

# Minutes of the TropNet meeting in Hamburg, April 2014

## 1. Membership issues:

- 71 members, no changes in the last year
- Membership status: Agreement on the following changes:  
**New forms of membership:** In the future the membership status of the individual TropNet centres will be re-evaluated once yearly in connection with the 'annual survey on imported infectious diseases'. The survey (deadline 15<sup>th</sup> March) will be conducted online via a form on the TropNet website as it has been done in the last two years. The start of the survey will be announced via the TropNet mailing list and the survey will be accessible over a period of six weeks, starting 2 month before the annual TropNet meeting. Centres completing the annual survey by submitting the numbers of imported diseases they observed in the previous year (even though if there are zero cases) will be labelled as '**members**' on the website. TropNet centres not taking part in the annual survey, will be labelled as '**observers**'.
- Presentation of the results of the conducted member survey regarding the proposed TropNet platforms: Consensus that the current TropNet platforms are approved and supported by the network members.
- Agreement that the management of the different network platforms will be split among the members with assignment of leaders and core groups heading the individual platforms.

## Proposed core groups (Expertise):

### RESEARCH

Leo Visser (Immunology),  
Thomas Zoller (Malaria),  
Jan Clerinx (Schistosomiasis, Fever),  
Thomas Junghanss (Echinococcosis),  
Angela Copolongo,  
Henrik Nielson,  
Valerie D'Acremont (Fever),  
Toni Seriano (Pediatrics),  
Graham Fry

### POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Christoph Hatz,  
Guido Calleri,  
Andreas Neumayr,  
Olivier Bouchaud,  
Ron Behrens

### TEACHING & TRAINING

Christoph Hatz,  
Joaquim Gascon,  
Hans-Dieter Nothdurft  
Emmanuel Bottieau

### SURVEILLANCE /REPORTING

Andreas Neumayr  
Anna Beltrame  
Juan Cuadros  
Toni Seriano  
Guido Calleri  
Joaquim Gascon

### TRAVEL MEDICINE INFO MATERIAL

Jan Clerinx  
Andreas Neumayr  
Rogelio López-Vélez (Migrant health issues)  
Thomas Junghanss (Poisonous & venomous animals)  
Graham Fry

### WEBSITE

Thomas Zoller  
Guido  
Andreas Neumayr

- Summary of on-going and upcoming TropNet studies as well as studies with TropNet participation.
2. Annual report on observed imported diseases: the current 'annual survey form' will be extended to enable the reporting of possibly emerging diseases.
  3. TropNet 'Surveillance news' / 'Statements'
    - Currently various sites compile 'surveillance news' in Europe (Tomas Jelinek, Berlin; Abraham Goorhuis, Amsterdam; Maia Funk, Zurich; others?)  
Would it be feasible to bundle these overlapping efforts?
    - *The question is discussed whether the 'Surveillance news' should be continued.*  
Analysis of the TropNet website statistics by Thomas Zoller:  
The TropNet website is accessed by >5000 individual IP-addresses per months. However, unfortunately it is not possible to measure the number of visits to the 'surveillance news' subpage.  
Interestingly 1/3 of all traceable IP-addresses accessing the TropNet website are from the US.
    - It has been suggested to replace the 'Surveillance news' by 'Statements': topic specific expert advice for the non-professional lay person / public on current outbreak events / health issues (e.g. Ebola, MERS-CoV...). Such a statement should rather summarize a health problem/situation and provide advices which are relevant for travellers than give detailed information on e.g. outbreaks as it is already provided by WHO, CDC, pubmed etc. Only a link to these website for further information.  
Thomas Junghanss proposed as first topic a 'statement' regarding the commitment to migratory health in Europe. Francesco Castelli commented to volunteer in reviewing such a document. (Rogelio Lopez Velez stated his interest in migratory health and would be an ideal substitute to this group).

**Conclusion:** The surveillance news will be continued for another year and re-evaluated. Up to the next regular meeting in spring 2015, at least 2 statements will be formulated and put on the website (one of them about Ebola risk for travellers, on the commitment to migration medicine).

4. Next TropNet Meetings:  
**Regular Meeting in Spring 2015 (possible dates: April Friday 13.00h 10/ Saturday 11 17.30h, or 17/18, 24/25 2015).** Possible Meeting Place: St Albans/London to be confirmed by R. Behrens.

**Technical Meeting in Autumn 2014 in Basel (proposed dates: Friday arrival/ Saturday departure late afternoon: 12<sup>th</sup>/ 13<sup>th</sup> September or 3<sup>rd</sup> / 4<sup>th</sup> October 2014):**

Discussion and finalisation of research projects, Pre-ECTMIH-Travel Medicine Course 2015 in Basel. All members are welcome. Leaders of research groups are expected to participate if possible: Leo Visser (Immunology), Thomas Zoller (Malaria), Jan Clerinx (Schistosomiasis, Fever), Thomas Junghanss (Echinococcosis), Valerie D'Acremont (Fever), Toni Seriano (Pediatrics), J. Blum (LeishMan), R. Behrens, E. Bottieau, C. Hatz and A. Neumayr.

A topic to be discussed at the technical meeting should be how to better deal with the problematic issue of ethical clearance of future studies within the network. Therefore, we are looking for someone (ideally someone who has experience with FP7, Horizon 2020 etc.) who would volunteer to evaluate and summarize the issue and the current situation in Europe in order to better define the problems and obstacles and to facilitate the planning of future projects. If anyone would like to take over this task please contact us!

