Current status and opportunities for Young Professionals in ISBT

This article is written by the inaugural ISBT Young Professionals Council, which commenced in 2018 (by ISBT1PYPC). Our aim is to increase the visibility of ISBT membership and to promote active participation of the Young Professionals (≤ 35 years old) in the Society’s activities. With this in mind, it is important to have an understanding of the current Young Professionals’ involvement in the society and what activities are already available.

How many ISBT members are Young Professionals and where are they based?

In 2017/18, 369 or 21% of the 1,731 ISBT members were aged ≤35, and therefore considered Young Professionals. The 362 Young Professional members were from all around the world, with Europe, the Americas and the Western Pacific the most heavily represented regions based upon WHO’s regional classifications (Figure 1).

Opportunities for Young Professionals at ISBT congresses

There are several activities available for Young Professionals at ISBT Congresses:

- The Haraki Gunson Fellowship is a travel grant for young researchers (≤40 years old) to attend an ISBT International or Regional Congress. Twenty-five Fellowships were awarded at the Toronto International Congress.
- There are special Young Investigators sessions at ISBT congresses. In Toronto, 215 (72%) of the 297 abstracts submitted for presentations were submitted by Young Professionals. Six abstracts were selected for the Young Investigators session, 27 abstracts selected for oral presentations in other sessions, and 182 abstracts selected for poster presentations.
- The Young Investigators’ breakfast session allows younger members to meet and talk with transfusion medicine experts about the challenges and joys of research. In Toronto, 42 Young Professionals registered for this session.
- There are workshops designed for Young Professionals during ISBT congresses. At the upcoming Congress in Basel three workshops will be organised.

Other opportunities for ISBT Young Professionals

There are further opportunities for ISBT Young Professional members outside of ISBT congresses:

- The IVF Training Program is a two-year Transfusion Research Training program for Young Professionals. Participants learn how to develop research protocols and how to write a manuscript. The programme consists of a number of web-based lessons, combined with in-person sessions at ISBT congresses.
- Each month an ISBT webinar on various Transfusion Medicine topics is organised. During these live events attendees are able to ask questions and discuss the topic.
- Every two months the ISBT hosts an online Live Journal Club where scientific articles are discussed by experts. ISBT members can ask questions and discuss the article.
- There is also the ISBT Forum available for all ISBT members. There are several specific forums available, including one for Young Professionals.

The ISBT Webinars, Live Journal Clubs and the ISBT Forum are freely accessible. Moreover, recordings of past ISBT webinars and Live Journal Clubs sessions are available on ISBT Education.

What is next?

Every three months an ISBT webinar will be dedicated to Young Professionals. The topic of the webinar will help the professional development of Young Professionals and the session will be co-hosted by a member of the council. There will be a “speed dating” session at the Basel Congress to facilitate further interaction between Young Professionals and experienced ISBT members. Further ideas for activities or ways to improve the experience of Young Professional members are welcome and can be communicated to myself (tung@redcrossblood.org.au) or other council members (tung@redcrossblood.org.au) or other council members. Email addresses of the ISBT Young Professional Council members are listed on the ISBT website. Young members are also invited to share with us their thoughts and activities within the ISBT society through the different social media channels using #ISBTYoungBlood.

ISBT at the 12th education course for leaders of the blood services in China

The Education Course for Leaders of the Blood Services in China (ECLBS) is an intensive 18-day educational programme that was established by the Shanghai Blood Centre, the WHO Collaborating Centre, Chinese Society of Blood Transfusion and AABB in 2006. In 2009, Silvano Wendel, ISBT President, and Judith Chapman, ISBT Executive Director, joined the third round of the course and after discussion with the management board ISBT was pleased to sign an MoU with the four partner organisations in 2011.

Since that moment ISBT has been present providing a teacher for one of the sessions at each round of the course on a range of topics including corners and conatin, transfusion transmitted infectious diseases, haemovigilance, clinical aspects of transfusion and big data. ISBT also reviews curricula and course materials as necessary.

The course attendees learn about all aspects of transfusion medicine during the 18 days of the course. They take an extensive test at the beginning of the course and one at the end, which helps them and the management committee see how much they have learnt. Participants are divided into different teams to work together on projects and presentations. They also have fun sessions learning about teamwork and solving problems together. All of the sessions include participants for their role in leading at one of the many regional blood centres in China.

Judith Chapman, Executive Director of ISBT, attended the opening ceremony of the 12th course in November 2018 and Christian Erkstorp participated in the course as the ISBT lecturer with a specific remit to speak on big data in transfusion medicine, Judith has been pleased to attend the ECLBS opening ceremony whenever possible and to meet the course participants. The dinners on the opening and closing evenings have also been memorable experiences. ISBT continues to see the value of the course to the participants and has seen how the participants develop and grow. Many were present at the ISBT congress in Guangzhou in 2017.

ISBT has been honoured to participate in management committee meetings and to contribute ideas to the development of the course. ISBT acknowledges the effort from all the course management committee and the Shanghai Blood Centre who are involved in ensuring a very effective programme.