Background

- The Paediatric Task Force for Global Musculoskeletal Health was set up in 2017 as part of the Global Alliance for Musculoskeletal Health (G-MUSC) and acknowledges the importance of a ‘life course approach’ to optimising musculoskeletal (MSK) health in adulthood.
- We work in partnership with G-MUSC, the Pediatric Rheumatology European Society (PReS) and the Paediatric Musculoskeletal Matters (PMM) learning e-platform.
- We are a virtual global community and open to all: clinicians (doctors and allied health professionals), patient and consumers, professional societies, healthcare planners and policy makers, non-health professional groups, research consortia, industry (e-technology, pharma).
- The Paediatric Task Force has representation from many clinicians (doctors, allied health and members of patient / parent groups) around the world including Asia, AsiaPacific, Africa, Americas, Europe regions; in the main from paediatric rheumatology and paediatric orthopaedics. There is great enthusiasm to ‘work better together’ to improve the lives of children and raise awareness amongst health care planners and policy makers that more needs to be done and now!

Our Aims

- **Raise awareness**
  - about the existence of children and young people around the world with MSK problems
  - about the considerable long-term impact of *untreated* MSK conditions starting in early life: impact on young people, their families, carers and society
  - that many conditions are *treatable*; long term disability can be avoided thus reducing ‘cost’ to individuals and society

- **Identify and promote tangible solutions to better access to ‘right’ care**
  - models of clinical care and care pathways
  - education and training for the workforce
  - patient and public involvement and engagement

- **Promote healthy joints and bones**
  - to prevent obesity
  - to reduce the risk of injury
  - to reduce osteoarthritis and osteoporosis

More information

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Pediatric Rheumatology European Society (https://www.pres.eu)
Paediatric Musculoskeletal Matters (http://www.pmmonline.org)

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Paediatric Task Force Activities

The Paediatric Task Force has been engaged in a variety of activities. Links with paediatric orthopaedics and public health (obesity related theme) are developing as well as considerations for road safety. There is a large network of enthusiastic people working together and connected through email and social media communications. This is our first G-MSUSC Newsletter and is a welcome additions to improve communications for our expanding global community.

A community pain survey based on G-MUSC Pain Task Force work (Damian Hoy et al) is also planned to include tools applicable for children and young people.

More of these items in future Newsletters.

For this Newsletter we focus mainly on paediatric rheumatology related activities.

**WORD-Day !** The Paediatric Task Force had a very active part in WORD Day (WOrld young Rheumatic Diseases Day) – the first ever WORD Day was March 9 2019 and this initiative was set up by parents and patient groups to raise awareness of rheumatic diseases in children and young people. This will be an annual event.

The Paediatric Task Force social media promoted the WORD campaign and around the world there was a huge response with many people in countries around the world hosting events to raise awareness.

More is planned for next year and the Paediatric Task Force is working with the WORD-Day organisers to build on the success of 2019.

There is need to do more to target health care professionals who work with children to consider rheumatic diseases and promote early diagnosis and access to the right care.

The Paediatric Task Force developed our own original graphics to raise awareness and based around the theme… ‘children get arthritis too!’

The messages for the graphics were developed with medical students and paediatricians working in Malaysia.

The graphics were shared through social media from medical students at Newcastle University Medical School in Malaysia.

The social media campaign was regarded as a great success with over 2000 ‘likes’ in the days that followed their release.

There was also very positive feedback from the medical students who were involved – to have them engaged with the campaign and include their ideas was great!

More is planned from the Paediatric Task Force for next year’s WORD day campaign.

Watch this space!
Describing the Global MSK burden and the work of the Paediatric Task Force. A plenary presentation was delivered by Professor Helen Foster at Asia Pacific League of Associations for Rheumatology (APLAR) and Australian Rheumatology Association (ARA) meeting Brisbane on 9 April 2019. Helen described the work of the Paediatric Task Force and her research from Newcastle University, UK to describe the global burden of MSK disease using exemplar conditions (Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis, Juvenile Systemic Lupus Erythematosus and Clubfoot). Further work to be done includes validation of the data in countries where databases exist and to link with the Global Burden Database consortium in their future analyses. The key message is that there are many millions of children affected around the world. There is need to promote the messages of this high global MSK burden and reach out to key stakeholders in health care planning and policy. This work is being submitted for publication.

