

October 2011

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Important dates

2011

7 December, abstract submission deadline for 16th International Workshop on HIV Observational Databases ([website](#))

2012

15 February, abstract submission deadline for 19th International AIDS Conference 2012, 22-27 July, Washington DC, US, ([website](#))

5-8 March, 19th Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections (CROI), Seattle, US ([website](#))

28-29 March, EuroCoord Annual Retreat/CoP meeting, Athens, Greece

29-31 March, 16th International Workshop on HIV Observational Databases (IWHOD), Athens, Greece ([website](#))

22-27 July, 19th International AIDS Conference 2012, Washington DC, US ([website](#))

Inside this issue



In this newsletter, we update you on all of the progress that has been made within EuroCoord over the past few months.

The interim reports were submitted by beneficiaries in July as part of **WP1** (management) - many thanks to you all for your hard work on this. All of the reports were reviewed and approved by the Executive Board.

These reports highlighted the achievements of each WP so far. **WP2** (training & outreach) has been working on pilot online training modules, while **WP4** has produced an online data submission program which will be ready for testing next year.

Many milestones have also been reached for the network-specific WPs (WPs 5-12). A paediatric HIV cohort study has been established in the Ukraine as part of **WP5**, and the protocol for estimating incidence in Central & Eastern Europe is currently being produced as part of **WP7**.

COHERE has finalised their data merger as part of **WP11 & 12** while EuroSIDA has approved two new studies as part of **WP9 & 10**.

The sub-groups of the scientific oversight **WP3** (virology, methodology, hepatitis, pharmacokinetics) have been meeting regularly, and a recent face to face meeting of the hepatitis sub-group was held in Milan.

The new science WPs have been progressing with kick-off meetings for **WP14** (Migrants) and **WP15** (Modelling), while **WP13** (TB) has been moving ahead with ethical approvals and recruitment.

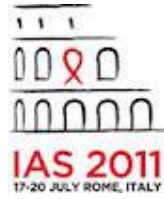
As well as these WP achievements, we were also invited to take part in the **IAS & EACS conferences**. During the 'European HIV/AIDS Research Programmes' session at the IAS conference in July, I gave a presentation outlining the structure and main aims of EuroCoord. Last week, I also talked about EuroCoord as part of the 'Best of HIV observational cohort research' session at EACS.

Please remember that we welcome your input and ideas for the **EuroCoord website**. If you would like to contribute something, please contact info@EuroCoord.net. And don't forget to let us know when any important papers are published from your networks so that we can feature them on the website.

Caroline Sabin
EuroCoord Scientific Coordinator/WP3 lead

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EuroCoord conference coverage



Caroline Sabin as Scientific Coordinator presented during the recent IAS and EACS conferences.

Alongside NEAT, EUROPRISE, and EDCTP, Caroline outlined the main aims and structure of EuroCoord during the 'European HIV/AIDS Research Programmes' session of the IAS conference back in July.

And last week, Caroline was invited to give a presentation about EuroCoord as part of the 'Best of HIV observational cohort research' session of the EACS conference which took place in Belgrade.

The IAS presentation is available to download (with audio) from the [IAS website](#) and the presentations are also available on [Dropbox](#).

During both talks, copies of the EuroCoord briefing document were circulated. The leaflet outlines the structure and aims of EuroCoord and is available to [download from the EuroCoord website](#). If you would like hard copies, please email info@EuroCoord.net.

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Workpackage updates

WP1 - NoE management

EuroCoord Workpackage 1 (Network of Excellence Management) has progressed well in the early months of the project, with all of the assigned activities and **milestones completed as planned**.

The project's financial arrangements have been fully set up, and all of the project participants have submitted **interim reports** on their first six months of work in a timely manner. The focus of the EuroCoord management team has now shifted towards the first official project report to the European Commission, due in early 2012, along with various administrative adjustments to the project's founding contracts.

The project management team has also set up and launched the **project's public website** (www.eurocoord.net) along with an **internal project management tool** (Dropbox) to facilitate collaboration and information sharing across the four networks.

Communications within the project teams have remained positive throughout, and the overall assessment indicates that the project has begun successfully and that it is well on course to achieve its objectives.

