The European Scientific Working group on Influenza (ESWI) is a group of key scientific experts in influenza who have joined forces in the aim to reduce the burden of influenza in Europe:

- Ted van Essen, Amersfoort, The Netherlands
- Gülsah Gabriel, Heinrich-Pette-Institute, Leibniz Institute for Experimental Virology in Hamburg, Germany
- Terho Heikkinen, University of Turku, Finland
- Susanne Herold, University of Giessen Lung Centre, Germany
- Edward C. Hutchinson, University of Glasgow, UK
- Laurence Josset, University of Lyon, France
- Peter Openshaw, Imperial College London, UK
- Ab Osterhaus, Research Center for Emerging Infections and Zoonoses Hannover, Germany
- Roman Prymula, Military Hospital of Hradec Kralove, Czech Republic
- Sylvie van der Werf, Institut Pasteur, Paris, France
- Marco Goeljenbier, Harbour Hospital Rotterdam, The Netherlands

To realize its objective, ESWI has established structural partnerships with influenza stakeholder organizations:
Benefits of flu vaccination for persons with diabetes mellitus: A review

People with diabetes face a higher risk for influenza and its complications. National and international guidelines therefore advise that diabetes patients be annually vaccinated against influenza.

The evidence that underpins these guidelines has long been fragmented and underexposed. Consequently, attention for the impact of influenza on diabetes patients is low and so is the influenza vaccine uptake in this group, despite WHO’s target to routinely vaccinate 75% of all people at high risk. It was therefore high time to assemble all currently available data about the impact of influenza on diabetes patients and to review current influenza prevention strategies. ESWI has undertaken this important endeavour and in its most recent paper (published in Vaccine Journal on 12 September 2017), ESWI has reviewed the scientific base for recommending routine vaccination of diabetes patients against influenza.

www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/28807608
No less than 19 young scientists had entered the 4th ESWI Best Body of Work Award competition. The scientific quality of the submissions was of an exceptionally high level. The Evaluation Committee members fully agreed that it was a great pleasure to see so many talented young flu researchers and to review their work. But it also made their task to assess the applications a complex and difficult one. After thorough deliberation, the Evaluation Committee members decided to award the fourth edition of ESWI’s prize to Dr. Debby van Riel, Erasmus MC Rotterdam, The Netherlands. She received a cash award of €10,000 and an invitation to present at the Sixth ESWI Influenza Conference in Riga.

In light of the quality of their work, several other applicants had been invited to co-chair a scientific session at the 2017 Riga Conference, as indeed, appointing promising scientists as programme session co-chairs is also part of ESWI’s objective to stimulate the careers of promising researchers.

Dr. Debby van Riel was awarded the 4th edition of ESWI’s Influenza Award for Young Scientists

ESWI’s founding father Claude Hannoun celebrates the 2017 Best Body of Work Award Winner Debby van Riel during the 6th ESWI Influenza Conference.
Towards an influenza coalition

ESWI symposium at 2017 WONCA Europe Congress in Prague

ESWI has been working with WONCA Europe (the European branch of the world organization of national colleges and academies of general practitioners) since 2009. Both organizations share the objective to improve the management of influenza by general practitioners during seasonal and pandemic outbreaks of flu. This is urgently needed to solve the paradox where primary care physicians play a crucial role in protecting their patients from influenza infection by providing clear, scientific advice about the benefits of influenza vaccination for at-risk groups. But despite the scientific evidence as well as the efforts to encourage influenza vaccination, the overall vaccination rates among risk groups and healthcare workers remain low.

A systematic overview of all aspects of influenza from the family physicians’ perspective is hence urgently needed and that is exactly why EUROPREV, a WONCA Special Interest Group dedicated to prevention and health promotion, and ESWI joined forces at the occasion of the WONCA 2017 conference in Prague (28 June – 1 July 2017). ESWI and EUROPREV held a joint symposium on 29 June 2017, gathering experts from various disciplines to discuss the crucial role of care physicians in influenza vaccination and to provide an overview of scientific arguments for primary care physicians to get the annual flu vaccine. The symposium was chaired by EUROPREV’s Mateja Bulc and ESWI’s Ted van Essen. The outcome of the meeting will be the basis of a joint statement on the crucial role of care physicians in influenza vaccination.
Representatives of ESWI, APACI, the US National Adult and Influenza Immunization Summit and ISIRV held a Global Influenza Summit Planning Meeting on 11 September 2017 in Riga. The partners agreed on the concept of a 2-day meeting with pandemic preparedness as the theme, to commemorate the outbreak of 1918 Spanish flu, while looking at how to improve on past pandemic experiences.