A survey of paediatric rheumatology care in Asia Pacific (ASIAPAC) countries is underway and so far, we have over 300 responses. This work will inform further work to help the Paediatric Task Force to set priorities for action in ASIAPAC and will have transferable value to our work on a broader scale. The survey is anonymous and includes questions about current models of care, education and training for the workforce and access to treatments. The work from the survey will be written up for publication as a collaboration with Dr Sirirat Charuvanij and colleagues in Bangkok Thailand. The link to the survey is as follows and is still open (respondents are asked for their country of work to assist with future analysis) https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/PaedRheumCareSurvey

The first ‘face to face’ Paediatric Task Force meeting was held at the Asia Pacific League of Associations for Rheumatology (APLAR) and Australian Rheumatology Association (ARA) meeting Brisbane on 9 April 2019. We had representation from many countries within the Asia Pacific (ASIAPAC) region – invites were sent to APLAR-ARA attendees by the organisers and we had replies from 23 individuals; Australia, Argentina, India, Hong Kong, Pakistan, Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore were represented and we had expressions of interest from other countries including Nepal, Myanmar, China, Japan, Korea and Indonesia. We had representation from doctors (specialists and trainees working in adult rheumatology and also those from paediatric rheumatology), allied health professionals, patient groups and education (school teacher).

The meeting included thought provoking presentations from representative countries (Dr Davinder Singh Grewal – Australia and Dr Soamarat Vilaiyuk – Thailand) followed by lively discussion about inequities in access to paediatric rheumatology care within ASIAPAC countries.

There was also a presentation (from Dr Ricardo Russo, Argentina) about the development of the JAMLess (Juvenile Arthritis Management for Less Resource Income Countries) recommendations (C Scott et al Clin Rheumatology 2018) and the potential for a further iteration of JAMLess to facilitate implementation.

Group discussions were most informative to inform priorities setting for the Paediatric Task Force to take forward. These were deemed to be practical, pragmatic and positive rather than focusing on the enormity of the challenges that we face.

The following were proposed to be priorities for the future work of the Paediatric Task Force and will be taken forward at the next meetings for discussion and to inform our strategy.
1. **Gathering more data** to inform the global burden to raise awareness, develop key messages for stakeholders (health and non-health care planners) and to leverage change.

2. **Addressing workforce challenges**: consider thinking ‘outside the box’ to engage and involve the existing workforce (health and non-health care workers in the community, school and hospital care settings) to work better together to aid identification of children with suspected MSK disease, facilitate referral and deliver initial care. Models of care need to be adapted for different health care contexts around the world to include transport communication and geographical challenges. The need for more paediatric subspecialists remains a challenge and other models of care are required. There are many exemplars of innovative models of care that we can learn from and we need to find ways to share such great ideas.

3. **Education and training of the workforce** – we need to consider the workforce in the broadest sense and identify their needs. This is considering not just the needs of specialists but other key members of the workforce. There are many exemplars of innovative models that we can learn from and we need to find ways to share such great ideas. There is need to improve accessibility to existing training materials and courses.

4. **Educational materials are to be relevant** to health care contexts and to include recommendations and guidelines that acknowledge the many challenges that exist around the world.

5. **Sharing and promoting great ideas** was a recurring theme from the discussions – there are many great ideas and models that exist – often in countries facing considerable challenges. A shared open platform would be well received.

### Future Paediatric Task Force meetings

- **EULAR PReS June 2019** - [https://www.congress.eular.org](https://www.congress.eular.org) and there will be a symposium on global perspectives for paediatric rheumatology June 12 2019 - speakers Prof Chris Scott (South Africa) and Prof Helen Foster (on behalf of the Paediatric Task Force)

- **AFLAR Sept 2019** - [https://aflar.net/2018/01/15/about-mauritius/](https://aflar.net/2018/01/15/about-mauritius/) - paediatric rheumatology symposium

- **PReS Basic Course Paediatric Rheumatology South East Asia** – Kuala Lumpur March 2020 (exact dates to be confirmed)