EUROPEAN MEDICINES AGENCY
SCIENCE MEDICINES HEALTH

10 May 2010
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European Network of Centres for Pharmacoepidemiology and Pharmacovigilance

# Minutes of Meeting of the ENCePP Steering Group

7 May 2010 –chaired by Peter Arlett

| List of Participants | |
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| Present: | Peter Arlett (PA), Corinne de Vries (CdV), Hans-Georg Eichler (HE - *partly*), Henry Fitt (HF), David Haerry, Joan-Ramon Laporte (JRL – *partly, via TC*), Jytte Lyngvig (JL – *partly, via TC*), Nicholas Moore (NM), Yola Moride (YM), Ingemar Persson (IP), June Munro Raine (JMR), Miriam Sturkenboom (MS), Giuseppe Traversa (GT)<br>*EMA Advisors to the ENCePP SG*: Xavier Kurz (XK -partly), Jim Slattery (JS - *partly*),<br><br>*EMA*: Stefanie Prilla (SP), Rocio Fernandez Fresquet (RFF - *partly*)<br>*ENCePP Secretariat:* Camilla Smeraldi (CS), Dagmar Vogl (DV)<br>Observer: Kevin Blake (*Irish Medicines Board – partly via TC*) |
| Apologies: | Hubert Leufkens, Valerie Simmons, Stella Blackburn (EMA) |

| Agenda | |
|---|---|
| 1 | **Adoption of draft agenda** |
| 2 | **Matters arising from previous meeting**<br>2.1 SG members' declarations of conflict of interest |
| 3 | **ENCePP Code of Conduct**<br>3.1 Adoption of Code of Conduct |
| 4 | **Checklist of Methodological Research Standards**<br>4.1 Decision on title of checklist |
| 5 | **General discussion / Issues raised by ENCePP Partners**<br>5.1 Priority items identified in SG meeting on 19/03/2010 |
| 6 | **ENCePP Working Groups**<br>6.1 Review of WG priorities for future activities<br>*Need for a new WG or amendments of mandate(s)? |
| 7 | **ENCePP Database of Research Resources**<br>7.1 Demo of new release incl. data sources |

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| Agenda | |
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| 8 | **ENCePP Register of Studies**<br>8.1 Presentation of list of data fields<br>8.2 Presentation and endorsement of interim procedure<br>8.3 ENCePP Seal |
| 9 | **Networking**<br>9.1 ENCePP Plenary 08 June 2010: draft agenda<br>9.2 ENCePP Infoday 26 November 2010: Proposed draft agenda |
| 10 | **Summary of discussions & next steps** |
| 11 | **A.O.B**<br>11.1 Interaction with non-EEA centres<br>11.2 Endorsement of PhEpi events/publication on ENCePP website |

## 1. Adoption of draft agenda

The draft agenda was adopted without changes.

## 2. Matters arising from previous meeting

In response to a question raised at previous meetings, regarding the possibility of making available the declarations of interests of all SG members, the Chair announced that a file with printouts of declarations from all SG members (incl. EMA staff) had been prepared and was available for consultation during the meeting.

## 3. ENCePP Code of Conduct

The final draft of the ENCePP Code of Conduct had been circulated to the SG for formal adoption at the current meeting.

The SG adopted the ENCePP Code of Conduct with some minor linguistic amendments and a few other amendments including the addition of a clarifying sentence to cover studies funded through public funding bodies or studentship agreements. Further to the proposal from NM to change the definition of pharmacoepidemiology currently included in the Code of Conduct (Strom - *Pharmacoepidemiology* & International Society of Pharmacoepidemiology) with the one included in the MeSH terminology, the SG agreed to defer the decision.

Additionally, it was agreed to amend the Code of Conduct to include in the contract the statement “The parties to this agreement and individuals acting on their behalf hereby commit to adhere to the rules of the ENCePP Code of Conduct in their entirety”, translated into the language of the contract.

The Chair of the SG congratulated all those who have collaborated on drafting the document and in particular SP and the Chair of WG2, Helen Dolk for their work.

The SG acknowledged that the Code of Conduct represents a very important concept in the context of capacity building and fostering independence and transparency in research. Given its innovative nature, the SG recognised the importance of a full communication package to launch the Code together with the concept of ENCePP studies. The communication should also serve to clarify that application of the Code is not mandatory and is not retroactive.

At the same time the SG acknowledged the need to establish a formal review process of the Code of Conduct in light of the experience gained with its application. It was therefore decided to review the

Code of Conduct after 1 year from its launch or after 15 ENCePP studies, whichever comes first. The review should take into consideration the number of applications for ENCePP studies, any problems encountered in the context of the applications, possible breaches to the Code of Conduct and qualitative feedback from stakeholders. In particular, the SG identified some critical areas which should be revisited as part of the first review. This includes possible conflicts of the Code's requirement to provide the version of the study protocol before start of data collection and the conduct of feasibility studies before the actual study, as well as the definition of direct and indirect interests.