The end result of the meeting is agreed to be the publication of a road map, listing the steps required to be appropriately prepared for the next influenza pandemic. The Global Influenza Summit will be held in China in November 2018. Discussions are currently ongoing to finalize the programme and the location.
ESWI – in close collaboration with the European Society for Paediatric Infectious Diseases (ESPID) - held its scientific symposium on Influenza Preventing Policies for Children on 14 June 2017 at the Faculty Club of the University of Leuven, Belgium. Participants from 25 countries across the world, including scientists, virologists, paediatricians, family doctors, public health officials and policy makers and the private sector, came together to share the latest scientific findings on child vaccination and vaccine efficacy in children and discuss approaches and best practices.

The main objectives of this symposium were to pave the way towards well-balanced influenza preventing policies for children in Europe and to create awareness and attention for childhood flu vaccination as a priority topic on the public health policy agenda.

Creating a common approach takes time and the symposium should hence be seen as the starting point of a trajectory that will continue to fuel the scientific/policy debate. In the months following the symposium, this trajectory has led to Riga, where the symposium outcome fed into the programme of the Sixth ESWI Influenza Conference, and to Malmö, where ESPID and ESWI will hold a joint symposium on flu vaccination of children at the 36th annual ESPID Congress (30 May 2018).

The easy-to-grasp report of this scientific symposium is available on the ESWI portal website: www.eswi.org/ippc/downloads

Symposium lectures have been videorecorded. All recordings are available on ESWI TV at www.eswi.org/eswi-tv/
Roundtable on Influenza Vaccination of People with Diabetes

On 25 October 2017, the diabetes community joined forces to pave the way towards an improved protection of diabetes patients. In fact, patient organizations, healthcare professionals and academic experts assembled in Leuven, Belgium, for a roundtable discussion organized by the Foundation of European Nurses in Diabetes (FEND) and ESWI.

The roundtable discussions were extremely relevant as influenza vaccine uptake in diabetes patients is low, despite WHO’s target to routinely vaccinate 75% of all people at high risk. Estimations from recent years indicate vaccination rates for diabetes patients between 50% and 62% in the US, but only 10% in Poland and 40% in Germany.

ESWI’s roundtable on influenza vaccination of people with diabetes enjoyed the active participation of:
- Foundation of European Nurses in Diabetes (FEND)
- Primary Care Diabetes Europe (PCDE)
- The International Society for Pediatric and Adolescent Diabetes (ISPAD)
- Immunology of Diabetes Society (IDS)
- Pharmacist Group to the European Union (PGEU)
- The International Diabetes Federation (IDF Europe)

To enhance participation of the worldwide diabetes community, the morning lectures had been made accessible via livestream. 116 viewers from Australia to the USA watched the lectures and were able to participate in the discussions via chatbox. The entire roundtable event (including the panel discussion) had been videotaped. The edited videos are available on the ESWI website (ESWI TV section).

The main take home messages of this important event have now been summarized in this easy-to-grasp fact sheet.
A single injection of the mRNA-LNP vaccine induced high levels of polyfunctional antigen-specific CD4+ T cells.
From 10 – 13 September 2017, the Sixth ESWI Influenza Conference assembled 712 members of the worldwide influenza community in Riga, Latvia. The conference gave the floor to the most renowned scientific experts of the world in order to showcase recent advances in basic science and the control and prevention of influenza, to stimulate the scientific debate on novel, unpublished research data and to advance our understanding of influenza by identifying new research routes.

This was exemplified by the choice of keynote speakers, which included Prof. Peter Palese who addressed the issue of a universal influenza virus vaccine, and Prof. Malik Peiris, who elaborated on the potential threats posed by H5, H7 influenza viruses. Another example is ESWI’s aim to address urgent scientific and social challenges. To that end, a separate scientific session was dedicated to the issue of maternal influenza vaccination. Yet another urgent social need is the risk management and mitigation of epidemic and pandemic threats. In this context, ESWI cooperated with the World Health Organization, where Marie-Paule Kieny organized a session on this particular topic.

