



Putting patients first

Five global healthcare organizations sign Consensus Framework for Ethical Collaboration

On 20 January 2014, a joint event was hosted by the International Alliance for Patients' Organizations (IAPO), International Council of Nurses (ICN), International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers and Associations (IFPMA), International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) and the World Medical Association (WMA) in Geneva to introduce and sign the Consensus Framework for Ethical Collaboration between Patients' Organizations, Healthcare Professionals and the Pharmaceutical Industry. The keynote address was given by Dr. Edward Kelley, Director, Service Delivery and Safety, Health Systems and Innovation Cluster at the World Health Organization, and was followed by statements by senior representatives from IAPO, ICN, IFPMA, FIP and WMA. The Consensus Framework was formally adopted in a signing ceremony.

About the Consensus Framework

The Consensus Framework aims to complement the various national, regional and global codes and guidelines and to serve as a model for similar joint initiatives between patients' organizations, healthcare professionals and pharmaceutical industry associations at the national level. The Consensus Framework and accompanying resources are intended to serve as a toolkit for any organization (e.g. associations, companies, and alliances) that wish to develop their own policies. The Consensus Framework does not aim to be comprehensive or binding and has no formal enforcement mechanism.

The Consensus Framework is the result of a dialogue which began in 2011 between IAPO, ICN, IFPMA, FIP, and WMA.

The Consensus Framework outlines some key areas that should be considered by all partners to help guide ethical collaborations at the individual and organizational levels, and encompasses a shared commitment of organizations representing patients, healthcare professionals, and the pharmaceutical industry to continually improve global health and ensure, in collaboration with other stakeholders, that all patients receive appropriate treatment.



Introducing the event, **Ms. Joanna Groves**, CEO of IAPO, said that the Consensus Framework demonstrated a common commitment to professional integrity as well as addressed the need to promote ethical

interactions worldwide. It is based on the shared values and principles currently found in the codes or guidelines of each signatory partner. It also contains four overarching principles: Putting Patients First; Supporting Ethical Research and Innovation; Ensuring Independence and Ethical Conduct; and Promoting Transparency and Accountability.



Dr. Kelley congratulated IAPO, ICN, IFPMA, FIP and WMA for taking the initiative of developing the Consensus Framework and said that while it provides a link to existing codes and guidelines, one of its

strengths is that it also addresses new concerns relating to ethics in health research and healthcare. In this sense, the Consensus Framework “can be considered as an updated complement to the 1988 WHO Ethical Criteria for Medicinal Drug Promotion.” Kelley also highlighted the importance of “putting patients first” and recognizing their role in healthcare, R&D, the global debate on health priorities and equitable access to safe treatments, and in promoting ethical conduct in health research.

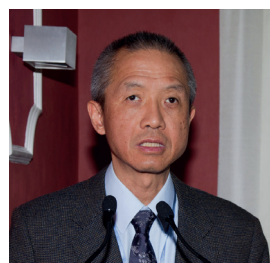
In recent years, WHO has supported many initiatives promoting transparency such as the Medicines Transparency Alliance (MeTA). WHO also announced that two further initiatives related to the 3rd Global Patient Safety Challenge of the World Alliance for Patient Safety will be launched during 2014-2015. Kelley echoed an

earlier message by Marie-Paule Kieny, WHO Assistant Director-General for Health Systems and Innovation, by encouraging all organizations involved to examine ways to develop monitoring mechanisms that support the principles contained in the framework agreement.



Dr. Otmar Kloiber, Secretary General of WMA said that in recent years healthcare has become more effective but also more complex. Patient care now requires a higher degree of cooperation between health

professionals, as well as with industries that provide medicines, technologies and services. To be effective, healthcare requires trust and confidence in what health professionals do for their patients. Providing care also requires a team effort and cooperation must be based on transparency, accountability and professionalism. He added that caring and ethics were not in themselves enough and that medicine needs scientific research to provide new solutions for healthier societies.



Mr. Kin-ping Tsang, Chair of IAPO, said that his organization represents around 365 million patients across the world and is committed to achieving the best possible outcomes by putting the patient first and achieving

greater transparency. While each signatory partner is responsible for its own code of practice or respective guidelines, it is nonetheless clear that health outcomes are improved when regular information-sharing takes place between all partners. This broad-based consensus framework applied across much of the healthcare community to include interactions involving patients, nurses, pharmacists, doctors, and the healthcare industry. Echoing an earlier comment by Joanna Groves, he said that navigating the healthcare system could be very challenging for patients; therefore, patients need to trust that the care they received is based on accurate information. He added that each partner has their own role and responsibility in the health sector and should design and deliver the appropriate service to meet patient needs.