Lastly, several members of the SG questioned whether it could be possible to develop, on the basis of the Code of Conduct, a form of skeleton contract to be used by investigators who wish to conduct an ENCePP study. Although the SG agreed that such a skeleton would be helpful, it was noted that a generic contract might not be suitable in all cases, i.e. depending on the study type and scope and also with regard to individual rules and practices of investigators and study funding. It was decided to revisit this proposal at the time of the first revision of the Code of Conduct.

## 4. Checklist of Methodological Research Standards

At the previous SG meeting held on 19 March 2010, the content of the checklist of methodological standards was unanimously adopted by the SG, however on that occasion it was agreed to give consideration to a possible change in the name of the document to avoid any misperceptions.

After careful consideration, the SG agreed that the new title of the document should change to "Checklist of Methodological Standards for ENCePP Study Protocols", as this would better reflect the aim of the document.

## 5. General discussion / Issues raised by ENCePP Partners

Following from previous discussions, the Chair of the SG requested members to discuss the list of priority items identified at the last meeting of the SG and to define a possible interface of the SG with existing or new Working Groups and with the plenary. The discussion on the priority list was taken in conjunction with the review of the Working Group Mandates (item 6 of the agenda of the current meeting).

The following items were considered for discussion:

1) Funding of academic research / independent studies
2) Regulatory interface with ENCePP study requirements
3) Repository of Declarations of Interest
4) Dialogue with medical journals
5) Strategy – safety issues in Europe: Explore in a pilot phase how ENCePP can react to a particular problem
6) Data privacy & protection
7) Evaluation of added value of the ENCePP study concept compared to the added bureaucratic burden (performance measures); measures of success of ENCePP; quality evaluation & assurance
8) Audit/appeals/"policing" of ENCePP studies

Item 1: Funding of academic research / independent studies
Item 2: Regulatory interface with ENCePP study requirements
Item 5: Strategy - safety issues in Europe: Explore in a pilot phase how ENCePP can react to a particular problem

The SG considered that the first two points previously identified on the list of priorities (i.e. "Funding of academic research / independent studies" and "regulatory interface with ENCePP study requirements")

should now be considered as subheading of the more general topic “Strategy – safety issues in Europe”.

In this respect it was noted that in recent years there has been a growing interest from Regulators in research activities, and this has possibly happened as a consequence of the introduction of risk management plans. The SG considered that independence of researchers should not be affected by the fact that Regulators could use the ENCePP network as a resource to conduct a study.

Further consideration on the interface between ENCePP and Regulators should be given in light of the new pharmacovigilance legislative proposals, as this could have an impact on the ENCePP activities.

Similarly, regarding funding it is not envisaged that in the short term EMA should be considered as a significant source of funding for studies conducted by/through the network. However, further thoughts could be given in light of the new legislative proposals (which foresee fees being charged for pharmacovigilance).

The SG agreed that further activities on these topics should be undertaken by WG2.

Item 3: Repository of Declarations of Interest

The SG agreed in principle with the idea of having a repository of DoI, as this could also be considered a step forward to ensure transparency and openness. However it was acknowledged that to translate the idea into practice there still would be a need for substantial discussion.

The SG agreed that further activities on this topic should fall within the remit of WG2.

Item 4: Dialogue with medical journals

With regard to dialogue with medical journals, the SG concluded that it would be of paramount importance to get an endorsement from ICMJE on the ENCePP study concept. Initial contact has already been established and it was suggested to arrange a meeting with BMJ and the Lancet to further explain ENCePP initiatives.

It was agreed that this topic would remain the competence of the SG.

Item 6: Data privacy & protection

The SG acknowledged the need for further work to be done, particularly to improve harmonisation of implementation of current legislation, including to facilitate sharing of data across borders. The work should ideally lead to the development of a best practice guide that could be endorsed by ENCePP participants.

The SG agreed that further activities on this topic should fall within the remit of WG3.

Item 7: Evaluation of added value of the ENCePP study concept compared to the added bureaucratic burden (performance measures); measures of success of ENCePP; quality evaluation & assurance

In addition to the decision to undertake a formal review of the ENCePP Code of Conduct (see agenda item 3), the SG was informed about an EMA brainstorming meeting during which there has been initial discussion on the metrics to be used for the impact evaluation of ENCePP. It was proposed to circulate the outcome of this brainstorming to all the members of the SG.

Moreover it was proposed to present at the next meeting of the SG an overview of the number and type of studies requested by the CHMP in 2007.

It was agreed that this topic would remain the responsibility of the SG.

Item 8: Audit/appeals/”policing” of ENCePP studies

With regard to this item, and in particular with the focus on implementation and enforcement of the Code of Conduct, the SG was of the opinion that Working Group 2 should be consulted on whether a new WG should be set up on “policing”, or whether this topic can be dealt with within the existing WG2..

