

GET TO KNOW ISBER'S COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE, WORKING GROUPS AND SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS



The following is a list of active WGs and SIGs. ISBER members are encouraged to review the mandates of these groups and email info@isber.org if you wish to join.

COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE:

- **Education and Training**—The purpose of the Education and Training (E&T) Community of Practice (CoP) is to identify and implement mechanisms to ensure that ISBER members have access to state-of-the-art information and tools to effectively operate repositories for the preservation of specimens for future research and analysis. The CoP provides information on training courses and other educational opportunities for ISBER members to allow for the dissemination of methods and practices for performing efficient, effective repository activities. The Education and Training Community of Practice is led by Tamsin Tarlin.
- **Science Policy**—The purpose of the ISBER Science Policy Advisory Community of Practice (CoP) is to coordinate and to be a voice for the perspectives of the ISBER membership and the Society on policy issues related to biological and environmental repositories. The CoP communicates with the membership on emerging science policy issues providing analysis of policies and regulations that may affect the biorepository community and developing policy position statements on behalf of ISBER. In addition, the CoP shares information on emerging global policy issues through collaboration with other allied groups, educational opportunities, and the development of shared resources. The Science Policy Community of Practice is led by Helen Morrin.
- **Standards**—The Standards Community of Practice (CoP) serves as a conduit between ISBER and the Biobanking Standardization community and its stakeholders. In this capacity it provides:
 - » Expertise, leadership, and oversight of the preparation and review of the ISBER Best Practices and its updates, including translations.
 - » Expertise and input for development of standards and standards-related products / tools (e.g., Self-assessment Tool, certification criteria).
 - » Knowledge on implementation pathways for the vast array of available standards-related biobanking tools and their inter-relationships, in cooperation with the Education and Training CoP.
 - » The Standards Community of Practice is led by Mieke De Wilde.

WORKING GROUPS:

- **BioSpecimen Science Working Group**—Biospecimens stored in biorepositories are intended to be used for biomarker identification and validation. The performance of such biomarkers greatly depends on the pre-analytical variations of the samples that were used for their initial identification. These variations introduced during specimen processing can alter the actual experimental data potentially leading to misinterpretation of findings. Quality assurance on this issue is therefore of utmost importance and allows us to establish the right correspondence between processing methods and end-use biomarkers. Lalita Wadhwa recently took over the leadership of this group.
- **Enviro-Bio Working Group**—The Enviro-Bio Working Group's mission is to provide the ISBER communication forum for environmental, biological, and animal (e.g. "enviro-bio") biospecimens and biobanks with an aim to represent these biobanks' needs and integrate them into ISBER activities and products. Their current activities center around defining and integrating enviro-bio terminology into ISBER products, such as contributing enviro-bio content to ISBER educational material and training programs. In the past, the Enviro-Bio Working Group has led conference workshops on interdisciplinary collaborations and on international regulations. The group is chaired by Piper Mullins.

- **Informatics Working Group**—The ISBER Informatics Working Group includes representatives from ISBER member vendors who provide custom built and COTS systems, as well as members who are involved in informatics within a repository. The mission of the IWG includes ongoing development of best practices for information management to support biobanking. Cheryl Michels took over the leadership of this in September 2022.
- **International Repository Locator Working Group**— is an initiative by ISBER to help investigators locate biospecimen and data repositories by developing a directory of repository information that can be searched online. The International Repository Locator also seeks to increase the profile of research and biobanking activities being supported by individual repositories amongst key global stakeholders including scientific societies, researchers, funding bodies, governments, consortia, and private industry. In the summer of 2022, the ISBER leadership agreed to form a task force to review ISBER's International Repository Locator (IRL). There is a need to develop metrics of success in order to evaluate the effectiveness of this initiative. Thus, a Review Task Force will evaluate this initiative and also will decide whether ISBER should continue to host the IRL on the ISBER website. If the

recommendation is to continue to support the IRL, then a project plan for the upcoming year is to be developed. The IRL is currently led by Yaffa Rubinstein.

- **Pharma Working Group**— Pharma Biospecimen Working Group—The Working Group exists to identify and address challenging topics facing industry (Pharma, Biotech, Diagnostics and Scientific Services) through shared industry experience and expertise. In addition, the Working Group promotes the requirements of industry within the ISBER community and seeks to grow attendance from the industry sector at the ISBER Annual Meeting. The membership is predominantly from the Pharma and Industry life sciences sector but aims to build alignment and shared objectives with the wider biobanking community and across different sectors. Most recently the group has completed a survey of biobanks to try to understand what barriers may exist to collaborations between industry and academic biobanks. In addition, a session is being planned for the upcoming ISBER conference in Seattle. This session intends to familiarize academics and public sector biobankers with requirements, opportunities, and challenges of the private-public partnership. The group is led by Suenne Orth.

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS:

- **Automated Repositories Special Interest Group**— Automated repositories present challenging issues with regards to design, sample process, data process and labware. The quantity of environmental and biological specimens and derivatives is rising and will continue to do so. Automation of the processes to collect, prepare, distribute, and archive the materials and the data associated with those materials becomes compelling as laboratory operations increase. Interoperability and facile exchange of specimens and data between collections is critical. The Automated Repositories Special Interest Group meets to present automation experiences, share learning and answer questions about implementing automation. The group is chaired by Andy Zaayenga and Jessica Bilyeu.
- **Pediatric Special Interest Group**—As pediatric biobanking and adult biobanking are fundamentally different, the ISBER Pediatric SIG focuses on pediatric biobanking-specific topics. These topics include the often small amount of samples obtained from pediatric patients, the relative rarity of most childhood diseases, the inherited nature of a significant amount of childhood diseases assent and capacity to consent to name a few! This SIG provides

leadership in pediatric biobanking, develops pediatric biobanking guidelines, and foster collaborations. We published a pediatric specific BIO issue in 2021. The group started in 2017, is led by Suzanne Vercauteren.

- **Rare Disease Special Interest Group**—Rare diseases are a clinically heterogeneous group of about 7,000 disorders which are mostly genetic in origin. Rare diseases affect mostly children, are commonly diagnosed during childhood, and often have deleterious long-term effects. Their cumulative public concern around the world is substantial. Unfortunately, only a small portion of these disorders has an effective drug therapy. To expand our scientific knowledge of these disorders, increased effort is needed to invest on initiatives addressing obstacles in children participation in research, including collection and access to pediatric samples. To increase the participation of ISBER members in this Group and based on experience/outcome, it was decided recently to change it from RD Working Group to RD interest group. The plan is to regroup the members who are interested in RDs to share and discuss emerging issues and new development in the field of Rare Diseases. The group is led by Yaffa Rubinstein.