

News - Immediate

New international collaboration launched for safer use of medicines and better patient care

A major international project, funded by the European Commission, aiming to improve patient safety, has recently been launched.

The 'Monitoring Medicines' project will run for 3½ years. It involves a) methodological development in direct patient reporting of suspected adverse reactions b) better analysis of reasons for medication errors c) improved approaches to active and focused medicine surveillance d) identification of early indicators of drug dependence and substandard medicines in medicine safety databases and e) decision support tools for treatment of HIV/AIDS.

The partners in the project cover a wide range of organisations dedicated to improving public health through safer use of medicines; they are:

- Copenhagen HIV Programme, Denmark
- University of Ghana Medical School
- Pharmacy and Poisons Board, Kenya
- Centre Anti Poison et de Pharmacovigilance du Maroc
- Lareb, Netherlands Pharmacovigilance Centre
- Zuellig Family Foundation, the Philippines
- Medical Products Agency, Sweden
- Elliot Brown Consulting Limited, UK
- National Patient Safety Agency, UK
- World Health Organization
- Uppsala Monitoring Centre, Sweden (UMC, the overall project co-ordinator)

The overall aim of 'Monitoring Medicines' is to strengthen what we know about medicines and their use, sharing that knowledge and putting the knowledge to use to reduce patient deaths and adverse effects due to medicines.

The project will help to advance the application, co-ordination and optimal use of pharmacovigilance evidence, and to strengthen the links between the various individuals, national pharmacovigilance centres and experts involved. Most importantly, the project will strive to increase consumer involvement in the reporting of adverse drug reactions (ADRs), and mobilize and sustain political commitment to support those working in drug safety.

Funded by the Seventh Framework Programme (FP-7) of the Research Directorate of the European Commission (EC), the project agreement came into force on 1 September 2009. In the first week of March, representatives of all the diverse collaborating partners

gathered in Uppsala for a 2-day meeting hosted by the UMC, to plan the work in each package, and to understand each other's professional and health care background.

UMC representative Sten Olsson, commented:

“This is a very exciting project for all involved. The amount of funding will enable us to achieve some important goals for international patient safety. After a productive and timely ‘kick-off’ we are all looking forward to working together.”

For more information please contact the Coordinator Sten Olsson at *the* Uppsala Monitoring Centre, e-mail sten.olsson@who-umc.org, or phone +46-18-656060 or fax +46-18-656080 or the Project Manager Ennita Nilsson, ennita.nilsson@who-umc.org A dedicated web site is available, offering information on the progress of the project: www.monitoringmedicines.org

This press release was distributed on behalf of the project by the Uppsala Monitoring Centre, Box 1051, SE-751 40 Uppsala, Sweden

Notes for Editors

Uppsala Monitoring Centre (UMC)

- The Uppsala Monitoring Centre is the field-name of the WHO Collaborating Centre for International Drug Monitoring
- The UMC is the principal, independent scientific group in the world concerned with the safer, more rational use of medicines and with broader issues of safety in healthcare
- The UMC's authority is based on more than thirty years of scientific research and achievement in collaboration with member countries of the WHO Programme for International Drug Monitoring
- The core activity of the UMC, worldwide pharmacovigilance, is the collecting, researching, assessing and evaluating of information on the adverse effects of medicines, biological products, herbals and traditional medicines with a view to identifying new information about hazards, and preventing harm to patients
- The WHO Global Individual Case Safety Report (ICSR) database, VigiBase, of more than 5 million worldwide reports of adverse drug reactions (ADRs) is the basis for the UMC's scientific work and publications and the source of its several standard dictionaries, reference works, occasional papers and service to member countries
- A secondary high level priority is the promotion of effective education, training and communication about benefit, harm, effectiveness and risk in medicine in patient care and public health for all audiences.