

# Report: 15th IAMRA Biennial Conference

## Bali, Indonesia

### November 6-9, 2023

IAMRA's fifteenth *International Conference on Medical Regulation* was held at the Merusaka Hotel, Nusa Dua, Bali, Indonesia, from Tuesday to Thursday, November 6-9, 2023.

The Conference was hosted by the Indonesian Medical Council and attracted 308 registrants from 25 countries around the world.

The Conference theme was 'Regulation in a disrupted world: challenges and opportunities' and was also the first time the IAMRA community had assembled in person for over five years after the disruptions of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The [program](#) covered key issues in medical and health regulation around the world. These included how regulation is responding to the impact of developing technologies like artificial intelligence and other market disruptors, the opportunities and challenges in engaging with system issues like supporting access to the medical workforce, the role for regulators in addressing racism and the impacts of climate change, and how to best support practitioner health and wellbeing.

#### Opening ceremony

The Conference commenced with an Indonesian cultural display, followed by an official opening by the Indonesian Health Minister, Mr Budi Gunadi Sadikin, who joined the delegates via a live video-link.

The Minister spoke about a comprehensive and forward-looking health care law, passed in August 2023 that would help Indonesia prepare for the next pandemic and face the challenges of providing care to 514 cities, 10,000 districts, 85,000 villages, and 300,000 hamlets on 17,000 islands for a total population of 280 million people. A key focus of his address was Indonesia's commitment to building and sustaining a medical and health workforce that will meet their current and future community demands.

#### Keynote presentations

**"Revolutionizing Remedies: Regulating the Dawn of Medical AI"**. Prof. Euan Ashley of Stanford University provided a fascinating overview of the rise of medical AI and the potential impacts arising from its use for regulators. He noted that the fundamental building block of an AI neural network is a zero and a one, and that AI is fundamentally and ultimately a machine that can be manipulated and programmed by humans.

**"Practitioner health and wellbeing and the implications for regulators"**. Prof. Marie Bismark of Melbourne University provided a comprehensive overview of the current pressures facing medical practitioners in the post-Covid environment. This included several paradoxes for physicians, including how they can sometimes smile and struggle at the same time. Prof Bismark highlighted that the antidote to burnout is connection, and the role regulators can play in helping to facilitate greater connection when engaging with practitioners.

#### Panel discussion sessions

**"Regulation 2030 - what's coming...what's already here?"** explored the current and future trends shaping medical and health practitioner regulation.

- Prof. Anna Van der Gaag, CBE, from the University of Surrey, U.K. provided a short, thought-provoking keynote presentation highlighting the critical importance for regulators in the current environment to move from traditional forms of medical licensure to models that embrace proportionality, transparency, and trust.

- Panelist, Prof. Vivian Lin, from the University of Hong Kong, encouraged regulators to improve the quality of health care through better partnerships and not just the blunt regulatory tools of discipline and punishment.

**“International movement of doctors - opportunities and ethical challenges”.** This included:

- Panelist, Dr. Suzanne Crowe, President of the Irish Medical Council, spoke about the need for compassion in medical regulation, especially for thinking ahead and anticipating the needs of physicians who are also refugees from the world’s conflict zones, and
- Dr Kgosi Letlape, Immediate past Chair IAMRA/Past President Health Professions Registration Council of South Africa, spoke on the “health care apartheid” in South Africa characterized by the internal movement of doctors, that has resulted in differences between care provided by the private health care system versus the public health care system, “...and between the haves and the have nots.”

**“International standards for accreditation of medical schools – progress and future directions”.**

An expert panel of international medical educators and accreditors, including Dr William Pinsky, CEO, Education Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG), Professor Ricardo Leon-Borquez, President, World Federation of Medical Education and Dr Peter Katsufrikas, President and CEO, National Board of Medical, discussed the history and strategic direction of the (ECFMG) international accreditation process. This included discussion on what it means, how it works, and highlighted its importance in harmonizing and standardizing medical education internationally.

- Associate Professor Titi Savitri Prihatiningsih, Board of National Education Standards, Indonesia, highlighted the importance of accreditation on the local and international recognition for an Indonesian program.

**“Medical regulators, governments, and workforce – challenges and opportunities”**, explored different perspectives on how regulators can have a positive impact at global, regional, and local levels and identified practical approaches for regulators to better support government and workforce policy. Highlights included:

- Dr Giorgio Cometto, Unit Head, Human Resources for Health Policies and Standards, World Health Organization, noted the broad scope of regulatory models and how they help to address health system issues (including labor market failures),
- Dr Jeancarlo Cavalcante, 1st Vice President, Brazilian Council of Medicine/Board member IAMRA, provided perspective on the challenges of aligning supply with demand in medical education and the impacts on workforce demographics in Brazil, and
- Mrs. Joan Simeon, CEO Medical Council of New Zealand (MCNZ)/Chair-elect IAMRA, highlighted the potential leadership role of regulators in influencing changes in workforce policy, including the reliance on International Medical Graduates.

**“How do regulators contribute to the elimination of racism?”** explored several different perspectives of the role of regulators in contributing to the elimination of racism in health care, as well as providing practical steps that can be taken locally and/or as part of collaborative international efforts. Highlights included:

- Dr Rachelle Love, from the Medical Council of Aotearoa/New Zealand, provided a short keynote presentation based on her experience and expertise in Māori health care that included the challenges and opportunities for regulators in implementing strategies to address racism,
- Panelist, Ms Jayde Fuller, National Director Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health, Ahpra, highlighted the recent legislative changes leading to a recent successful prosecution of a case of racism by a medical practitioner in Australia,

- Dr Margo Greenwood, College of Physicians and Surgeons of British Columbia, outlined Canada’s distressing history with residential schools for children of First Nations tribes and the significant recent legislative changes that will require regulators to help embed cultural safety in their work, and
- Dr Jeffrey Carter, Chair, Federation of State Medical Boards, USA, explained the FSMB’s unifying role with different approaches across State Medical Boards, including their recent development of a playbook for regulators to help them to embed principles of diversity, equity and inclusion in all aspects of their work.

