

**Global Communications and
Collaboration in Toxicology**
**9th Congress of Toxicology in Developing Countries and
XIX Congresso Brasileiro de Toxicologia**
Natal Convention Center
Tuesday, November 10, 2015
12:30 – 14:00

Overview and Minutes

Organizers

International Union of Toxicology (IUTOX)
Hispanic Organization of Toxicologists (HOT)
(HOT is a Special Interest Group of the Society of Toxicology)
All are invited

With a growing number of toxicology societies forming around the world, it's ever more important that we all work together to promote the science of toxicology and innovate to solve common problems. Increasingly available technology offers new opportunities and resources to communicate and collaborate across time zones on a wide range of timely issues. The purpose of this networking discussion is to raise awareness of communication efforts already underway by our member societies, discuss how and if these programs and resources can be more effective and widely available, and finally, what opportunities exist to encourage and facilitate future communication among all IUTOX member societies.

Panel:

Elaine Faustman, IUTOX Secretary-General and Chair, Education Committee
Emanuela Corsini, IUTOX Councilor and Chair, Communications Committee
Silvia B.M. Barros, SBTtox Member, HOT Councilor
Ofelia Olivero, HOT Past President; SOT Special Interest Group Liaison, SOT Councilor

Attendees:

Fiona Sewell, United Kingdom	Carolina Guzman, Spain
Natalie Burden, United Kingdom	Adriana Haas, Argentina
Vesna Matovic, Serbia	Fernanda Coleraus Silva, Brazil
Gisela A. Umbuzeiro, Brazil	Arina du Plessis, South Africa
Rafael Buralli, Brazil	Vanessa de Moura Sá Rocha, Brazil
Peter Goering, USA	Javier Perera Rios, México
Braulio Jimenez, USA	Jessica E.S.P. Silveira, Brazil
Lijie Fu, China	Betzabet Quintanilla-Vega, Mexico
Songsak Srianujata, Thailand	Norma Perez Herrera, Mexico
Pablo Olivares, Chile	Herman Autrup, Denmark
Fernanda Cavieres, Chile	Donna Breskin, USA

Minutes:

1. Silvia Barros welcomed everyone to the meeting and invited attendees to introduce themselves.
2. Emanuela Corsini highlighted IUTOX communication activities especially the newsletter, which is published three times per year in February, June and October. She stressed that IUTOX invites all member societies to submit their news and information for publication in the newsletter and is traditionally the best way for IUTOX to collect and disseminate information across all societies.
3. Elaine Faustman provided an overview of IUTOX, which serves as the Union for 63 member societies from nearly as many countries. She reviewed numerous IUTOX member societies that serve as partners to host risk assessment training, ICT and CTDC meetings, and select courses. Elaine stated that an important IUTOX goal is to raise the profile of toxicology and toxicologists in countries where toxicology is under-represented.
4. Ofelia Olivero reviewed the purpose of the Hispanic Organization of Toxicologists (HOT), which is a Special Interest Group of the Society of Toxicology (SOT). HOT publishes a newsletter, *Toxenlaces*, six times per year to collect and disseminate important toxicological events and issues to international Spanish and Portuguese-speaking scientific communities. HOT also hosts a website and works with sister groups around the world. HOT places a strong priority on mentoring and makes available travel awards to encourage a “community of learning.” She reported that HOT and IUTOX have been active participants in the SOT Global Coffee hosted at the last several SOT Annual Meetings. The global coffee has provided a forum to brainstorm ways to improve information sharing among toxicology societies around the world. She noted that a goal of this meeting is to identify ways to implement programs across member societies in support of education and communication efforts.

5. Brainstorming--Implementation Ideas

- a. *General comment: How can we help small groups spread information on a local level in a way that will be understood and address local issues?*
- b. Increase HOT outreach efforts to encourage involvement and expand base of active societies.
- c. Can IUTOX advertise a “help desk” to serve as the central location to share information and resources across societies to answer frequently asked questions such as how to find visiting scholar and exchange programs, what is the availability of CE courses and other toxicology academic programs, where can curricula development models be found, where to look for funding and research study grants, etc.
- d. Can HOT webinars be downloaded and made available to the public at a later date?

- e. Suggested webinar topics: How to write grants and other relevant topics on finding funding.
- f. Suggested professional development webinar topics: How to find a mentor and how to get help with publishing journal articles.
- g. More on mentorship which was identified as a topic of high importance. Can Skype and You Tube be used to produce training videos for mentors? Should SOT Annual Meetings and IUTOX Congresses include sessions for faculty (and others) such as *How to be a Successful Mentor* and *Mentoring Mentors*. The point was made that mentoring is different in a work setting where professional development is the goal as opposed to mentoring in an academic research-focused environment where the student's advisor must be involved to prevent offering the student conflicting advice.

6. Brainstorming-How to Share Information: Technology, Resources, Courses and Meetings

- a. *General comment: What moral obligations do scientists have to share information and knowledge? If there's a commitment to equal access to science across all nations, the need is great to find ways to advance such information.*
- b. Some participants shared a preference for small, single-focused meetings.
- c. Short webinars and you tube videos are appropriate and accessible for many viewers with limited financial resources and time.
- d. Science Slam in Germany has been a very effective tool to engage scientists/new audience.
- e. Can partners in industry share high quality videos or other technology formats they've developed to address a variety of current/timely issues?
- f. Can courses on specialized topics be replicated or repeated with customization for regional use?
- g. Can fact sheets be developed (FAQs) for use in times of crisis with the idea of sharing existing information, but not providing a position paper on the issue.
- h. Identify countries that provide open access to their journals, which opens up an excellent path to advanced scientific research and information. Brazil is one such example, however, the extent of free access beyond Brazil's borders was not clear.
- i. Do member societies need (want) training on risk communication and how to take and communicate positions on controversial and non-controversial topics? Large associations may be able to share examples of such information.
- j. More on the question of societies managing communications on controversial topics, which stimulated further discussion. Peter Goering was asked about the SOT approach to writing position papers or providing a response to a specific "hot topic." Dr. Goering replied that SOT will either provide a response independently or call on other respected organizations to seek their advice and counsel before deciding whether or not to provide a public comment. Elaine Faustman was asked if IUTOX can help societies write position papers. Elaine responded that IUTOX has limited resources to

be responsive to its large membership and the variety of viewpoints they represent. Elaine suggested that societies look to resources closer to home that would be in a better position to understand the nuances of a local or regional issue.

7. Improving Communication: Specific Recommendations

- a. *General comment: How do societies make the information they want to share with the public relevant and easily accessible?*
- b. Post information on websites by topic to make it easier to access and identify resources.
- c. Harness social media and determine international applicability of vehicles such as Twitter (which is working well with a young audience). Can IUTOX create and maintain a presence on Facebook and LinkedIn?
- d. ResearchGate has gained popularity as a means of easy access to authors to request and share scientific research and information. Should societies promote this tool? The following statistics were noted by a participant: ResearchGate and LinkedIn are used by 50% of scientists and 60% of scientists use FaceBook.

8. Next Steps

- a. IUTOX will disseminate minutes/meeting summary to the participants.
- b. IUTOX and HOT will report on the goals and recommendations of the meeting through their respective communication vehicles.
- c. IUTOX and HOT will work together to identify which action items noted in the report can be adopted immediately and which can be moved ahead by evaluating the necessary planning and resources.
- d. IUTOX and HOT have had preliminary discussions to host a similar session at the ICTXIV meeting in Merida, Mexico in October, 2016.