



# THE PULSE

Bringing YOU news from UAEM Europe

## AUTUMN EDITION

Welcome to this season's edition of the newsletter! We are covering the ECC handover meeting, the World Health Summit, the European Day of Shame, we are giving a brief introduction to open-source R&D as well as saying goodbye to former members.

The next edition is already in the making, so if you or your chapter want to share something, feel free to send us your content to [uaemeuropenewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:uaemeuropenewsletter@gmail.com).

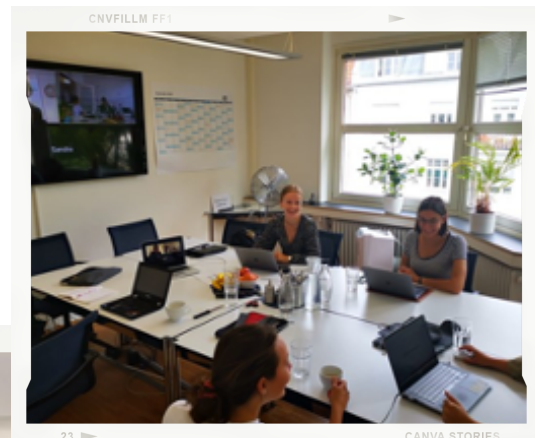
Short Notice: 

UAEM Europe has an Instagram!

Go follow @uaem\_europe to never miss news about UAEM's work again!

## ECC HANDOVER MEETING

On the second weekend of September, old and new members of the European Coordinating Committee (ECC) met up virtually and in person in Munich for the annual Handover Meeting. It was a weekend full of introducing the Newbies to the ECC, getting to know each other, setting up the team's working structure, and planning the upcoming year. We decided that for the next term, we want to empower you to work on the implementation of ETAF, be more approachable for you, encourage exchange between chapters, and strengthen UAEM Europe's advocacy activities. Additionally, the Newbies Sina, Adriane, and Maurice had to do a presentation on a UAEM-related topic. Also, Joanna, a former member of the ECC, joined us to give input on good teamwork practices. A huge thank you again for doing this!



As we were fortunate enough to have an in-person meeting this year, we also used this opportunity to socialize with each other and grow closer as a group. After this weekend we are now highly motivated for this new term and want to successfully tackle the next year with all of you!

## WORLD HEALTH SUMMIT

The World Health Summit is an international conference that has been held in Europe since 2009. This year, six UAEM members from Germany attended the summit in Berlin, and have provided an eye-witness account for us below.

Amid the on-going pandemic, it didn't come as a surprise that vaccine equity was a heavily-debated topic during the conference, with the director-general of the World Health Organization (WHO), Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, once again raising his voice for the patent waiver, stating that 'The pandemic will end when we choose that it will end.'

Government officials and industry spokespersons consider the access to COVID-19 health technologies, and the general COVID response much more positive than the WHO and the attending NGO's. The IFPMA (International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers and Associations) heavily defended tiered- and value-based pricing (see infobox below.)

In addition to COVID, recurring themes including antimicrobial resistance, as well as general access to medicines challenges were also widely discussed. Unfortunately, UAEMers found that critical topics related to intellectual property were only briefly touched upon, if at all.

Overall, our UAEMers engaged in many inspiring discussions, and connected with personalities of global health, highlighting our organisation's mission.

The attendees were able to get the best out of the situation using this pandemic as a chance to elaborate to a stronger WHO, a larger networked global health community, more worldwide cooperation and better preparedness for the next pandemic.



### INFOBOX

#### Tiered pricing:

Prices change due to different categories. A child, for instance, pays less for a cinema ticket than an adult. Or if talking in healthcare terms: low income countries pay less for the COVID-19 vaccines than industrial countries..

#### Value-based pricing:

Value-based pricing is when the price tag is decided based on the product benefits perceived by the consumer, instead of the costs associated with developing the product.





## EUROPEAN DAY OF SHAME



Activists carry coffins down Whitehall ahead of Covid-19 vaccine patent talks

On the 12th of October UAEMers members from the UK joined activists from Global Justice Now, Just Treatment and StopAids, in leading a funeral procession to highlight the deathly impact from COVID-19 pandemic ahead of the crucial discussions on the TRIPS Waiver at the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

The UK, along with the EU and Switzerland continue to perpetuate the harsh impacts of the pandemic by continuing to block the waiver, which was initially proposed by India and South Africa to the WTO last year.