In addition to the points previously raised, the SG agreed with a proposal from DH to establish a new working group on communication. The new group should concentrate its efforts both on developing a communication strategy for the promotion of the ENCePP activities and on communicating about ENCePP studies and their results.

## 6. ENCePP Working Groups

In preparation for the plenary meeting in June 2010, the SG agreed to request from the Chairs of each working group a short report on the targets accomplished by each working group and possible amendments to their mandates, also taking into account the outcome of the discussion on the priority items at the current SG meeting.

In particular, the existing WG4 (Inventory of EU Pharmacovigilance and Pharmacoepidemiology centres in ENCePP) should be closed. The SG expressed its gratitude towards Mary Teeling, the chair of WG4 during the past 2 years. At the same time, 1 or possibly 2 new working groups agreed by the SG (“Policing” and Communication) should be established. A call for volunteers for these two new working groups should be made during the plenary on the basis of draft mandates (bullet points to be prepared by the Secretariat). Once new groups have been assembled their first task would be to propose a detailed mandate to be adopted by the SG.

Additionally, MS mentioned that availability of trained pharmacoepidemiologists in Europe is no longer meeting the steadily growing demand. It would be interesting to develop a model to estimate the actual demand versus the availability of trained pharmacoepidemiologists in Europe. It was proposed to take this issue as a question to WG1 to see whether it could fit as part of the training needs topic already included in its mandate.

The SG also agreed with a proposal by MS to develop a couple of "case studies" to test the utility of the inventory of research centres and that of data sources. This task would be undertaken by WG3.

It was decided that each Working Group should be followed by at least one representative of the SG. The allocation will be made once the new and amended mandates are available.

## 7. ENCePP Database of Research Resources

The SG was informed that on the morning of the meeting, version 2.0 of the ENCePP Resources Database had been launched. The new version incorporates the e-database of data sources that allows creation of a publicly accessible register of data sources that can be used for research in the field of pharmacovigilance and pharmacoepidemiology. MS suggested extending the linkage of the registered centres from data sources maintained by the centres to all data sources that the centre has access to and has used in the past 5 years (question 10 of the centres’ data collection form). In order to provide for a better overview, NM proposed introducing a limited number of key words reflecting the main activities and expertise of the centres. All suggestions will be considered in the light of available resources and time constraints.

In addition to the data sources component of the database, several improvements have also been implemented in the existing inventory of research centres and networks in ENCePP which was launched

in January of this year, including an improved design and layout, interconnection of resources, extended search functions and downloadable & printable profile of centres/networks and data sources.

Finally, the SG was also informed that an ENCePP Partner Forum section accessible from the ENCePP website had also been launched, although its detailed structure stillneeds to be further developed.

## 8. ENCePP Register of Studies

The SG received an update from EMA on the status of the development of the electronic register of studies. The SG was informed that release of this component is expected for the 3rd Quarter 2010.

RFF gave a presentation on the list of data fields that will be included in the database. It was highlighted that the list of data fields, drawn following advice of Subgroup 2 of WG2, was now ready to be passed to the IT project development team. Members of the SG were invited to provide comments on the proposed fields within a short timeframe in order to finalise the list in the upcoming week.

Members of the SG were also reminded of the fact that registration of the study in a publicly available electronic register is one of the CoRe requirements for a study to be awarded the title of ENCePP study and were therefore consulted on a proposal from EMA on an interim solution to be followed by those investigators who wish to register their studies and to apply for the ENCePP study seal, pending finalisation of the dedicated database. According to this proposal, it would be up to the ENCePP Secretariat to collect paper questionnaires from investigators wishing to register their studies and to maintain a publicly accessible register in the ENCePP website. Questionnaires received during this interim phase should also be used to test the database under development with real life cases.

The SG endorsed the proposal from the ENCePP Secretariat to put in place an interim solution pending finalisation of the database.

With regard to the creation of an “ENCePP Seal” for those studies that fulfill all the CoRe requirements, a proposed template letter for acknowledgement was circulated, but was not discussed due to time constraints.

## 9. Networking

The SG noted the draft agenda for the next ENCePP Plenary which will be held on 08 June 2010. Members of the SG were invited to provide comments to the ENCePP Secretariat.

The SG also noted the proposed agenda for the ENCePP Infoday organised by DIA on 26 November 2010. The SG recommended the meeting to be longer in length but comprising shorter individual sessions.

## 10. Summary of discussions & next steps

The Chair thanked all the participants for their contribution to the SG and reminded everybody about the next plenary meeting on 8th June 2010.

## 11. AOB

Further to a request from NM exploring the possibility of a formal ENCePP endorsement (through use of the ENCePP logo) to the Bordeaux Pharmacoepidemiology Festival (29 June – 1 July 2010), the SG agreed with his proposal.

Next meetings:

- Vitero meeting: 16 September 2010, 14.00-16.00

- Vitero meeting: 2 December 2010, 14.00-16.00