



## Working locally, collaborating globally to improve the quality of respiratory care

An explanation for primary care clinicians about the role of the IPCRG, and of national primary care respiratory groups

Across the world, the vast burden of chronic and infectious respiratory disease is mainly diagnosed and managed in primary care, however that is organised locally. However, most of the evidence is based on hospital and research centre activity. Primary care clinicians therefore have to interpret research findings in the context of their primary care experience, and find ways to apply those findings to their practice that may differ considerably from that of hospital or disease-specialist colleagues.

Similarly, many high profile lectures, seminars and workshops are led by hospital and disease-specialist colleagues, even if the audience is mainly primary care.

The IPCRG was set up in 2000 by an international community of primary care physicians, researchers and educators who wanted to redress the balance and provide primary care evidence, research and education for their peers.

It is both an organisation of national organisations and an international community of practice. It brings together national groups where they exist, and helps others grow where they do not. It connects individual researchers and educators who want to connect with colleagues for multi-national projects.

Our mission is to raise standards of care in individual countries and globally, through collaborative research, innovation and dissemination of best practice and education. We also advocate for the [primary care role](#) in the detection and management of respiratory disease at policy level directly and with our associate members.

The IPCRG membership currently consists of 23 full voting members that are national primary care respiratory societies, and associate individual members in countries where such groups are not yet constituted. We reach over 125,000 primary care professionals worldwide through these members.

The IPCRG is the primary care representative on WHO-Global Alliance against Chronic Respiratory Diseases (GARD) Planning Executive, the WONCA Europe Special Interest Group (WESIG) in respiratory disease and is an organization in collaborative relations with Wonca global.

### What are the benefits to you?

#### Research

The IPCRG offers you the opportunity to join a growing network of primary care practitioners with an interest in respiratory research in low, middle and high income countries with the aim of influencing guidelines and practice. The IPCRG has [published a list of prioritised research needs](#) and [mapped](#) respiratory guidelines and the primary care role in their development.

There are a number of research programmes, including UNLOCK and FRESH AIR. [UNLOCK](#) is an international collaboration between primary care researchers to coordinate and share datasets of relevant diagnostic and follow-up variables for COPD and asthma management in primary care. We are always looking for new members. [FRESH AIR](#) started in Vietnam, has been successfully implemented in Uganda and is a WHO-GARD demonstration project. It is an epidemiological study on the prevalence of COPD and its risk factors including all types of smoke: exposure to biomass, smoking, and any other local exposures and we are franchising it to new countries such as Kyrgyzstan.

We also have groups looking at COPD and pain, mhealth and tobacco dependence.

Our E-Faculty project has now worked with primary care research-naive teams in Vietnam and Romania and is now working in Chile. Each aims to achieve our phased goals of presentations at IPCRG conferences, publication and then initiation of further research.

Building on the E-faculty we have also now appointed our first candidate for the IPCRG Research Fellowship.

Interested in  
research?  
[Join our  
Research  
Network](#)

## Publications

With our UK member organisation, the PCRS-UK and Nature Publishing Group we offer the Medline-listed [npj Primary Care Respiratory Medicine](#) available free online. We welcome submissions.

## Conferences

The IPCRG runs biennial conferences which offer terrific opportunities for networking, presenting new research, debating research ideas, catching up with the latest thinking, and learning or refreshing new skills. In addition we run scientific meetings focused on presenting new research, but for the first time in Singapore May 2015 we will also run a respiratory research school. As an example see [Athens 2014](#) information including videos Athens on Air. The 8<sup>th</sup> world conference is to be held in Amsterdam in May 2016.

## Education

The IPCRG is committed to an education strategy that supports the development and improvement of primary care respiratory medicine. Our priorities are to support education or quality improvement projects that are of practical value to primary care practitioners, policy makers and patients in low, middle and high income countries. We prioritise those that can demonstrate the value of primary care to policy-makers, our member countries and global community of practice. Our flagship programme is E-Quality, with three rounds of projects.

## International speaking

Members of the IPCRG are invited to speak at international events including at the European Parliament, and international conferences.

It has an active policy of encouraging new speakers and facilitators through its own education programmes, and in particular its biennial international conference. If you are interested in speaking, chairing or facilitating, let us know.

## Committees

The IPCRG operates mainly virtually, including the operation of its sub-committees: research, education, governance and conference scientific programme.

It also has an active web team, that develops the web platform which is a knowledge-sharing platform.

These provide new opportunities for practitioners who want to get involved in some international work and to influence what we do.

## Joining us

If you are interested in joining a group, then the IPCRG can put you in contact with your local group, if it exists.

If it does not, [it can help you set one up](#) by providing guidance and contacts for sponsorship, ideas for meetings, speakers for meetings, example constitutions, use of the website to develop your own home page and local material in your preferred language(s), and various educational resources.

Correspondence address: PO Box 11961

Westhill

AB32 9AE

U.K.

Tel: +44 1224 (0) 743753

[BusinessManager@theipcr.org](mailto:BusinessManager@theipcr.org)

[www.theipcr.org](http://www.theipcr.org)

The International Primary Care Respiratory Group (IPCRG) is a charity registered in Scotland working internationally (SC No: 035056) and a company limited by guarantee (Company number 256268)

Registered Offices: 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, 115 George Street, Edinburgh, Scotland, EH2 4JN

Tel: +44 1224 743753

[www.theipcr.org](http://www.theipcr.org)

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