

HARMONIZATION MEETING – BETHESDA, MD, NOVEMBER 28-29, 2017

On November 28-29, 2017, we convened a meeting of the Network on the Harmonization of International Aging Studies with support from the National Institute of Aging (NIA). The purpose of the meeting was to hear updates on each study and to further discuss the harmonization of aging data across studies. The meeting was held in Bethesda to maximize attendance of the BSR unit at the National Institute of Aging. The meeting was very well attended with representatives of all the HRS studies around the world. The countries represented were the United States (HRS), Mexico (MHAS), Brazil (ELSI), England (ELSA), Continental Europe (SHARE) Ireland (TILDA), Northern Ireland (NICOLA), Scotland (Haagis) , South Korea (KLoSA), China (CHARLS), India (LASI), Indonesia (IFLS), Japan (JSTAR), WHO (SAGE), South Africa (HAALSI). Each PI highlighted the current state of the project and plans for the future.

The discussion during the day included the following topics:

- Commissioned background papers as well as commissioning speakers for talks for the conference might be a worthwhile endeavor
- Coordinating such that a calendar exists with all relevant meetings and conferences might assist with collaboration across studies and organizations
- Coordinating on what variables are never used in ageing studies to streamline surveys might also be a worthwhile pursuit
- It was noted that a comprehensive approach must be adopted in looking at ageing in context of healthcare systems; thought must be put into situating private doctors, private hospitals, acute and long-term care models in approaching ageing, as well as understanding the data systems that stem from this interconnected web.
- Given the high costs of treatment of care with ageing diseases, emphasis needs to be put on prevention, and data and studies need to accordingly adapt to understanding the savings from prevention.

The first day included a talk by NIA Director of Behavior and Social Research, encouraging researchers to consider the upcoming WHO decade of aging in 2020 and how we could incorporate the work of the harmonization studies into a purpose that would serve the WHO campaign. The conversation included helping new studies in the HRS around the world get started. Countries trying to do that include Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia, and Thailand. Elisa Epel of UCSF spoke at the meeting about her group's attempt to construct a harmonized stress module that could be used in the HRS studies.

It was agreed by the participants at the meeting to hold the next meeting in October 2018 in London where the ELSA study will be having their biannual launch. This will be cost effective since many participants will be attending the ELSA meeting any way.