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WP2 - Training & outreach

The WP working group has been formed with members from each network, and **3 teleconferences** have already taken place. Cadpeople, the e-learning company, are currently developing **pilot online training modules** and Caroline Sabin & Bruno Ledergerber have been providing input on specific modules which will allow the work from WP2 to be linked closely to the work from the Data management group (WP4).

The first **residential training course** is being held in **Rome in October 2011** and is designed for all healthcare professionals caring for children living with HIV, including doctors in training, nurses, counsellors and psychologists. This course will incorporate an e-learning component consisting of a series of modules and clinical cases for students to explore and then consolidate during a 3 day residential symposium.

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WP3 - Scientific oversight

For the first few months that EuroCoord has been up-and-running, the primary objective of the Scientific Oversight group has been to

ensure that there are **good lines of communication** between each of the networks as well as between the networks and the Scientific Oversight group.

This will enable our research to be coordinated so as to achieve **maximal synergy** and 'added value'. This has been done by identifying representatives from each network to join the **four subgroups (Methodology, Hepatitis, PK, and Virology)**; these groups now have regular meetings to discuss ongoing related work within the networks. For example, the hepatitis sub-group had a recent face to face meeting in Milan on 1 June, and will be meeting again during EACS.

In addition, the Scientific Oversight group has been actively seeking ways to **promote the EuroCoord 'name'** and its ongoing research.

It has achieved this through the development of the **EuroCoord website** (which will now include short summaries of the most important papers published by participating networks), through **oral presentations** at several international HIV meetings (including the IAS meeting in Rome and EACS in Belgrade) and through the development of materials (e.g. slide sets) that participating members can use when making their own presentations on EuroCoord.

The group has also had several meetings with the External Advisory Group and hopes to have another **face-to-face meeting** with this group in the Autumn.

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WP4 - Data management

The data management Workpackage (WP4) focuses on ensuring **harmonisation and quality control** of data variables captured by the networks. For this purpose, the HIV Cohorts Data Exchange Protocol (HICDEP) has been extended with quality checks and implemented as a Wiki on www.hicdep.org. This public platform with a discussion forum allows all interested parties to participate in the developments. The HICDEP format and checks have been integrated into an **online data submission program** which will undergo testing next year and we expect that this tool (developed within **CHAIN**) will greatly facilitate mergers in the future.

Another task within WP4 is an **inventory database** of available data items in the different cohorts as well as meta-information on the set-up of the cohort, overlap with other cohorts and summary statistics. This database is in final testing and will be released to the cohorts and is expected to be completed by the end of 2011.

The first **cross-network data mergers** are expected to occur during 2012 and will heavily profit from the WP4-tools mentioned above as well as the experience of the data managers in charge.

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WP5 & 6 - PENTA

During the first six months of EuroCoord, activities within WP5 have included **establishment of a new paediatric HIV cohort study in Ukraine**, ongoing enrolments, follow-up and analysis within the European Collaborative Study, follow-up and analysis within the European Paediatric HIV and Lipodystrophy Study and data mergers/analyses within EPPICC on neonatal prophylaxis for PMTCT, response to early ART in infants and pharmacovigilance (FPV, DRV).

Activities for WP6 (PENTA trials) have included **recruiting into the KONCERT trial, PENTA 18** (Once-daily dosing of lopinavir/r tablets in HIV-infected children), and into the pilot phase of the BREATHER trial, PENTA 16, (Weekends off therapy), drafting of a new concept sheet for PENTA 17 trial (PI monotherapy for maintenance of HIV-1 viral suppression in HIV-1 infected children), year 3 **data collection for PENTA 11 long-term follow-up** and ongoing analysis of PENPACT1 sub-studies (lipodystrophy, adherence, neuropsychological).

The **PENTA Investigators' Meeting** was held in Venice in May 2011, and presentations included findings/updates from PENPACT1, PENTA11, KONCERT (PENTA18), and BREATHER (PENTA 16).

Several **manuscripts** are at advanced stages or submitted, with two papers (from ECS) published during this reporting period:

1. The European Pregnancy and Paediatric HIV Cohort Collaboration (EPPICC) study group in EuroCoord (Judd A, Penazzato M, Townsend C, Duong T, Castro H, Goetghebuer T, Warszawski J, Galli L, Chiappini E, de Martino M, Ene L, Giaquinto C, Königs C, Le Chenadec J, Lyall H, Noguera Julian A, Ramos JT, Rojo-Conejo P, Rudin C, Thorne C, Tookey P, Tudor-Williams G, Gibb DM). Early antiretroviral therapy in HIV-1 infected infants in Europe, 1996-2008: treatment response and duration of first line regimens. AIDS

2011. *In press*.

