” will be held in London, United Kingdom, on 9-10 December, 2002. The Conference will review the events that led to the smog of 1952, and reflect on the current state of London’s air quality, along with other major cities. The Commemorative conference will be held on Monday, December 9, almost 50 years to the day after the peak of the 1952 smog. It will appeal to a wide audience of public health professionals, historians, policy analysts and others with an interest in the history and future of air pollution and health generally or more specifically the evolution of London’s environment. Two specialist workshops on Tuesday, December 9, will be of particular interest to historians or epidemiologists: a *Historical Witness* seminar and a workshop on *The Analysis and Interpretation of Health Impacts of Pollution Episodes*. This meeting will be followed by the European Air Pollution meeting AIRNET on December 11 and 12.

The Conference is organized by Dr. Tony Fletcher and Professor Virginia Berridge of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, with the support of a planning committee. The Tuesday afternoon session is co-organized by Ross Anderson, Ben Armstrong, Aaron Cohen and Tony Fletcher. Speakers confirmed include: Michal Krzyzanowski (WHO, Bonn), Bert Brunekreef (University of Utrecht, NL), Doug Dockery and Joel Schwartz (Harvard School of Public Health), Devra Davis (University of Pittsburgh), Erich Wichmann (GSF Neuherberg, Germany), Mike Brauer (University of British Columbia), Peter Brimblecombe (UEA), Catherine Wills and Mark Jackson (Essex University), Ross Anderson (St. George’s Hospital Medical School), Frank Kelly (Guys and St Thomas’ Medical School), Stephen Mosely (University of Birmingham), Dick Derwent (UK Meteorological Office), Bob Maynard (UK Department of Health), Andy Haines, Virginia Berridge, Tony Fletcher and Jerry Morris (LSHTM), Pat Lawther, Roy Parker, Sir Donald Acheson.

For more information on the conference, consult the Website [www.lshtm.ac.uk/smog](http://www.lshtm.ac.uk/smog) or email: [tony.fletcher@lshtm.ac.uk](mailto:tony.fletcher@lshtm.ac.uk) , [virginia.berridge@lshtm.ac.uk](mailto:virginia.berridge@lshtm.ac.uk) , or [mike.ahern@lshtm.ac.uk](mailto:mike.ahern@lshtm.ac.uk) .

**ISEE COMMITTEES****Communications Committee (Helena Mussalo-Rauhamaa, Interim Chair)**

Helena Mussalo-Rauhamaa, University of Helsinki, serves as Interim Chair of this committee. She welcomes your comments and suggestions on communication within ISEE. You can contact her at +358-09-19127545 (phone) or [Helena.Mussalo-Rauhamaa@helsinki.fi](mailto:Helena.Mussalo-Rauhamaa@helsinki.fi) (e-mail).

The Society's Website address is [www.iseepi.org](http://www.iseepi.org). The Website design was revised during the past year to improve content presentation, navigation, and usability. The next step will be to place a membership directory on the Website, although this step will be taken only after we can ensure that the information can be restricted only to Society members.

We encourage you to look at the Website periodically for new information and breaking ISEE news. We welcome feedback, suggestions, and relevant contributions to the site. We also invite you to send us information and announcements, e.g., from meetings, training programs, newly published books, CD-ROMs, etc., for the "Announcements from Other Organizations" page on the Website. We are especially interested in new student-oriented learning methods and tools. Please send Helena detailed information on the organizer or publisher, cost and contact address.

**Committee on Ethics and Philosophy (Jouni Jaakkola, Chair)**

Research results in environmental epidemiology may have substantial societal influence, which leads to different types of ethical and philosophical issues. The Committee on Ethics and Philosophy has been concerned that different interest groups try to influence the free distribution of research results and knowledge. The Committee developed a procedure to investigate situations where individuals, "whistleblowers," expressing legitimate concerns about environmental hazards for populations, are victimized or harassed. This procedure, posted in the ISEE web page, includes actions against harassment. We have offered support for some whistleblowers, but it seems that we have just seen the tip of the iceberg – scientists or other individuals expressing their concerns or informing about facts are really susceptible to threat and harassment. As an international and neutral organization ISEE has a potential to become a moral support for free distribution of scientific knowledge. Although we may not have the capacity to investigate all the emerging cases, merely the knowledge about availability of support will help. We believe that publicizing typical case studies and solutions will also provide advice and moral support for the victims.

