

## **Press Release for the 39<sup>th</sup> PDR Annual General Meeting**

The Pharma Documentation Ring (PDR) held its 39th Annual General Meeting in Berlin from 24-26 September 1997. The PDR is an association whose members consist of representatives from the scientific information departments of, currently 26, R&D-based pharmaceutical corporations, the latter now account for almost half of the total global turnover (\$225 billion) of ethical drugs in 1996. This year's successful meeting, excellently organized by Schering AG, was attended by some 40 delegates from all member companies. Merck & Co and Hoffmann La Roche attended for the first time.

An intensive exchange of experience in all major areas of information science ensued, some selected highlights were:

All PDR companies have already introduced, or about to launch, intranet technology to enhance corporate information management processes; besides the use of intranet technology as standardized, user-friendly, front-ends to corporate databases and other services, some 90% of

PDR companies plan to migrate their CD-ROM applications to an intranet environment, to overcome the known problems associated with networking CD-ROMs

The PDR "Intranet Task Force" found a relatively slow uptake by publishers and database producers to the request that they should provide an ample range of important database services e.g. drug indexes, pharmacopoeias in formats suitable for corporate intranets - at realistic prices

Increasing availability of electronic journals (currently ca. 350) but the situation is very fragmented due to the different approaches made by producers with too many discrete sources, varying pricing structures and need to negotiate separate contracts with the wide range of suppliers

Improved timeliness of pharmaceutical patent information from the main database producers - Chemical Abstracts Service and Derwent Publications Ltd. - due, at least in part, to work conducted by the PDR Patent co-ordinators

Markedly increased interest by companies in the area of competitive intelligence

Special "PDR TRIP-Fulcrum Initiative" session, which focussed on the need for a continuation of support for the TRIP text retrieval system beyond Dec. 1999. An encouraging response was received from owner (Fulcrum Inc.) of the TRIP software shortly before the AGM. A follow-up meeting with Fulcrum Inc. is planned for November 1997 to clarify the situation.

The 1997 survey on licensed-in Drug Development Product Files within the 26 PDR member companies indicated that the Pharmaprojects file (PJB) now leads with 23 installations followed by R&D Focus(IMS) with 19, MDDR(Prous/MDL) and R&D Insight(ADIS) both having 14 installations, the latter file having doubled its customer base within the PDR over the last year. Several PDR companies are now testing the IDdb File from Current Drugs.

The PDR thanks CAS (Chemical Abstracts Service) for responding to their urgent request to provide specialized database producers of the above type with CAS Registry Numbers and chemical structures in suitable formats for in-house use, thereby ensuring that top quality, accurate chemical structures enter these files on pharmaceutical development products. This should help alleviate the present QA problems associated with these sources. In fact, the same

PDR survey placed currency of data and coverage and accuracy of chemical structures at the top of their list of priorities for these files, shortly ahead of an improved CAS Registry Number coverage. There was also concern about the reliability of the development status information in the different files and a wide variation on the one product was often found in these sources. A possible activity for the PDR in 1998 will be to analyse the overall accuracy of these different sources

A special PDR Meeting is planned for 1998, focussing on: Electronic Journals/Document Delivery Services

A proposal for the new PDR Board for the 1997-99 period was approved by members:  
Sandy Mullen (Bayer AG), Muriel Levenbach (Solvay Duphar B.V.)  
David McNeillie (Zeneca Pharmaceuticals), Hans-Ulrich HauBermann (Knoll AG)

The 40th PDR AGM, to be held on 30th Sept. - 2nd October 1998 in Montpellier, will be hosted by Sanofi.

The PDR survey conducted amongst members at the recent Berlin meeting indicated a very high level of relevant as well quality presentations by delegates. A very pragmatic approach to the different topics was strongly evident, helping to make these AGMs one of the annual highlights of the information scene in the pharmaceutical sector. A report on last year's PDR AGM can be found in the journal -Drug News and Perspectives, 10 (1) 61 - 64 (1997).

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