2. European Collaborative Study in EuroCoord. Insufficient antiretroviral therapy in pregnancy: missed opportunities for prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV in Europe. *Antivir Ther.* 2011;16:895-903. [[PubMed](#)]

3. Thorne C, Semenenko I, Malyuta R; for the Ukraine European Collaborative Study Group in EuroCoord. Prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV among pregnant women using injecting drugs in Ukraine, 2000-2010. *Addiction.* 2011. [[Epub ahead of print](#)]

4. Babiker A, Castro H (nee Green), Compagnucci A, Fiscus S, Giaquinto C, Gibb D, Harper L, Harrison L, Hughes M, McKinney R, Melvin A, Mofenson L, Saidi Y, Smith M E, Tudor-Williams G, Walker A S. First-line antiretroviral therapy initiation with a protease inhibitor versus non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor combination and switch at higher versus low viral load in HIV-infected children: an open randomised controlled phase 2/3 trial. *Lancet Infect Dis* 2011; 11:273-83 [[PubMed](#)]

Posters have been presented at CROI, IWHOD, the 3rd International Workshop on HIV Pediatrics and the IAS conference in Rome including:

Compagnucci A. on behalf of the PENTA Steering Committee. Long term consequences of planned treatment interruptions in HIV infected children: Results from the TICCH (Treatment Interruption in Children with Chronic HIV-Infection)/PENTA 11 trial. 3rd HIV Paediatric Workshop Rome 15-16 July 2011.

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WP7 & 8 - CASCADE

The **CASCADE Workshop** took place in May of this year in Pisa. During the workshop, results of ongoing analyses were presented and future work was discussed.

The **2011 CASCADE dataset** is now ready and contains data on just under 26,000 seroconverters from 29 cohorts. The dataset was collated by Sara Lodi who has now left the MRC as she gained a Marie Curie Fellowship to work with Julia Del Amo at ISCIII on the EuroCoord migrants work. She has been replaced by Ashley Olson at MRC.

In October a meeting was held, chaired by Deenan Pillay and attended by Laurence Meyer, Jacques Fellay and Amalio Telenti, among others, to discuss the **genetics work** with Paul Kellam and Manj Sandhu from the Wellcome Trust-funded Sanger Institute. The group agreed that the priority now is to have complete documentation of the readiness of each cohort for this work including the necessary ethics approval, consent, and central storage of specimens.

Work on a **protocol for estimating HIV incidence** in Estonia, Poland, and the Ukraine has begun and a teleconference has taken place to agree the details. The work will be taken forward by Irja Lutsar (Estonia), Magda Rosinska & Janusz Janiec (Poland), and Ruslan Malyuta & Igor Semenenko (Ukraine) in those three countries. Ruth Smith, a PhD student on an MRC studentship will work on this project with these colleagues.

There have been **8 publications** so far this year, with the paper by [Funk et al](#) on timing of ART receiving much attention ([Science Daily](#)) as has the paper by [Lodi et al](#) on time to reaching CD4 thresholds ([aidsmap](#)).

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WP9 & 10 - EuroSIDA

A **new steering committee** was elected based on a ballot system with all participating centres voting based on the cumulative person years of follow-up they have contributed to EuroSIDA, and a total of **3 teleconferences** of the SC have taken place.

Projects initiated in 2010 are progressing as planned. **Two new projects have been approved** to proceed by the Steering Committee and **2 newsletters** have been distributed. Dataset 33 has been sent to all centres for follow-up.

Receipt of plasma samples has been steady and on target (total of 76,708 plasma samples have been registered in the central plasma repository).

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WP11 & 12 - COHERE

The **COHERE Manual of Operations** was finalised in the first quarter of 2011. The manual will be a valuable tool for the collaboration in moving projects and administrative procedures forward in a unified manner.

The **website** (www.cohere.org) is also an important tool for the collaboration and is always updated with the project publications, presentations, as well as all study documents.

Finally, all year one project groups have been established, developed project plans and are ready to move, therefore the COHERE collaboration is happy to announce that the **data merger** is in the final stages and it is expected to be sent to project leads for analysis in September 2011. The database contains data on 269,636 patients from 30 cohorts.