This temporary intervention would waive patents on COVID-19 vaccinations and related technologies, allowing countries around the world to develop immunity to the virus and put an end to the on-going pandemic.

The funeral procession was held to demonstrate the million lives that have already been lost to COVID-19, and thereby call on the UK government to prevent further, unnecessary deaths by voicing their support for the TRIPS waiver now.

# A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO OPEN-SOURCE R&D & PANEL: THE DOOR IS OPEN



## A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO OPEN-SOURCE R&D

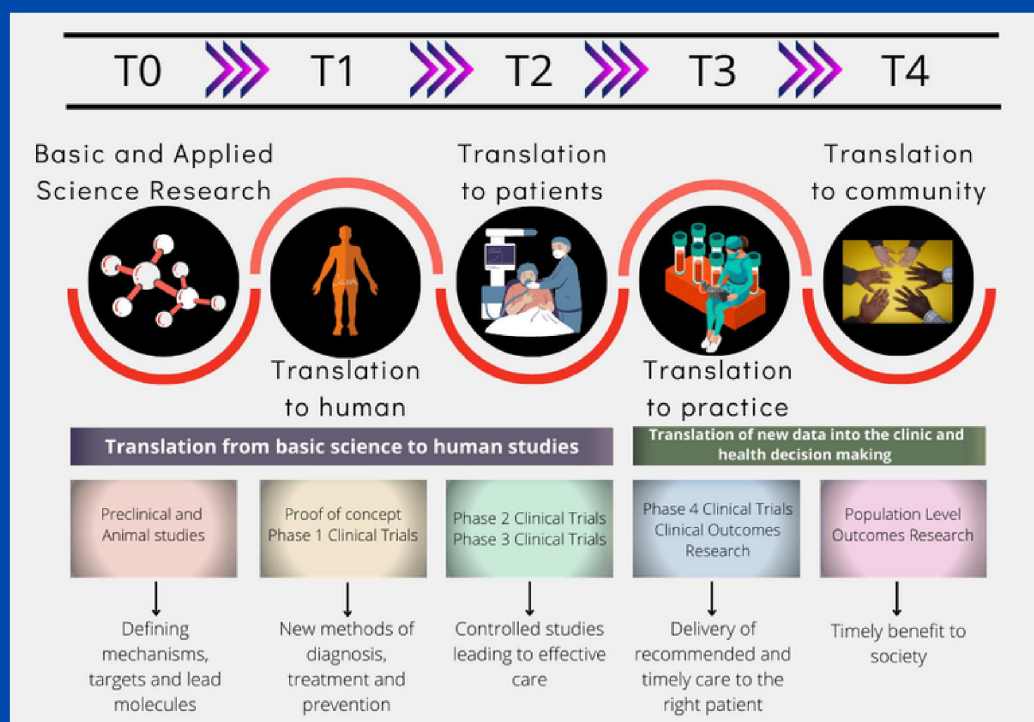


Open-source Research and Development (R&D) is a novel approach that in principle lets scientists across organisations, disciplines, and borders collaborate or jointly solve problems in which they share an interest (1). The concept of open-source research originated as a counterculture movement in the software industry but has diversified into various other fields, including bioinformatics, which is an interdisciplinary field that develops methods and software tools to analyse and understand large biological data.

The boost in technology and digitization of data has facilitated the development of several research tools to identify molecular targets or model protein interactions to aid in creating new drugs. However, the field of biology is inherently different from software development and therefore adopting the open source approach in biology has unique obstacles. The development process of drugs and healthcare technologies is mired in regulatory requirements and complex intellectual property rights. This not only increases the cost of production in terms of time and money, but also makes it harder to meet the legal standards for others to do research on already patented innovation.



### RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT PATHWAY <sup>[2]</sup>



THE DOOR IS OPEN: CAN OPEN-SOURCE R&D IMPROVE ACCESS TO MEDICINES?





