



## CONSTITUTION

The International Medication Safety Network (IMSN) is an international network of safe medication practice centres established with the aim of improving patient safety. This is achieved by operating medication error reporting programmes and producing guidance to minimise preventable harms from medicine use in practice.

### Article 1 - Purpose

Acted by the "Salamanca Declaration to promote safe medication practices globally" in November 2006, this network aims to promote cooperation between independent, multidisciplinary safe medication practice centres whose primary focus is preventing medication errors.

The purpose of the Network shall be:

- a. to encourage and further the development of independent medication error reporting programmes and safe medication practice centres globally.
- b. to promote international exchange of good-quality information concerning safe medication practices;
- c. to engage in whatever ancillary activities the Executive Committee considers desirable for the furtherance of these primary purposes.

### Article 2 - Definitions

"the Network" The International Medication Safety Network

"the Member" a safe medication practice centre, fulfilling the membership criteria of IMSN. A member Centre will be represented by its Head or by another designated person from its staff.

"the Executive Committee" The governing body of the Network constituted as hereinafter described. May be referred to as "the Committee."

"OGM" Ordinary General Meeting of members.

"EGM" Extraordinary General Meeting of members.

"Safe Medication Practices Centre" or "Centre"

An independent programme including an active medication error reporting and learning system which: maintains fully operational a database of voluntarily submitted reports of medication errors; provides content expertise to assure analysis of error reports, communicates medication safety information and provides risk reduction and prevention programmes for the healthcare community and patients. Their staffs include healthcare professionals working within the healthcare system in the corresponding country.

"Independent" A Safe Medication Practices Centre is independent if it fulfils the following criteria:

- a. it is run by a national governmental, charitable or other organisation that is not for profit;
- b. its organisational structure and financial resources are capable of guaranteeing the organisation's independence.
- c. it is operated independent of, and free of influence from, the pharmaceutical industry or related healthcare industry.
- d. its conflict of interest policies and transparencies are in place to prevent situations where the personal interests of individuals or outside organizations are in conflict with the patients' interests.

### Article 3 - Official languages

The Network's official language is English.  
The English version of the Articles and Rules of the Network is definitive.

### Article 4 - Member status

#### 4.1 Conditions of and procedure for admission to membership

4.1.1 Safe Medication Practices Centres fulfilling all the following requirements may apply for membership of the Network:

- that they provide evidence of expertise, commitment, and interest in medication error prevention, research and prevention; maintain fully operational a database of submitted reports of medication errors; provide content expertise to assure analysis of error reports, communicate medication safety information and provide risk reduction and prevention activities for the healthcare community and patients;
- that they fully and unreservedly accept the Articles of the Network, in particular Articles 1 and 2, and its Rules;
- that they have procedures and organisation that will, in the opinion of the Committee or the Network in General Meeting, ensure their independence and the quality of their content as defined in Article 2 above;
- that they timely contribute to the annual "Global Report on Safe Medication Practices";
- that their bulletins or publications contain no advertising relating to therapeutic or diagnostic activities;
- that they shall allow the quality of their organisation and the independence of their editorial system to be periodically assessed by the Network as necessary.
- that they will inform the Committee of any changes in structure, working, financing or organisation likely to modify their independence or their quality;
- that they will pay the annual membership fee as set out in Article 8 hereto.

#### 4.1.2

- a. Applications for admission shall be submitted in writing to the Committee.
- b. The Committee shall examine applications for admission, check that the applicant members fulfil the requirements and give the undertakings specified in Article 5.1.1.

- c. In assessing the application, the Committee may, as and when it considers appropriate, consult other competent people.
- d. The Committee shall decide to grant or refuse membership.
- e. The applicant member shall be informed of the decision to grant or refuse it membership within one month of the decision being taken.
- f. The Committee shall report in detail on successful and unsuccessful applications for membership, and of any resignations of or removals from membership, at each OGM.
- g. If the Committee is not able to reach a two-thirds majority in favour either of granting or refusing membership, or if the Committee refuses membership and the applicant so requests, the Committee shall put the matter before the next OGM, which shall have the final say in all disputes relating to admission to membership.

#### 4.2 Rights of members

- a. The right of using the IMSN logo.  
Associate members cannot use the IMSN logo.
- b. To use the IMSN communication network.
- c. To have the access to the full website, including password protected areas if any.
- d. Individual members must not act on behalf of the IMSN without the approval of the Committee.