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WP13 - HIV TB

The prospective phase of the TB:HIV study was initiated 1 January 2011. Currently the Steering Committee, study investigators and coordinating centre are moving ahead with **ethical approvals and recruitment** (see Figures 1 and 2).

The **study newsletter** for June can be viewed here: [TB HIV Newsletter](#).

Figure 1: Participating centres and regions

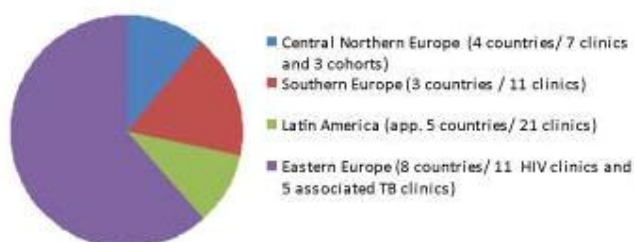
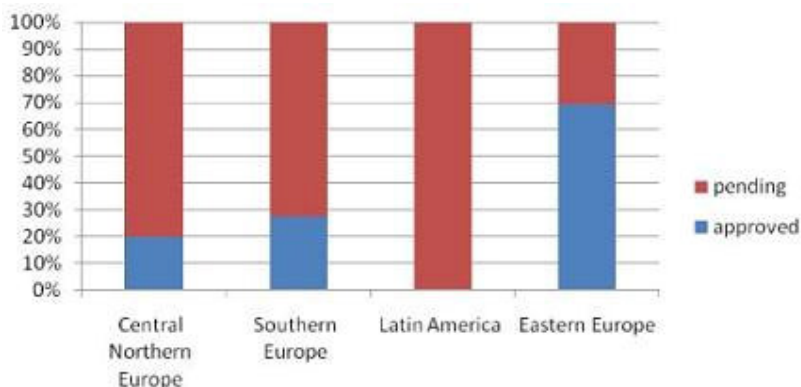


Figure 2: Status of ethical approval



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WP14 - Migrants

The **HIV and Migrants Workpackage 14 Working Group** (see attached list) has been formed and a Chair appointed.

Since January 2011 the group has been **working on the survey protocols** and the long process of seeking **ethical approval**. Two questionnaires that will be used to explore the barriers to accessing HIV testing, prevention, and treatment services for migrants across Europe have been developed.

The group aim to recruit two samples: 1) 4,000 people from 40 clinics in 9 countries, and 2) 1,000 migrants recruited using an internet survey. The **web-based questionnaire** will be targeted at migrants from high risk communities and will be promoted using online social networks and community based organisations.

This study will be known as **aMASE: advancing Migrant Access to health Services in Europe**. This name has been chosen in an effort to brand the study positively and provide an identity that communities and organisations serving civil society will embrace.

Another aim of the clinic-based questionnaire is to **develop an algorithm** to determine the likely country of HIV acquisition. The group has been working with collaborators to try and identify key behavioural indicators and factors associated with CD4 cell decline. A systematic review of the literature is underway.

WP14 is **collaborating with the data management workpackage** (WP4) which is currently setting up an online data inventory survey that will be distributed and completed by the EuroCoord Networks and all single cohorts within EuroCoord in September/October. This survey will provide the group with a clear view on completeness and format of information on migrants in EuroCoord.

The **kick-off meeting of WP14 took place in Madrid on 29 September** with 26 attendees from EuroCoord sites. The group discussed the survey protocols and the pilot studies will soon be launched.

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WP15 - Modelling

WP15, now also known as the **SSOPHIE** (Stochastic Simulation of Outcomes of People with HIV in Europe) project, first arranged its **kick-off meeting in March 2011** and has since been making steady progress on developing a new stochastic computer simulation model.

The working group agreed at the meeting that the HIV Synthesis model, developed by some members of the group, would be used as a starting point for the SSOPHIE model. **Teleconferences** have subsequently taken place to evaluate and discuss various aspects of the model as part of a structured model building exercise.

The group aims to finish initial discussions regarding the model by the end of 2011, and anticipate the model programming to continue throughout 2012. The **first prototype** of the model is a deliverable to be achieved by the end of 2012.

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If you would like to know more about EuroCoord, please visit the website www.EuroCoord.net or contact info@EuroCoord.net



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