

# Newsletter - April 1995

## **I** NTERNATIONAL **S** TUDY OF **A** STHMA AND **A** LLERGIES IN **C** HILDHOOD

### **The Newsletter**

Thank you for your positive responses to the February Newsletter. I would welcome items from anyone for inclusion in the next newsletter.

- Innes Asher  
*Auckland*

PS Please let me know if you do NOT want to receive the ISAAC Newsletter.

### **Note From Innes Asher**

I have unfortunately been notified by Bonnie Sibbald that she is resigning from her remaining administrative roles in ISAAC due to the increased workload and responsibilities associated with her new position in the University of Manchester. I would like to thank Bonnie on behalf of the ISAAC Steering Committee for her very valuable input. We wish Bonnie well for her future endeavours.

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### **Progress from the International Data Centre**

#### ISAAC Data Entry

Many Centres have expressed an interest in a data entry package designed specifically for ISAAC. Alistair Stewart in Auckland has developed a simple package using the Epi-Info epidemiological software programme which is available from regional coordinators. Epi-Info is public domain software which may be used by anyone for epidemiological research and Dr Tord Kjellstrom of the World Health Organisation (WHO) has kindly offered to supply as many copies of Epi-Info as required for ISAAC. The ISAAC Steering Committee welcomes this support from WHO. Unfortunately for Macintosh users, Epi-info is only available for IBM compatible personal computers.

The Auckland ISAAC data entry package consists of Epi-Info itself (supplied by WHO) and the questionnaire file component specific to ISAAC.

When using the Auckland ISAAC data entry package the data entry operator will see screens resembling the ISAAC questionnaire. Basic operating documentation is also supplied.

The method of obtaining the Auckland ISAAC data entry package is as follows:

1. A collaborating centre informs the regional coordinator that the Epi-Info/Auckland ISAAC data entry package is required.
2. The regional coordinator informs Richard Beasley of numbers of Epi-Info/Auckland ISAAC data entry packages required for their region.
3. Richard Beasley informs the ISAAC International Data Centre in Auckland of the requirements.
4. The ISAAC International Data Centre will:
  - a) Send copies of the Auckland ISAAC data entry package directly to the regional coordinator.
  - b) Request the WHO to supply the appropriate number of copies of Epi-Info directly to the regional coordinator.

The data entry programme is still undergoing development and we would be grateful for comments from any users so that we can improve the programme further.

## ISAAC Phase One Data Registration Form

The International Data Centre has developed a Phase One Data Registration Form to obtain information that is necessary during the data checking, data assessment and data analysis processes. The questions included in the form are concerned with the sampling framework (methodology) used, the method of data entry, whether any changes have been made to the responses of the child or parent and the participation rate achieved during the study. The data registration form is sent to centres as soon as we receive a copy of their data.

The question concerning the sampling framework will allow us to decide whether it is necessary to apply the Rao-Scott correction for the cluster sampling effect (design effect). The information from the questions relating to the method of data entry and the participation rate achieved during the study will be important when the data is assessed for inclusion in the ISAAC Phase One comparisons. During data checking it is important that we know whether the information in the ISAAC questionnaire has been altered in any way from the responses provided by the child or parent.

### Phase One Progress

As of March 1995 the ISAAC International Data Centre has received data from the following centres:

Adelaide (Australia)	Auckland (New Zealand)
Barcelona (Spain)	Cartagena (Spain)
Christchurch (New Zealand)	Hawkes Bay (New Zealand)
Krakow (Poland)	Lisbon (Portugal)
London (England)	Melbourne (Australia)
Moscow (Russia)	Münster (Germany)
Nelson (New Zealand)	Pamplona (Spain)
Sydney (Australia)	Valencia (Spain)
Wellington (New Zealand)	Whakatane (New Zealand)

The current total is 29 data sets from 18 centres (some centres have studied 6-7 year olds as well as the 13-14 year olds).

The data checking process is going well and we look forward to receiving more data within the next few months.

Tadd Clayton, Data Manager, International Data Centre.

## **Meeting of the Western European National Coordinators in Muenster, Germany 9 and 10 December 1994**

The Muenster ISAAC-Team welcomed 9 colleagues from the Western Europe Region and the Regional Coordinator of Eastern Europe\*\*.

Attendees: Ross Anderson, Bengt Björkstén\*\*, Denis Charpin, Heinrich Duhme, Francesco Forastiere, D. Luis Garcia-Marcos Alvarez, Ulrich Keil, Angela Liese, Erika von Mutius, José Eduardo Rosado Pinto, Josef Riedler, Manfred Schmid, David Strachan, Stephan Weiland, Marjan Wieringa.

The purpose of the meeting was to evaluate the present situation of ISAAC-Phase I in Western Europe and to join efforts for Phase II.