#### 4.3 Loss of status of member of the Network

##### 4.3.1

- a. The status of each member of the Network shall be regularly reviewed by the Committee, at least once every six years, and the Committee shall in particular check whether the member continues to fulfil all the requirements and undertakings specified in Article 4.1.1
- b. The Committee may decide to remove a member from the Network but not unless a recorded-delivery letter has first been sent to the safe medication practices centre in question at its address last notified to the Network giving reasons for exclusion and it has been given a reasonable opportunity to furnish its explanation. The centre shall be notified within one month of the decision being taken. A centre so removed from membership shall have a right to appeal to the next OGM. If this is not to be held within the next six months, it shall have the right to insist that an EGM be held as soon as is reasonably practicable and to appeal to that EGM. On such an appeal, the General

Meeting may restore the safe medication practices centre to membership if it thinks fit.

**4.3.2** A member may resign from membership of the Network with immediate effect by giving formal written notice to the Committee, but shall be liable to pay the membership fee for the full calendar year during which the resignation takes effect.

**4.3.3** If a Safe Medication Practices Centre ceases for any reason to be a member of the Network it shall cease to be entitled to hold itself out as connected in any way with the Network.

#### **4.4 Associate members status**

Institutions or individuals sympathetic to the purposes of the Network, but not qualified to be members, may, at the absolute discretion of the Committee and on payment of the relevant membership fee, be given the status of Associate Member of the Network. Associate Members shall have all the rights and obligations of members except those of voting and of standing for office and use of the Network's logo. Where appropriate, the term "member" in these Articles shall include an Associate Member.

### **Article 5 - Committee**

#### **5.1 Authority and duration of service**

- a. The Committee elected by a secret ballot at an OGM shall administer the Network until the end of the next OGM or until otherwise removed by the members.(see 5.2f.)
- b. At each OGM members elect the Committee according to the procedure specified below.

#### **5.2 Appointment of Committee members**

- a. The Committee shall comprise a minimum of three members and a maximum of five, each elected by members at the OGM. Each Committee member must be a representative of a member Centre. The committee shall appoint an associate member to serve as ex officio for a period of one year. In addition, the hosting country shall appoint an ex officio member to serve until the time of the annual meeting. Neither ex officio member shall have voting privileges unless they also happen to be a full member of the committee. The Committee that is current at the time of approval of this constitution

shall serve for an additional three year period, after which a new committee, elected by the OGM, will begin service. At least one of the current Committee members will automatically remain as one of the three to five Committee members.

- b. After serving three years, Committee members shall retire from office but shall be eligible for re-election.
- c. No person shall be elected or re-elected to the Committee unless he/she:
  - (i) is recommended by the Committee; or
  - (ii) is willing to be elected and has been nominated by at least two members of the Network.
- d. An OGM or the Committee may, by a simple majority, appoint a person who is willing to act to be a Committee member either to fill a vacancy or as an additional Committee member (provided that the maximum of five is not exceeded). It is desirable to have representation of the different regions. Not more than one representative from a member Centre may be a member of the Committee. The Committee may not co-opt someone to sit on the Committee from a Safe Medication Practices Centre already represented in the Committee.
- e. The members of the Committee are responsible for the running, development and representation of the Network, and for monitoring the quality and independence of members and network publications.
- f. The status of Committee member shall lapse on resignation, death or on removal from office by a decision of two-thirds of those present and voting at a General Meeting after the member in question has first been summoned by recorded-delivery letter to appear before the meeting in order to furnish explanations for the actions or omissions described to him therein and has been given a reasonable opportunity to appear and furnish and furnish explanations. It would also lapse if the safe medication practices centre represented by the Committee member was no longer a member of the Network.
- g. A person may serve as Chair for a maximum of three consecutive terms.

#### **5.3**

- a. The Committee shall meet upon its election to designate from amongst its members a Chairperson, a Treasurer, a General Secretary, and two further members having

responsibility for the regional development of the Network.

- b. The Committee shall meet in plenary session at least once a year. Committee members may participate by teleconference or videoconference if they are unable to attend in person.
- c. The Committee may, from time to time, delegate any of its functions to a sub-committee consisting of one or more persons whether Committee members or not and may revoke any such delegation at any time. Any such sub-committee shall report regularly to the Committee on its activities and decisions. A subcommittee consisting of two or more members shall adopt the same procedure as that specified for the Committee itself so far as it is applicable.
- d. The preparation of the content and the maintenance and development of the website shall be the responsibility of the Committee.