5. Agreement to conduct a 'preconference Travel Medicine Course' at the ECTMIH 2015 in Basel. The target participants are Travel Medicine specialists.

**Conclusion:** The Course curriculum for the one day course on September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2015, will be prepared by a group of TropNet members (L. Visser, J. Gascon, M. Bottieau, HD Nothdurft, C. Hatz, others are welcome) and finalised during the autumn 2014 meeting in Basel.

6. In case someone wants to measure serum antibody levels after Yellow fever vaccination, the respective lab-form of the University Medical Centre in Leiden, The Netherlands is available for download on the internal TropNet-website after login under 'Network Resources' -> 'YELLOW FEVER VIRUS NEUTRALIZATION TEST' (on the left side of the page).
7. Teaching & Training at a personal level: proposition that people participate in the daily activities in one of the TropNet centre.

Scientific contributions (see also presentation slides):

1. J. Cramer: A study on football fan travellers (during World Cup in Brazil) and 'controls' after the World Cup will be recruited in Germany before departure at travel clinics and in airport lounges. Other centres are welcome (Antwerp, Zuerich?): they will receive the final questionnaire.
2. A. Neumayr: A prospective study on the emergence of artemisinin resistance in returning travellers, already proposed in Bordeaux, is open for participation. The study aims at assessing art resistance in relation to travel destinations as a sentinel measure for possible treatment recommendation changes.
3. G. Rojo: A prospective study to assess the two different *P. ovale* infections (*walikeri* and *curtisi*) is proposed. The discussion raises the question whether such a study is feasible due to very small numbers of expected patients.

4. R. Behrens: The problematic regulations on DEEDT toxicity issues are discussed. Ron also presented interesting and challenging data of a randomised blinded study of the effectiveness of topical corticosteroids and ibuprofen for the relief of Type I mosquito bite symptoms.

The complete booklet of the workshop, as well as some photographs, is available for download on the internal TropNet-website after login under `Workshops`.

## 8. Study proposals

The following proposals were discussed in the plenary:

1. Evaluation of PCR based diagnosis of acute schistosomiasis in its prepatent and patent phase. Antwerp (lead) and Basel are interested to carry this project further. Others are welcome.
2. Praziquantel pharmacokinetics in treating schistosomiasis and other helminth(?) cases. Basel (lead) and Heidelberg are interested, others are highly welcome.
3. PneumoTravChild: Barclona (hebron: lead). Other participants are likely to be working with children, all welcome.
4. Centre-based management of cystic echinococcosis: a model for NTD/NICs care in Europe. Heidelberg (lead), Basel interested to participate. This exemplary project, together with a TropNet statement, will be pursued by TropNet as a possible strategic flagship with regard to recommendation policy.
5. Leishman: ongoing activities in clinical and diagnostic issues are ongoing. Basel (lead), Berlin, Antwerp, Leiden, London, Paris and others involved.
6. HaemoArt: haemolysis after antimalarial tx. Berlin (lead), Basel
7. GiardiaTREAT and GiardiaREF: Basel (lead), Lausanne, Berne, Geneva. Others are welcome. Meanwhile both studies have been approved by the EC in Basel.
8. Safety surveillance of YF live vaccines in immunosuppressed persons. Zürich (lead), Leiden, Basel, Berne, Lausanne, Geneva, St. Gallen (not member of TropNet). This project has been awarded an ISTM-grant for investigating the impact of low-dose Methotrexate on YF-immune response and adverse events.
9. StavTrav: Ongoing project, Tübingen (lead)

Several issues have been discussed in the context of proposed, planned and on-going projects:

1. Ethical issues in member countries: differences in ethical clearance requirements become more challenging as reflected by many members. Collaborative research

may be negatively influenced by such problems because the amount of work and time (often not available) and even funds. Still, if we do not want to only rely on industry and institutional collaborative work (Sigma Tau, FP/), the efforts of the members are vital to conduct the sort of practical and scientific research we would like to pursue. This issue will be discussed during the autumn meeting 2014.

2. Visibility of TropNet: it is vital that publications related to the network need to have 'TropNet' clearly stated in the scientific publications and in reports to national and international organisations and institutions.
3. The low numbers of cases in some (smaller) TropNet centres raise the question whether the invested time is worth the benefit. On the other hand, most relevant questions pertaining prevention, diagnosis and management of disorders in returning travellers can not be adequately assessed in single (large) centres alone. The TropNet could take such targets in cooperation and at the same time work on harmonisation of diagnostic and management standards among the centres and in Europe.

#### Decisions:

1. To have a 'technical meeting' in autumn 2014 for the discussion of research, policy and training issues of TropNet.
2. To have the next regular TropNet meeting in spring 2015 .
3. To request basic annual reporting in order to assign 'member' or 'observer' status within the network.
4. To work on at least 2 TropNet statements which are published on the website.
5. To pursue a policy development for TropNet, based on the existing 'Expert Group for Travel Medicine' to establish joint recommendations o travel (and Tropical) medicine issues.
6. To work on ethical clearance issues in member countries in order to better understand the challenges and how to overcome problems.
7. To encourage participation in existing and new collaborative research projects which have a relevance for practical work in the respective centres.
8. To continue the internal surveillance of epidemic and unexpected travel medicine events among our clients.
9. To assess the continuation of 'surveillance news' in the future: final decision in autumn 2014.
10. To conduct a one-day course on travel medicine on the forthcoming ECTMIH2015 Congress in Basel in September 2015.