### **Phase I in Western Europe**

#### **Present Status**

Each coordinator gave a summary about the progress of Phase I in his/her country. From a total of 41 centers (December '94), data collection has already been completed by 14. The table summarizes the core instruments and optional topics used in the different countries. Further Phase I enrolment will not be actively encouraged.

#### **Analysis and Publication Strategies**

The need for guidance on the interpretation of the core questionnaire was expressed. Since there are no official guidelines beyond the descriptions of the study instruments in the ISAAC-Manual, the advice was given to exchange suggestions on how to analyse and interpret data. When publishing their results each investigator should state clearly which of the ISAAC-Questions were used to identify a disease symptom entity.

The Western European Coordinators decided to prepare a first descriptive paper regarding the frequencies of the three disease entities as soon as data from all countries is available. The Scandinavian countries were invited to be included. Regarding the authorship it was decided to use an anonymous form such as "The ISAAC Investigators"; individual names will only be listed in the appendix.

It was emphasized that international comparisons are strongly encouraged

since this is an inherent aim of the ISAAC-Study. A strategy will be developed on how to analyze and present the data in such comparative studies.

ISAAC validation efforts will be collected by Ross Anderson. The National Coordinators are encouraged to contact him regarding validation studies. In addition, tests on repeatability of the applied modules were recommended.

### Components of ISAAC Phase I Core Modules in Western European Countries

Country	Questionnaire to 13/14 year olds	Video to 13/14 year olds		Questionnaire to parents of 6/7 year olds	Optional topics
		Caucasian video	International composite video		
Austria	X	X		X	Questions regarding indoor and outdoor pollutants.
Belgium	X			X	Wheezing, respiratory infections, medication, croup; family history.
France	X	X		X	Questions on indoor environment; questions on disease management; opinion questions on asthma and other common diseases; (spirometry, only Bordeaux).
Germany	X	X		X	Indoor exposure; active smoking; parental smoking; traffic exposure; heredity; social status.
Great Britain	X				Cough, phlegm, treatment; indoor environment; active and passive smoking.
Greece	X			X	?
Italy	X	1 centre	other centres	X	Active smoking, passive smoking; socio-economic status; heating, cooking, dampness, mould; heredity; traffic exposure; cough, phlegm.
Portugal	X			X	Active smoking; parental smoking; socio-economic status.
Spain	X	X		X	Indoor smoking; socio-economic status.

### Phase II in Western Europe

An outline on the basic questions, concept and scope of Phase II was presented. The development of standardized instruments and close collaboration for a successful Phase II is a major goal. Josef Riedler

from Austria offered to provide hypertonic saline challenge modules together with videos regarding spirometry. All (Eastern and Western) European centers should indicate whether they are interested in participating in Phase II.

## Application for EU-Funding

The European Union has created a funding programme for inter-European research collaboration in the field of biomedical research. The ISAAC-Project with its already existing structure seems to meet the aims and requirements of this program. An application for funding for a Western European coordination and data center will be brought on its way.

## Future meetings

The next Western Europe ISAAC Meeting will be held in Barcelona on September 17<sup>th</sup>, following the meeting of the International Steering Committee.

## News from German Centres

### Phase I Centres

#### **Muenster**

The data collection will be finished at the end of January 1995.

#### **Greifswald**

The pilot study was conducted during November and December 1994.

### Phase II Centres

#### **Dresden, Leipzig, and Munich, coordination in Muenster**

The pilot study for Phase II will start this spring.

## **Summary of International Progress Since October 1993**

Achievements of the ISAAC Steering Committee during this time include:

1. Report of the Fourth International Study of Asthma and Allergies in Childhood.
2. Publication of the ISAAC Registration Document.

3. Revised International video prepared by Wellington, December 1993.
4. Acceptance of the ISAAC methodology paper by the European Respiratory Journal\*.
5. Newsletters; October, December 1993; March, June 1994; February, April 1995.
6. Airway Responsiveness Satellite Workshop, Auckland, December 1993. Decision on hyperosmolar challenge.
7. Further development of Phase Two modules (publication planned for mid-1995).
8. Recruitment of new centres in all ISAAC regions.
9. Major funding (£150 000) for regional coordination from Glaxo International Medical Affairs.
10. Presentation by Erika von Mutius at the IUATLD annual meeting.
11. Report of the Fifth International Study of Asthma and Allergies in Childhood.

\* Asher MI, Keil U, Anderson HR, Beasley R, Crane J, Martinez F, Mitchell EA, Pearce N, Sibbald B, Stewart AW, Strachan D, Weiland SK, Williams HC. International Study of Asthma and Allergies in Childhood (ISAAC): rationale and methods. *European Respiratory Journal* (in press).

The European Respiratory Society has invited Dr Erika von Mutius to speak about "The Current Status of European ISAAC Studies" on 20 September 1995 at the annual congress.