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International Society of Drug Bulletins (ISDB): fit for the future

The ISDB's 9th General Assembly in Vancouver affirms the organisation's continued vitality and its commitment to independent information



The International Society of Drug Bulletins (ISDB), founded in 1986, is a world-wide network of bulletins and journals on drugs and therapeutics that are financially and intellectually independent of the pharmaceutical industry. *Prescrire* is a founding member.

ISDB member publications pursue common goals that are well known to *Prescrire* subscribers: publishing comparative information on drugs and other treatment options and working for change at a societal level in order to improve the quality of healthcare. In addition to exchanging experiences and best practices, ISDB members work together to optimize literature search, editorial methods, editor training and circulation. The network aims to be a voice that is heard in the international arena on topics like rational drug policy, independent information and pharmacovigilance.

A general assembly is held every three years. At the end of March 2012, some 53 participants representing 25 countries gathered in Vancouver, Canada for the ISDB's 9th General Assembly, entitled "Fit for the future! Independence & sustainability". The event was hosted by the Therapeutics Initiative, which publishes the ISDB-member bulletin *The Therapeutics Letter*.

Practical workshops were held on an array of subjects, including website management, writing for lay people, and how to run successful, independent continuing-education and e-learning programmes. The assembly also featured presentations by several prominent academics, as well as sessions devoted to "New drug assessments and cost-effectiveness assessments: methods and their rationale" and "Conflict of interest policy: why and how it contributes to sustainability". The Therapeutics Initiative team organised a workshop on critical appraisal of randomised controlled trials entitled "The Truth, The Half-Truth and Nothing Like the Truth".

The assembly was entirely self-financed, without any external sponsorship, thanks to members' annual fees and a contribution from *Prescrire's* Solidarity Support Programme.

The ISDB's next general assembly is scheduled for 2015.

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Prescrire International

83 bd Voltaire - 75558 PARIS CEDEX 11 - FRANCE

Fax: + 33 1 49237648

e-mail: international@prescrire.org

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