**“Climate change and planetary health – how should regulators respond?”** included examples of how the health impacts of climate change are currently being addressed in medical education, practice, and regulation internationally as well as guidance for the IAMRA community to contribute to these efforts. This included:

- Panelist, Ms Jane Dancer, Manager Strategy and Policy, Medical Council of New Zealand, provided an overview of the role of medical regulators in addressing planetary health and climate change, that includes the development of organizational strategies, as well as professional and ethical standards for doctors on planetary health,
- Dr Genevieve Moineau, Vice President World Federation of Medical Education, spoke about the impact of the Declaration on Planetary Health passed by all members of the Association of Faculties of Medicine, Canada and encouraged all attendees to sign it [here](#), and
- Mr Mark Swindells, Assistant Director Standards and Ethics, General Medical Council, UK, highlighted their impressive Net Zero Carbon Emissions Plan for 2030, encompassing stages 1 and 2, and for 2040, encompassing stage 3.

**“Is it possible to be both a kind and tough regulator?”** This final plenary panel explored several hypothetical case studies, with audience interaction expertly facilitated by Ms Susan Biggar, National Manager Regulatory Experience and Engagement, Ahpra. Highlights of the discussion included:

- Panelist, Dr Lisa Whop, Member Community Advisory Council for Ahpra, noted that “being kind (as a regulator) doesn’t mean being weak and being tough (as a regulator) doesn’t mean being unjust”, and
- Dr Daniel Yumbya EBS, CECM Health, Machakos County, Kenya, and Prof Saroj Jayasinghe, Department of Clinical Medicine, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka, agreed that regulators need to figure out a way to have an impact on both areas.

## Breakout sessions

Five breakout sessions were held across the first two days of the Conference and included a total of 43 concurrent presentations with 4 interactive workshops.

The breakout sessions engaged delegates in a wide variety of topics including diversity, equity and inclusion, ethics and professionalism in regulation, the impact of “brain drain” and the international movement and supply of doctors, case-based approaches to teaching and regulation, addressing sexual misconduct by doctors, and the regulation of cosmetic surgery. Other areas included developments in standards, data sharing, stakeholder communication and engagement, credentialing and medical school accreditation around the world.

Presentations from the keynotes, breakout and plenary sessions are available at the [Members section](#) of the IAMRA website.

## Social and cultural program

Delegates had the opportunity to participate in a range of activities as part of the Conference program that highlighted the rich cultural heritage and natural beauty of Bali, the “Island of the Gods”. This included a beachside reception on the evening before the first day of the Conference, featuring Balinese dancers and singers, and a welcome from Dr. Heidi Oetter, Chair of IAMRA, and Dr. Taruna Ikrar, President of the Indonesian Medical Council.

A highlight was the Gala Dinner at the nearby Royal Santrian Hotel on the evening of the second day. This featured an extensive buffet of local and international food, Balinese cultural music and dance, and the opportunity for delegates to relax, unwind and dance to a local band after dinner.

### **Members General Assembly (MGA)**

The IAMRA MGA was held on Wednesday November 8 and was attended by voting and other delegates from the following countries:

|           |             |                      |
|-----------|-------------|----------------------|
| Australia | Lesotho     | South Africa         |
| Bhutan    | Malawi      | Uganda               |
| Brazil    | Malaysia    | United Arab Emirates |
| Canada    | Namibia     | United Kingdom       |
| Ghana     | New Zealand | United States        |
| India     | Pakistan    | Zimbabwe             |
| Indonesia | Rwanda      |                      |
| Kenya     | Singapore   |                      |

The MGA delegates welcomed the new Chair of IAMRA, Mrs. Joan Simeon, Executive Director of the Medical Council of New Zealand; a new Chair-elect of IAMRA, Ms. Nicole Krishnaswami, Executive Director of the Oregon Medical Board; and a new board member, Dr. Boyd Buser, President of the Osteopathic International Alliance.

Two resolutions were endorsed at the MGA, one recognizing osteopathic physicians trained in the United States, and the other about appropriate and proper prescribing of medicine, sponsored by the Gujarat Medical Council of India.

Delegates thanked and farewelled the new Immediate Past Chair of IAMRA, Dr. Heidi Oetter, who was also retiring from her current role of Registrar and CEO of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of British Columbia at the end of November. They also acknowledged Ms. Roxanne Huff, who was transitioning to a new position in Oklahoma following 17 years of dedicated service to IAMRA.

Mrs. Simeon announced that Mr. Paul Shinkfield has been selected as IAMRA’s new Executive Director, effective December 1. Mrs. Simeon also announced that the IAMRA Board of Directors has decided that the next IAMRA Conference, in 2025, will be held in Dublin, Ireland, hosted by the Medical Council of Ireland.

### **Conference feedback**

Respondents to the post-Conference evaluation survey (n=121) provided overwhelmingly positive feedback, with over 96% indicating that they would attend another IAMRA Conference based on their experiences in Bali.

The below graph breaks down the feedback across several areas, including the quality of the program content, quality of the breakout sessions and speaker/audience interactivity.

### PROGRAM - OVERALL

■ Excellent 
 ■ Good 
 ■ Average 
 ■ Poor 
 ■ Very poor