Obstructing the conduct of study or the release of its findings may also be a threat of validity. The Committee has a continuing discussion about the meaning and definition of bias related to this type of research obstruction. Colin Soskolne, the first chair of the Committee, with input from a number of the committee members, has defined two central concepts, suppression bias and repression bias. The goal is that these will be included in the next edition of the *Dictionary of Epidemiology* edited by Dr. John Last. The Committee has posted a brief background and draft definitions of these concepts on the ISEE web page with a request for Society members to participate in the discussion.

A new initiative, launched in an ISEE symposium organized last year by Dr. Elihu Richter, the previous chair of the Committee, focuses on development of an epidemiological warning system for democide. The basis question is, are democides predictable from early signs. This would allow global monitoring of such signs and eventually prevention of democides. In history we can clearly recognize patterns, which have been followed by mass persecution and democides. Elihu will continue the discussion about the possibilities of applying epidemiological methods in his presentations as part of the symposium entitled "*Setbacks of a Sustainable Development: Disasters, Incident, Terrorism and Wars.*" Please join the discussion.

As the new Chair of the Committee, Jouni is inviting initiatives for activity in the philosophy of science related to environmental health issues. Tackling global environmental health issues will inevitably lead to changes in thinking and development of epidemiological methods. For those interested in past, present and future Committee activities, there will be a presentation in Vancouver by Colin Soskolne and his colleagues entitled "*A Decade of Ethics and Philosophy in Environmental Epidemiology*."

#### **Policy and Planning Working Group (Devra Davis and Yasmin von Schirnding, Co-Chairs)**

The Policy and Planning Working Group focuses its activities on strengthening the links between environmental epidemiology and policy development/implementation. The emphasis is on broadening the scope of environmental epidemiology, moving beyond a focus on individual risk factors and agents to an approach which addresses the broader development context in which environmental health problems occur. "Risk factors" in this regard include, for example, development sectors such as housing, energy, transport and agriculture as well as development processes such as urbanization, globalization, etc. The Committee has a new co-chair, Devra Davis, Professor at the Heinz School for Public Policy, Carnegie Mellon University.

#### **Committee on Capacity Building in Developing Countries (Richard Clapp, Chair)**

The main activity of this Committee has been publishing descriptions of collaborative work in Central Europe and a conference in Italy in the ISEE News section of *Epidemiology*. The Central Europe work involved ISEE members at State University of New York Buffalo, USA, and colleagues in the Ukraine, studying the health effects of the Chernobyl explosion in 1986. The Italian conference was the 25th meeting of the Italian Epidemiological Association and it featured presentations on "*Environment and Health*." In addition, the Committee will be publishing a description of the training being done by Elihu Richter in Israel, involving students from the former Soviet Union and Central Europe. It is hoped that this information will serve as a guide and a stimulus for more capacity-building work by other ISEE members.

#### **Awards Committee (Bert Brunekreef, Chair)**

The Awards Committee this year consists of Bert Brunekreef, Douglas Dockery, Irva Hertz-Picciotto, and Tony Fletcher.

***The John Goldsmith Award for Outstanding Contributions to Environmental Epidemiology.*** This award is given at the annual conference for "sustained and outstanding contributions to the knowledge and practice of environmental epidemiology." The award recognizes an environmental epidemiologist who has served as a model of excellence in research, unwavering promotion of environmental health, and integrity. The Committee has accepted nominations for the 2002 John Goldsmith Award and presented their recommendations to the Executive Council for selection of the awardee. The award will be presented at the annual conference in Vancouver during August 2002. The recipient will present the John Goldsmith lecture at the meeting.