The Sixth ESWI Influenza Conference again had two separate programme tracks. The scientific programme showcased the latest scientific achievements in the full spectrum of influenza research from basic to translational science. In keeping with ESWI’s aims to foster the exchange of evidence and practice at the interface of science and health policy, the conference also saw a new edition of the Science Policy Interface (SPI), the separate programme track specifically dedicated to public health officials, which ‘translated’ the newest scientific data into daily policy practice.
Top experts brought a mixture of tailor-made lectures, good practices, case studies and workshops. In seven sessions, they answered questions like: What is the potential impact of the H5N1, H7N9 and H5N8 bird flu viruses in Europe? What can we learn from other disease outbreaks like Zika, MERS and Ebola? Is the influenza vaccine safe for pregnant women? Can and will flu vaccines be improved? Will there ever be a vaccine that protects against all types of flu virus? And what is the future of antiviral flu drugs? The session topics had been arranged in such a way as to maximize the opportunities for interdisciplinary interactions.

Another unique feature of the ESWI Influenza Conferences is their strategy to support young, promising scientists from around the world. Through the Young Scientist Fund, ESWI provided 56 grants to young researchers. Successful grant applicants played an active role in the conference, each presenting their research either orally or in poster format. In addition, young scientists acted as co-chairs during the conference sessions, assisting the session chairs (renowned influenza experts) in selecting oral and poster presentations and in moderating the scientific debate during the conference. Importantly, Wednesday 13 September 2017 opened with a plenary session entirely devoted to the work of promising young scientists. Traditionally, these plenary sessions are highly appreciated in the influenza community, mainly due to their innovative and refreshing nature.
Conference participants came from 72 different countries. The overall majority of participants are Europeans (66%), with an important delegation from the US (15% of the conference participants). The vast majority (63%) of attendees are academics with an interest in influenza research (virology, epidemiology, vaccinology, diagnostics, animal health, mathematic modelling, immunology, public health science, family medicine...), 19% are public health officials (mainly representatives of the various national public health authorities), 15% are young, promising scientists who receive an ESWI scholarship, 2% are conference staff and commercial exhibitors, and 1% are members of the press.
ESWI is well-placed to assist international research consortia in bringing their findings to the heart of the society, emphasizing the importance of their work for the benefit of the people. ESWI is hence a partner in the communication & dissemination work packages of two major EU funded research projects:

**FLUNIVAC** (InFLUenza virus UNIVersal VACcine development program) is a unique consortium of various European SMEs, universities and an industry partner, which aims to pave the way to the development of a universal influenza vaccine. ESWI develops, edits and disseminates the annual FLUNIVAC newsletter to its list of influenza stakeholders.

**PREPARE** (Platform for European Preparedness Against (Re-)emerging Epidemics) is an EU funded network for harmonized large-scale clinical research studies on infectious diseases, prepared to rapidly respond to any severe ID outbreak, providing real-time evidence for clinical management of patients and for informing public health responses. ESWI contributed to the creation of a Virtual Learning Centre as a separate platform and domain. In 2017, ESWI had allocated a prominent slot for the PREPARE satellite symposium at the 6th ESWI Influenza Conference. In fact, PREPARE opened the conference with its scientific contribution on Sunday 10 September 2017.
SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY
ESWI continues to create, collect and disseminate relevant scientific content about influenza with three important objectives:

- to reinforce ESWI’s reputation and increase “brand” awareness
- to increase interaction with target audiences
- to promote ESWI events and increase the number of attendees

ESWI WEB PORTAL
Visitors of the www.eswi.org portal website can browse through our videos on various influenza topics in ESWI TV, get the information they need from our influenza knowledge center, stay informed about ESWI’s triennial influenza conferences, its symposia and roundtables, and the yearly Influenza Summits.

ESWI is determined to expand and update the content on the portal in order to maintain relevance and authority.

ESWI NEWS BULLETIN
ESWI manages and constantly updates a database of some 7,200 influenza stakeholders worldwide. ESWI is ready to use this platform in any flu-related educational project, as it is a highly flexible tool to reach the global flu field in just a few clicks. Another tool in ESWI’s web-based communication strategy is its monthly newsletter. The ESWI News Bulletin offers a selection of influenza-related articles collected from a range of media sources. The Bulletin is hence a cost-effective way to enhance ESWI’s visibility in the influenza community.
2018 will again be an interesting, busy and fascinating year for ESWI. To realize its aims, however, ESWI fully relies on the loyal and active support of its members, partner organizations and sponsoring companies. Their joint forces are the strength of ESWI, allowing the organization to play its unique role in the influenza field.

If you have any questions about the European Scientific Working group on Influenza, please contact:

David De Pooter
ESWI management
e-mail: david.depooter@eswi.org