#### **5.4 Decision-making by the Committee**

- a. The Committee shall be quorate if at least three members participate or are present or represented by a proxy.
- b. Each member of the Committee shall have one vote. In the event of a tie the Chairperson of the meeting shall have a second or casting vote.
- c. Decisions shall be taken by a majority vote of those present or represented. Decisions concerning admission to or exclusion from membership shall require at least a two-thirds majority of the votes in favour.
- d. The outcomes shall be recorded and published in the private area of the Network website. The records shall be kept by the Secretary of the Network and shall be open to inspection by representatives of members of the Network at reasonable times and at reasonable notice.
- e. The Committee shall after every meeting inform members in such manner and in such detail as it shall consider appropriate of its deliberations, decisions, actions and discussions.
- f. The Committee shall organise a postal or electronic consultation of Members of the Network on matters when requested in writing by at least thirty per cent of members and shall in good faith take account of the results of such consultation but shall not be bound thereby.

#### **5.5 The Committee Chairperson**

- a. The Committee Chairperson shall convene General Meetings and the Committee meetings.
- b. The Chairperson shall be fully authorised on behalf of the Network to execute all deeds and sign all documents necessary or expedient to implement decisions of the Committee or General Meeting and to represent the Network in all official acts. He or she shall have legal capacity to go to law as defendant or as plaintiff or to lodge appeals on behalf of the Network, in all cases by leave of the Committee. He or she may only agree to amicable settlements with the approval of the Committee.
- c. He or she shall chair all meetings and, if prevented from so doing, shall designate a member of the Committee. If the Chairperson is unable to attend and has not appointed a designate, the Committee members present shall elect one of their members to be Chairperson of the meeting.

#### **5.6 The General Secretary**

The General Secretary shall be responsible for membership files, correspondence, archives, invitations to meetings, the writing up of minutes and the keeping of records required by law. Membership files should be accessible to the Committee members.

#### **5.7 The Treasurer**

- a. The Treasurer shall be responsible for managing the funds of the Network and, under the supervision of the Committee Chairperson, issue all invoices, settle all accounts, receive all membership fees due to the Network and give receipts for the same; he/she may not part with cash, property or valuables belonging to the Network without the consent of the Committee. He/she is empowered to make payments to the value of \$5,000 US\$. In the case that higher sums are in question the Chairperson should co-sign the authorisation.
- b. He/she shall keep accurate accounts covering all transactions carried out by him/her and shall present the accounts and report on hi/her management at the OGM.

**5.8** The Committee may exercise all powers and decide on all matters which are not specially reserved to the General Meeting.

## Article 6 - meetings and function of the OGM

### 6.1 Composition and voting

- a. An OGM shall be convened at least once every two years.
- b. The OGM shall receive reports on the Committee's management, the Network's financial, and non-financial situation, and admissions to, refusals of, removals from and resignations of membership.
- c. It shall consider motions to approve the accounts for the previous financial periods since the last OGM and the budget forecast for the period until the next OGM.
- d. Any General Meeting that is not an OGM shall be called an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM).
- e. At least three months written notice of each General Meeting shall be given or posted to each member at its address last notified to the Network. Accidental non-receipt by a member of notice of a General Meeting shall not invalidate any of the business conducted thereat. A General Meeting may be held at shorter notice if it is so agreed, in the case of an OGM, by all the members and, in the case of an EGM, by at least three-quarters of the members .
- f. Any member may propose an item for the agenda of any General Meeting but the agenda shall be drawn up by the Committee.
- g. In addition to the items put on the agenda by the Committee any motion signed by two members and lodged with the General Secretary at least one month before the meeting shall be put before the meeting.
- h. In order to be able to deliberate, a General Meeting shall require a quorum of one-third of the total membership either present or represented. if this quorum is not reached, the Committee must in the following two months organise postal voting by all Members on questions regarded as essential by the Members present or represented at the inquorate meeting.
- i. Motions put before a General Meeting shall be decided on a simple majority of votes cast at the meeting unless these Articles or the Rules otherwise specify.
- j. Voting to appoint members of the Committee shall be by secret ballot. Votes on other matters shall as a general rule be by show of hands, but if at least two Members, either present or represented, request it, any vote may be taken by secret ballot.