The figure above depicts the generic pathway of healthcare research and development. The R&D process is “sequential” and “complementary” so that each successive invention builds upon its predecessors, and different research lines can lead to potential innovations, especially in the early stages of the process (3). It has been observed that open-source sectors innovate faster than proprietary sectors, because they share inputs and focus on quality of the product rather than profit (4). Patent protection can essentially hamper development by eliminating the possibility of shared inputs and ‘healthy’ competition. In order to superimpose the concept of open-source R&D on the current profit-driven market, it is helpful to categorise the drug R&D stages into either of the following two categories:



(i) ‘Knowledge-based’ work which involves identifying targets, understanding metabolic networks, or designing clinical trials and disease models, and



(ii) ‘Rule-based’ activity, which is more tightly regulated as it entails conformity to regulations, organisation, discipline, and implementation.

Knowledge-based work mostly requires intelligence and intuition, but little infrastructure and is therefore ideally suited for the open-source model, whereas Rule-based work requires physical assets such as laboratories, equipment, patients and so on (1).

Public-Private Partnerships aim to bridge the gap between these two aspects of R&D. These collaborations between chemists, biologists, clinicians, drug developers and other researchers have created a new low-cost business model by adopting the concept of open-source and combining it with outsourcing. The staffing is usually much smaller than other organisations and a Scientific Advisory Group oversees the project with backing and funding from other non-profit entities. They have shown promising results in developing treatments for some Neglected Tropical Diseases (5). Despite the progress made by this method and others there is still a huge disparity in access to healthcare and essential medicines between countries and populations and hence the need for a more sustainable, accessible, and ethical model of R&D.

**THE DOOR IS OPEN:  
CAN OPEN-SOURCE R&D IMPROVE ACCESS TO MEDICINES?**

To know more about open-source R&D and how you could adopt it into your own practice, join Universities Allied for Essential Medicines (UAEM) and Drugs for Neglected Diseases initiative (DNDi) for an online panel discussion exploring how open source R&D can be utilised to improve accessibility to medical products and drive innovation based on global health needs.

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/the-door-is-open-can-open-source-rd-improve-access-to-medicines-registration-168165275867>

THE DOOR IS OPEN: CAN OPEN-SOURCE R&D IMPROVE ACCESS TO MEDICINES?



## REFERENCES

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2. Fernandez-Moure JS. Lost in translation: The gap in scientific advancements and clinical application. *Front Bioeng Biotechnol.* 2016;4(JUN):1-6.
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4. Tesoriere A, Balletta L. A dynamic model of open source vs proprietary R&D. *Eur Econ Rev.* 2017;94:221-39.
5. Towse, A. & Renowden, O. in *Combating Diseases Associated with Poverty: Financing Strategies for Product Development and the Potential Role of Public-Private Partnerships* (eds Widdus, R. & White, K.) [online], <[http://www.globalforumhealth.org/filesupld/ippph\\_cd/06.PDF](http://www.globalforumhealth.org/filesupld/ippph_cd/06.PDF)> (Initiative on Public-Private Partnerships for Health, London, 2004)

## PANEL SUMMARY: THE DOOR IS OPEN

'THE DOOR IS OPEN: Can open source R&D improve access to medicines' was a virtual panel event covering the benefits of this approach, the barriers that face effective open source R&D, and how people working at any stage of the R&D pipeline can use open source approaches in their work. Our panelists had backgrounds in policy, research and touched on how open source R&D has been used in the COVID-19 pandemic, and how we can apply lessons learned in the pandemic to all medicines, vaccines and diagnostics in the future.

The diversity of panelists' expertise made for a varied and engaging discussion, with a range of points of view on even the fundamentals of what open source R&D really means.

This led to a productive discussion and proved very popular with attendees. It would be interesting to see whether any of the points made can be used to ignite further discussions in UAEM chapters or in the professional world.





## RECOGNISING MEMBERS IN UAEM EUROPE: SAYING THANK YOU TO OUR OUT-GOING LEADERSHIP REPRESENTATIVES

# ECC

### NATALIE RHODES



During her time on the ECC, Natalie was both a hard-working team member and an experienced mentor. She first joined UAEM at Maastricht University in 2018 and in the following year became the chapter's Policy Coordinator. She was heavily invested in the addition of A2M topics into course curriculums and started the ETAF implementation at her university.

