



Welcome to the first EFWISG newsletter of 2009 which we hope you will find of interest. We are sure that most Group members are aware of the 19th ECCMID in Helsinki, 16th – 19th May. (Further details are available from www.congrex.ch/eccmid2009/). We are delighted that the Programme Committee adopted our proposal for an **EFWISG-sponsored symposium in Helsinki**.

Symposium at the Helsinki ECCMID

We are delighted that Professor Jan Kluytmans (NL) and Dr Scott Weese (CAN) have agreed to speak at this symposium, *Hard to swallow – emerging and re-emerging issues in foodborne infection*. Prof Kluytmans' presentation is entitled *MRSA in food products: cause for concern or cause for complacency?* Dr Weese's subject is *Clostridium difficile in food – innocent bystander or serious threat?* Our Symposium at the 18th ECCMID in Barcelona was very well attended and attracted a wide audience and we are sure that these "hot topics" will also generate much interest in Helsinki. At the time of writing, the date and time of the symposium is not known, but we will email the Group membership as soon as this information is available.

Network Corner in Helsinki

As at Barcelona, EFWISG will participate in the **European Network Corner**. Please let us know if you have any ideas for material which we could include in the EFWISG poster.

Annual General Meeting in Helsinki

Members of the Group planning to go ECCMID are also encouraged to attend the **Annual General Meeting** of EFWISG – date and time to follow. Please inform other colleagues with an interest in food- or water-borne infection to come along, too. Currently, we have 131 members from 43 countries, but are always seeking new members, so please take every opportunity to encourage others to join!

Theme Issue of CMI on FWI

We are pleased to report that a short series of mini-reviews relating to foodborne infection will be published in a **theme issue of *Clinical Microbiology and Infection*** in December 2009. Guest-edited by Panayotis Tassios (GR) and Kevin Kerr (UK), this issue will feature papers from Jan Kluytmans and Scott Weese on the topics presented in Helsinki, as well as a third review, *Listeriosis: a resurgent foodborne infection* from Franz Allerberger (AT).

2009 Executive Committee Elections

Nearly two years have passed since EFWISG was established, and under our statutes, **elections to the positions of Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and three other Executive Committee Members** are due. To allow all members of the Group the opportunity to vote, elections will be conducted by electronic ballot. Full details of the election, which will be held in early March, will follow soon.



Material for our website

Our **web pages** are at www.escmid.org/research_projects/study_groups/efwisg/. ESCMID has indicated that it is now possible to add topical material to the pages, such as links to interesting resources (e.g. articles in *Eurosurveillance*). If you have suggestions for additional material for EFWISG's online presence, please let an Executive Committee member know.

Guidelines for safer eating & drinking

Continuing advances in medicine ensure that the number of people who can be classified as immunocompromised is constantly increasing. These individuals are at risk of a wide range of food- and water-borne infections, such as listeriosis and toxoplasmosis. In addition, relatively common infections, such as salmonellosis, which are usually self-limiting in otherwise healthy individuals, may be associated with much more severe disease in immunosuppressed individuals. Furthermore, severely neutropenic persons are at risk of infection from Gram-negative bacteria, like *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*, found in some food items. In recognition of this risk, most healthcare organisations have guidelines on the provision of microbiologically safe food for

immunosuppressed patients. However, these vary markedly from centre to centre, with some adopting an extremely proscriptive approach, whereas others are less stringent in their recommendations.

We therefore propose that EFWISG forms a working party to produce ESCMID-endorsed **consensus guidelines on safer eating and drinking for vulnerable patients** in two versions: one for health professionals, and another for patients and their families. We hope to ensure that the patient version is "user-friendly" by involving lay reviewers in the project. Once finalised, the guidelines would be submitted for publication in *Clinical Microbiology and Infection*. If you are interested in this project, please contact an Executive Committee member.

With kind regards

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