Mr. Russell Williams,
Chair of the IFPMA Code
Compliance Network
(CCN) & President of
Rx&D Canada, said that
the Consensus Framework
promotes partnerships
on behalf of patients and

will lead to increased interactions between medical professionals and the healthcare industry. This, in turn, will eventually lead to better treatments and better outcomes for patients. The Consensus Framework provides an opportunity to promote an atmosphere of trust leading to stronger relationships among health partners and more sustainable health systems. He added that the framework confirms ethical principles shared by IAPO, ICN, IFPMA, FIP, and WMA to the broader healthcare community. In his concluding remarks, Mr. Williams took the opportunity to challenge all jurisdictions and associations to build on this framework and replicate these efforts at the regional and national levels to support partnerships that deliver greater patient benefits and high quality patient care.

Following the partner statements, discussions followed on the role of health system strengthening and innovation as an economic drivers and whether the Consensus Framework could stimulate innovative practices. Participants stressed the important role of the healthcare sector in economies and that the return on investment in innovation in this sector is high. Innovation is the lifeblood of quality healthcare delivery and the outputs of innovation include new tools and greater effectiveness that benefit patients worldwide.

Comments about the Consensus Framework

“More than ever, healthcare delivery requires multiple interactions between patients, healthcare professionals, industry and other stakeholders.”

Luc Besancon, General Secretary and CEO of the International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP).

“By signing this document, each organization commits to open, transparent and informed decision-making and action, resulting in clear accountability in our actions.”

David Benton, Chief Executive Officer of the International Council of Nurses.

“In seeking to promote cooperation among health professionals, the Consensus Framework is also facilitating cooperation in ethical research and innovation.”

Otmar Kloiber, Secretary General of the World Medical Association.



Resources

The Consensus Framework for Ethical Collaboration between Patients' Organizations, Healthcare Professionals and the Pharmaceutical Industry is accessible at a http://www.ifpma.org/fileadmin/content/Publication/2014/Consensus_Framework-vF.pdf.

The related codes and guidelines referenced in the Consensus Framework are available on respective websites of IAPO, ICN, IFPMA, FIP, WMA.

About signatory partners



About IAPO:

IAPO is the only global alliance representing patients of all nationalities across all disease areas

and promoting patient-centered healthcare worldwide. Our members are patients' organizations working at the local, national, regional and international levels to represent and support patients, their families and care givers. IAPO has over 200 members which span over 60 countries and 60 disease areas and through its membership represents an estimated 365 million patients worldwide.



About ICN:

The International Council of Nurses (ICN) is a federation of more than 130 national nurses associations representing the millions of nurses worldwide. Operated by nurses and

leading nursing internationally, ICN works to ensure quality care for all and sound health policies globally.



About FIP:

The International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) is the global federation of national associations of pharmacists and pharmaceutical scientists and is in official

relations with the World Health Organization (WHO). Through its 126 Member Organisations FIP represents and serves more than three million practitioners and scientists around the world. Its mission is to improve global health by advancing pharmacy practice and science to enable better discovery, development, access to and safe use of appropriate, cost-effective, quality medicines worldwide.



About IFPMA:

IFPMA represents the research-based pharmaceutical companies and associations across the globe. The research-based pharmaceutical industry's 1.3 million

employees research, develop and provide medicines and vaccines that improve the life of patients worldwide. Based in Geneva, IFPMA has official relations with the United Nations and contributes industry expertise to help the global health community find solutions that improve global health.



About WMA:

The World Medical Association (WMA) is an international organization representing physicians. The organization was created to ensure the independence of physicians and

to work for the highest possible standards of ethical behavior and care by physicians, at all times. The purpose of the WMA is to serve humanity by endeavoring to achieve the highest international standards in Medical Education, Medical Science, Medical Art and Medical Ethics, and Health Care for all people in the world.

Consensus Framework Principles

The Consensus Framework for Ethical Collaboration is characterized by four overarching principles:

Put Patients First; Support Ethical Research and Innovation; Ensure Independence and Ethical Conduct; and Promote Transparency and Accountability. It declares that the concerned organizations should work as partners to ensure that collaboration between patients, healthcare professionals, and pharmaceutical companies support patients and their caregivers in making the best decision regarding their health treatment. It is underpinned by the premise that all partners working in healthcare have a right and responsibility to collaborate to improve healthcare access and delivery. Establishing partnerships will aim to deliver greater patient benefits.

The Consensus Framework further states that, among others, all human subject research must have a legitimate scientific purpose, should be aimed at improving health outcomes, and be ethically conducted. No financial benefit or benefit in kind should be sought, offered, provided or accepted in exchange for prescribing, recommending, dispensing or administering medicines by any party. The purpose and focus of all symposia, congresses, scientific or professional meetings for healthcare professionals and patient organization-ns should be to provide scientific or educational information. Business arrangements and professional relationships between partners should not inappropriately influence their practice, compromise their professional integrity or their obligations to patients.

Partners are encouraged to ensure a proper environment for ethics, including developing their own self-regulatory codes and principles for ethical collaboration and interactions and ensuring their effective implementation. Systems to monitor and report breaches of the set standards should be established to support ethical practices and ensure accountability both at the institutional and individual levels. These may include, for example, public statements detailing collaborative agreements and external review mechanisms.