She graduated with a masters in Global Health and continued her passion through her work in London. While on the ECC, she headed the COVID-19 Funding Tracker and was able to represent UAEM to a global audience. Natalie enriched the work on the ECC by bringing her knowledge, enthusiasm and vision to the committee. Her advice and ideas will be missed sorely, but we are excited to see where her path in the Global Health world is going to lead!

### ANJA WIEMERS

Anja is an encouraging, thoughtful, and attentive UAEM member, and friend. She joined UAEM in 2017 and quickly took on responsibilities by, first, supporting the team with communications, and then leading the Maastricht Chapter as a president. At the same time, Anja joined the European Coordination Committee in 2019 and whilst being active at a local chapter level, also engaged in the multinational sphere. Currently, she is part of the Executive Committee of UAEM. After finishing her medical studies at Maastricht University, Anja currently studies Global Health at the Karolinska Institutet in Stockholm. The UAEM community, in connection with the communal feeling of purpose and social impact, were and are some of the main reasons why Anja loves to be an UAEMer. With an open ear to listen and open arms to welcome new and old faces, Anja perfectly combines a passion for the A2M movement with laughter and warmth.



## FLORA WIEGAND



Flora has always been one of the most energetic and happy people on the ECC. She is always surrounded by a positive aura, loves laughing and is always good for a quick & refreshing energiser!

Academically, she was always particularly interested and active in the field of antimicrobial resistance and represented the ECC on many conferences throughout her time on the ECC. She was very passionate about forming partnerships with like-minded organizations and did a lot of work in cooperation with the European Alliance. Further, she was very active in the organization of our annual Access-2-Medicines (A2M) week for our members.

## EMCOM

As we had our handover of the Empowerment Committee (EmCom) this summer, we have to say goodbye to two of our members, Jess and Daphne.

**Daphne** worked with EmCom for the past term, in which she was driven by making resources and information more accessible and understandable for all of our members. We thank her for her creative thinking and her out-of-box ideas.

**Jess** started with EmCom three years ago, in the past two years she led the team as a chair. With her dedication, hard work and creativity she transformed EmCom into the body it is today. She showed outstanding leadership skills and knew how to connect with people on a personal level.

Working with both of you has been truly inspiring and delightful. Thank you for bringing all the fun, laughter and deep discussions into our calls. We are grateful that we found friends on the way. It is difficult for us to let you both go and we know that it is difficult for you to let EmCom go. But your impact is truly long-lasting and will live on with the team!

We will miss you and wish you all the best for your future steps!



# BOARD

LEONARD HESS



Thank you to Leo and Charlotte who have been in the UAEM Europe Board Since April 2019.

Charlotte, originally from the Maastricht Chapter, became our chief grant writer, amidst running Chairs calls, allowing for much-needed connection between the leadership bodies. She did it all with consistency, attention to detail and great humour!

Leo, originally from the Hamburg chapter, was a much appreciated member of the board due to his measured thoughtfulness. He became an expert in German visa applications, notaries and banking systems for us!

It has been a privilege to work with them both and watch them both on their journeys to becoming doctor's.



CHARLOTTE MENART

## JOINING UAEM LEADERSHIP BODIES ECC AND EMCOM ELECTIONS

The EmCom and ECC are looking for creative and passionate UAEMers to apply for the upcoming elections.

You can be part of our leadership and take an active role in driving UAEM's work in Europe. You will help us ensure that UAEM's work is successful, since the more people we are, the more we are able to achieve.

When working with us, you will definitely learn valuable leadership and project management skills on the way. And the best part: have lots of fun working in very motivated teams!

Not sure what we are doing exactly? Get to know us:

- Check out the Instagram posts we made: for EmCom, for ECC
- Find information about the two bodies on our UAEM Europe Chapter Handbook
- For all your burning questions there will be a Q&A webinar on Wednesday, the 15th of December at 8 pm CET. Register here.

You can find the application form attached, applications are open until the 20th of December.

Please send your application

- for EmCom to [emcom@essentialmedicine.org](mailto:emcom@essentialmedicine.org)
- for ECC to [ecc@essentialmedicine.org](mailto:ecc@essentialmedicine.org)

WE ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO HEARING FROM AND  
WORKING TOGETHER WITH YOU!