

Human Variome Project 3, Session 8 - Country Specific Collection

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Background:

The HVP is growing even if only judged by the number of international representatives at this conference, i.e. from 33 sovereign nations. This is particularly relevant to one of the objectives of the HVP, i.e. to identify genetic variants relevant to phenotypes from all populations across the world.

In terms of the format of the session: Instead of inviting representatives from each country to present their progress; abstracts were chosen on the deliverable that had been accomplished, with an opportunity for presenters to address obstacles and how these obstacles were overcome. Local experience including identification of major obstacles was presented by Raj Ramesar (South Africa), and Zilfalil Bin Alwi (Malaysia). Other examples of progress made since the HVP Spain meeting in 2009 were given in presentations by Mi-Hyun Park (Korea), Ming Qi (China), Alan Lo (Australia), Yoichi Matsubara (Japan) and Jumana Al-Aama (Saudi Arabia). Richard Cotton and Heather Howard highlighted guidelines for establishment of a HVP node. Short presentations on local experience were given by Joseph Borg (Malta), Suzanne Al-Bustan (Kuwait) and Aida Al-Aqeel (Saudi Arabia). Helpful contributions towards final recommendations came from quite a detailed discussion among the presenters and other attendees, including James Kaput (experience with unified protocols and developing countries), Linda Roberts (especially the role of education), Fahad Al-Mulla (obstacles in developing countries), Maria Sobrido (education and gathering support), among others. The five areas which were consistently highlighted in this regard were: (i) Communication, (ii) Bringing people of different backgrounds together, (iii) Education, (iv) Funding “policy makers on board”, and (v) Software optimization.

The ‘Country Specific Collection’ portfolio of the HVP provides an opportunity for engaging ideologically, at the smallest possible denominator in terms of addressing issues at the coal face.

Recommendations:

1. Education:

The specific target constituencies which should be considered included the public, professionals (clinicians, researchers, scientists, educationists), policymakers (government), and high school students. Very specific modes of education suggested included: lectures, pamphlets, and highly effective power point electronic