

Bringing vaccinologists together

The **INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR VACCINES** is uniting the diverse community of vaccinologists.

Vaccines have been a staple

of modern medicine since Edward Jenner's pioneering work with smallpox in 1796, but it is relatively recently that a professional society was formed to support the vital work done by vaccinologists.

The International Society for Vaccines (ISV) was founded in 1992 as a not-for-profit membership organization spanning the globe. It is the only international society whose sole purpose is to engage with, support and connect people in the vaccine community — be they microbiologists, immunologists, molecular biologists, clinicians, manufacturers, distributors,

regulators, advocates or policy-makers. The main function of the ISV is to promote knowledge exchange, and build national, regional and international capacity in vaccine science and delivery. The Society's platforms for this are its website, newsletter and, most importantly, its global and regional congresses.

The organization held its pilot global vaccine congress in Amsterdam in 2007, and has since convened a conference every year in cities including Boston, Singapore, Shanghai, Vienna, Barcelona, and Paris. Recognizing Asia as a vaccine research and innovation hub, ISV recently

partnered with organizations including the Japanese Society for Vaccinology, the Korean Vaccine Society and vaccine research groups in China to launch the Asia Vaccine Congress Series. The first of these events was held in Shanghai in 2016, and in November this year will convene in Hwasun, South Korea. The ISV is also active in encouraging and supporting regional vaccine meetings in various countries, such as Turkey.

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While vaccine science has advanced spectacularly since Jenner's day, achieving near-eradication of diseases such as polio which used to claim many lives, the field of vaccinology still faces many challenges. One of these is getting vaccines to the people that need them most, when they need them most. This issue is particularly acute for the developing world,

and for epidemics such as Ebola and avian influenza. To facilitate the rapid information-sharing that could help address these health crises, ISV is looking to organize specific disease-focused meetings, bringing together vaccinologists with specialized interests for more targeted collaboration and communication.

For Shan Lu, professor in the Department of Medicine at the University of Massachusetts Medical School, and one of the past-presidents of the ISV, these congresses are ISV's foundation, as they enable the personal interaction fundamental to build and sustain the vaccine community. An important component of this is mentorship of the next generation of vaccine scientists.

"Now vaccinologists around the globe feel they have a home, they feel some kind of affiliation," he says. ■

International Society for VACCINES

<https://www.isv-online.org/>



World map highlighting the 44 countries and regions who have ISV members, and the locations of the ISV annual Congresses.



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