***The Research Integrity Award.*** ISEE also awards researchers who have demonstrated exceptional integrity in withstanding pressures contrary to the profession's core value of protecting public health. The Research Integrity Award recognizes the researcher who withstands unusual pressure to distort, suppress or modify her/his line of inquiry, findings and/or their interpretation. For example, the Award recognizes environmental epidemiologists demonstrating integrity in the face of unusual pressure from special interests to: (1) not conduct an investigation of a sensitive issue; (2) suppress the publication of results unwanted by an entity with a vested interest in maintaining the status quo; or (3) alter the results and interpretation of a study to better suit a position held by a vested interest.

The Award is made on an occasional basis, no more frequently than once annually. Nominations are submitted to the Awards Committee Chair. No nomination was submitted this year.

## **CHAPTERS UPDATE**

### **Mediterranean Chapter (Klea Katsouyanni, Chair)**

Klea Katsouyanni, the Chapter chair, has circulated a letter to generate interest in the chapter and has received responses of interest, some of which provided contacts in North African countries. Please contact Klea ([kkatsouy@med.uoa.gr](mailto:kkatsouy@med.uoa.gr)) if you would like to support the activities of this chapter.

### **Central & Eastern Europe Chapter (Bogdan Wojtyniak, Chair)**

The Chapter continues to be active. Bogdan reports that the chapter co-organized a conference in June in Krakow on “*Molecular Epidemiology in Preventive Medicine, Achievement and New Challenges.*” The organizers anticipated about 35 participants from that part of Europe and the members planned to meet to discuss current and future activities of the Chapter.

### **Caucasus Chapter (Samaya Ismayilova, Chair)**

A Caucasus Chapter was formed this past year. The chapter has started a project to translate the WHO textbook “*Environmental Epidemiology: Textbook on Study Methods and Public Health Applications*” into native language (Azeri) and to hold two three-day trainings for 50 participants using the translated book. This project has been supported by Soros foundation (OSI-Azerbaijan, Public Health Programme) in collaboration with the WHO - Azerbaijan, Ministry of Health of Azerbaijan, Medical Department of Khazar University. The project start date was the beginning of June. The training sessions will be provided in September. A paper describing the Chapter, the ISEE and its activities, and an advertisement on conducting the training in September are being distributed. Under the project program the training will include 25 participants assigned by the Ministry of Health and 25 participants assigned by the Chapter. Eighty textbooks will be issued in August: 50 of them will be presented to the training participants, 20 to the round-table participants, and 10 to other organizations' libraries. This book is the first textbook on epidemiology in Azeri; the last book on epidemiology was published in 1954. Consequently, the project will play a significant role in the development and strengthening of environmental epidemiology in Azerbaijan.

For those in or from the region wishing to participate in the Caucasus Chapter, please communicate with Samaya ([ismayilovasy@hotmail.com](mailto:ismayilovasy@hotmail.com)).

### **Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) Chapter (Nelson Gouveia, Chair)**

The LAC Chapter has not been active during the past year. For further information about the Chapter, please contact Nelson Gouveia ([ngouveia@usp.br](mailto:ngouveia@usp.br)).

## **MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS**

If you are due to renew your ISEE membership for the June 2002–June 2003 cycle, or if your renewal is past due, you should have received a renewal notice in the mail during the past few weeks. If you received a notice, please renew your membership soon to avoid gaps in your journal subscription. It may take several months to re-start a lapsed subscription.

**Address Changes and Journal Delivery Problems**

If you change your mailing or e-mail address, please contact the ISEE Secretariat office and provide your new contact information. Also, if you are having journal delivery problems, please contact the Secretariat c/o JSI Research & Training Institute, 44 Farnsworth Street, Boston, MA 02210 USA; Phone: 617-482-9485; Fax: 617-482-0617; Email: [carol\\_rougvie@jsi.com](mailto:carol_rougvie@jsi.com).

**FEEDBACK**

If you have comments, suggestions or contributions for the newsletter, please let me know. You can reach me at [dbaker@uci.edu](mailto:dbaker@uci.edu) or via the Secretariat address shown in the letterhead.