- k. Resolutions to change the Articles of the Network and to dissolve the Network shall require at least a three-quarters majority vote of an OGM or EGM; resolutions to change the Rules of the Network shall require at least a two-thirds majority vote of an OGM or EGM. Voting shall be taken by secret ballot. Two persons elected in advance and not standing for election themselves, will be responsible for the election. They will count the votes. Ballots will be preserved by the Secretary.
- l. The Chairperson shall convene an EGM if a written request that one be held is signed on behalf of half the members and lodged with the Secretary.

## Article 7 - Dissolution

**7.1** In the event of dissolution of the Network, the General Meeting shall decide what shall be done with the Network's assets but shall not be empowered to allocate to Members of the Network more than the amounts of their financial contributions.

**7.2** It shall designate public bodies, charities or other private bodies officially recognised as devoted entirely to the public interest or as associations having objects similar to those of the Network, as recipients of any remaining assets after payment of all debts, charges and liquidation expenses relating to the Network.

**7.3** The General Meeting shall appoint one or more liquidators who shall be independent qualified accountants, to carry out the liquidation process and shall decide on the manner of such liquidation.

## Article 8 – Membership fee

**8.1.1** Each member and associate member shall pay an annual membership fee recommended by the Committee and agreed upon by vote of members at each OGM or at any EGM if the EGM so decides. A member joining part way through a year shall pay an apportioned part of that year's membership fee. No membership fee or apportioned part of a membership fee shall be refunded if a member ceases for any reason to be such during the year to which it relates.

**8.1.2** In lieu of membership fee, the safe practice Centre may choose to pay an equivalent amount as a meeting registration fee at the OGM.

- 8.1.3** It shall be possible to apply for exemption when payment is difficult. The Committee will request that the applicant organization explain the need and submit any financial data that is requested.
- 8.1.4.** In unusual circumstances, in lieu of a membership fee, the applicant may request that the Committee approve time devoted to voluntary work to offset the usual membership fee.
- 8.1.5** Associate members fees will be discounted compared to full membership fees.

## **Article 9 - Resources**

- 9.1** The Network's resources shall consist of the following elements:
- membership fees from members and associate members
  - any subsidies or donations granted or made to the Network by individuals or institutions, professional or amateur, with the exception of subsidies from the pharmaceutical industry or comparable industry and related healthcare industry;
  - income derived from services provided by the Network;
  - capital arising from surpluses on the annual budget.
- 9.2** The Network's finances will be audited independently.

## **Article 10 - Rules**

A set of Rules governing the implementation of the Articles hereof may from time to time be voted by members at the OGM on a motion put before it by the Committee.  
The said rules shall be appended hereto and shall apply to members in the same manner as the Articles hereof.

### **Rule I - Membership fee**

(supplement to article 8 of the Constitution)  
The membership fee shall be fixed according to Article 8 of the Constitution. It shall be paid no later than 3 months after receipt of the membership fee invoice sent to each Member each year by the Committee.

### **Rule II - Constitution of member status** (supplement to article 4 of the Constitution)

- II.1** An application for admission must comprise:
- a documentation on the activities of the Safe Medication Practices Centre during the two past years preceding the date of application, including its website. If this documentation do not specify the contents in English then a list of these contents, including keywords, shall be sent with the documentation;
  - a completed application form including the statement of having no conflicts of interest incompatible with network goals.
  - the joining fee (which will be refunded if the application is not accepted).  
The Committee may request further information to assist it in making its decision.

**II.2** As each issue is published, Member bulletins shall be sent to the Secretary of the Network or to the Institution charged to keep the library of IMSN.

**II.3** List of Members of the Network  
Before each OGM or EGM the Committee will draw up an official list of Members of the Network.

### **Rule III - Communication tools: the IMSN website**

An official IMSN Website, as well as IMSN publications such as a newsletter, reports, statements, proposals, are the responsibility of the Committee of the Network. The Committee will serve as editorial board of all communication tools.

The Website will serve as a way of communication between the members and the Committee as well as a way of transmitting important events which happened in and outside IMSN. The Website also has the purpose of presenting IMSN outside the Network. The contents of the Website should be updated monthly.

The Newsletter will report events important for the Network, news from the various member bulletins, interesting articles, activities of IMSN, reports of the Committee etc.