

In this issue:      ■ Events in 2004      ■ Website      ■ News      ■ Forum members

### 2004 PROGRAMME OF EVENTS

#### TOWARDS BETTER SAFETY ASSESSMENT OF MEDICINAL PRODUCTS: A FORUM PROJECT

Advances in human genomics research, together with the sequencing of the main laboratory animal species, are providing biomedical scientists with an important opportunity to understand the causes of disease and the factors that determine the response to therapy. The safety assessment of medicines remains a major public concern but it will be possible to provide better predictions of the risk of adverse reactions. It is the aim of this Project to survey the current status in the assessment of the safety of medicinal products and to identify scientific opportunities to improve assessment.



Dr Geoffrey Schild, Chairman of the Project (left) and Dr Gwyn Morgan, Scientific Advisor (right) at a working group meeting



Dr John Evans, AstraZeneca, presenting on *Drug withdrawals and animal data* at the second meeting of the Risk-benefit Assessment Working Group

Dr Geoffrey Schild and Dr Gwyn Morgan lead this major Project, which extends from the pre-clinical disciplines involved in early drug development through to the pre-marketing phases of clinical development to “pharmacovigilance” and related activities post-marketing. It brings together some 70 experts from industry, academia and regulatory bodies and aims to produce a draft report for consultation by May 2004.

The remit and the membership list are available on the Academy website at [www.acmedsci.ac.uk](http://www.acmedsci.ac.uk). Forum Members are welcome to attend working group meetings as observers and minutes of the meetings can be sent to interested representatives.

#### NEW TOPICS FOR 2004

A list of new topics suggested by Forum members was discussed at the Advisory Board meetings on 12 September and 8 December 2003. Topics like *Biomarkers of Disease and Disease Susceptibility* and *Who Prescribes?* are still under consideration but the following have now been confirmed:

- **Can Europe compete in biomedical research?** Sir Tom McKillop, Chief Executive of AstraZeneca, will deliver the second Annual Forum Lecture on Wednesday 31 March 2004 at 10 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1. The entry is free of charge.
- **Medicines for Children** – a symposium to be held on 14 June 2004 in London. The symposium will bring together experts from industry, academia and the regulatory authorities. The programme will include four sessions including 1) Requirements and Resources to be chaired by Professor Alasdair Breckenridge, *Chairman of the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency*; 2) Technical, scientific and medical issues to be chaired by Professor Patrick Vallance, *Head of Medicine, University College London*; 3) Practical experience with clinical trials in children to be chaired by Professor Sir Colin Dollery, *Senior Consultant, GlaxoSmithKline*; and 4) Unmet needs and parental concerns to be chaired by Professor Sir Michael Rawlins, *Chairman of the National Institute for Clinical Excellence*.
- **Obesity and Diabetes** – a Medical Science Briefing to be held in autumn 2004. This first briefing may become part of a series aimed at informing the press of the Academy Forum’s view on recent research developments in new diseases. These short events will bring together four experts from academia and industry, and will be followed by a debate.

## ANNUAL MEETING Wednesday 31 March 2004 (16.15-17.30)

The Annual Meeting will be the opportunity for members to meet, assess the Forum's first year of activity and discuss the programme of events for 2005. Members are invited to send a representative to the Annual Meeting and the following Annual Forum Lecture.

*Location:* The Reading Room, The British Academy, 10 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1

## WEBSITE Now available on the Academy website at [www.acmedsci.ac.uk](http://www.acmedsci.ac.uk):

- Remit of the project *Towards Better Safety Assessment of Medicinal Products* and the membership list - in the Forum Programme section at [http://www.acmedsci.ac.uk/f\\_forum.htm](http://www.acmedsci.ac.uk/f_forum.htm)
- The Academy report on *Strengthening Clinical Research* is available on the website at [http://www.acmedsci.ac.uk/f\\_current.htm](http://www.acmedsci.ac.uk/f_current.htm)
- The Academy draft report on *Putting the Neurosciences to work in neurorehabilitation* at [http://www.acmedsci.ac.uk/f\\_current.htm](http://www.acmedsci.ac.uk/f_current.htm)



For the list of Forum Members, please visit: [http://www.acmedsci.ac.uk/f\\_forum.htm](http://www.acmedsci.ac.uk/f_forum.htm)

For the Forum Programme, please visit: [http://www.acmedsci.ac.uk/f\\_forum.htm](http://www.acmedsci.ac.uk/f_forum.htm)

For Academy News, please visit: [http://www.acmedsci.ac.uk/f\\_news.htm](http://www.acmedsci.ac.uk/f_news.htm)

For Academy Current Activities, please visit: [http://www.acmedsci.ac.uk/f\\_current.htm](http://www.acmedsci.ac.uk/f_current.htm)



*Sir John Skehel delivering the keynote lecture on Influenza Surveillance at the Academy's Annual Meeting on 20 November 2003*

## NEWS

- The BioIndustry Association, Medicines Integrated and Wyeth join the Forum membership.
- Sir John Skehel, Chairman of the Forum and Director of the MRC's National Institute for Medical Research, is awarded a Royal Medal by the Royal Society for his pioneering research in virology. He joins an illustrious list of previous Medallists including, among others, the Nobel Prize winners Francis Crick, Frederick Sanger and Max Perutz.
- Several Forum members' representatives formed an 'industry' table at the Academy's Annual Dinner in the prestigious Great Hall at St Bartholomew's Hospital in London.

## FORUM MEMBERS

Acambis  
Advent Venture Partners  
Amersham  
Ardana Bioscience  
ABHI  
ABPI  
Astex Technology  
AstraZeneca  
BBSRC  
BioIndustry Association  
Cambridge Antibody Technology

Cancer Research UK  
Centre for Applied Microbiology  
and Research (CAMR)  
F.Hoffman.La-Roche  
Integrated Medicines  
GlaxoSmithKline  
Merck Sharp & Dohme  
Pfizer  
Renovo  
Wyeth  
Yamanouchi Pharma



*The Academy Dinner, 20 November 2003, The Great Hall, St Bartholomew's Hospital*