

FUNGAL INFECTION TRUST

TRUSTEES REPORT 2020

The board of Trustees, who are also directors of the Charity for the purposes of the Companies Act 2006, present their report and financial statements of Fungal Infection Trust for the year ended 30 April 2020. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies as set out on page 11 and comply with the charity's trust deed, the Companies Act 2006 and the Statement of Recommended Practice – Accounting and Reporting by Charities 2011.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The Fungal Infection Trust (“The Charity” or “The Trust” or “FIT”) is a company limited by guarantee and governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association.

DIRECTORS AND TRUSTEES

The directors of the charitable company are its Trustees for the purpose of charity law and throughout this report are collectively referred to as the **Trustees**

The Trustees serving during the year were as follows:

Mr J C Morgan **Secretary**

Professor P J Folkman

Mr P G Oxnam **Chairman**

Dr C L Pankhurst

Mr J C Wood-Collins **(resigned 23 July 2019)**

Professor J Cooke

Professor R Hay **(appointed 6 February 2020)**

New trustees are interviewed and appointed by the existing trustees. Before taking up their positions, new trustees are sent on externally run training courses where appropriate.

Risk Management

The trustees have examined the major strategic, business and operational risks which the charity faces and confirm that systems have been established to enable regular reports to be produced so that the necessary steps can be taken to lessen these risks.

The Trustees have undertaken a review of Employment issues and updated their procedures accordingly with particular attention to Health and Safety matters to comply with recent legislative changes.

Organisational Structure and Governance

The Trust is managed by the Trustees. The Trust has no paid or voluntary employees. Accounts are prepared by the Secretary on a regular basis and presented to the Trustees at their meetings. The financial status of the Trust is reviewed by a Trustee sub-committee prior to each Trustees' meeting and its recommendations presented to the meeting. A minimum of three Trustees meetings are held each year.

Responsibilities of Trustees

Law applicable to charities in England & Wales requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the incoming resources and application of the resources of the charity during the year and of its state of affairs at the end of the year. In preparing financial statements giving a true and fair view, the trustees should follow best practice and:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable accounting standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed;

- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy the financial position of the charity and which enable them to ascertain its financial position and to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006 and the Statement of Recommended Practice – Accounting and Reporting by Charities 2005 and the Trust Deed. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

1. To promote research in all aspects of mycology, mycotic diseases, fungal toxicology and microbial disease (of all living things) and to publish the useful results thereof.
2. To advance education particularly among physicians and scientists about mycology, mycotic diseases, fungal toxicology and microbial diseases in general.
3. To generally support basic research into fungi and fungal disease, train scientists into mycology and related disciplines.
4. To provide information to patients suffering from fungal diseases, in particular aspergillosis.
5. To raise awareness of fungal pathogens and fungal diseases amongst the general public in the UK and internationally.

Review of Activities

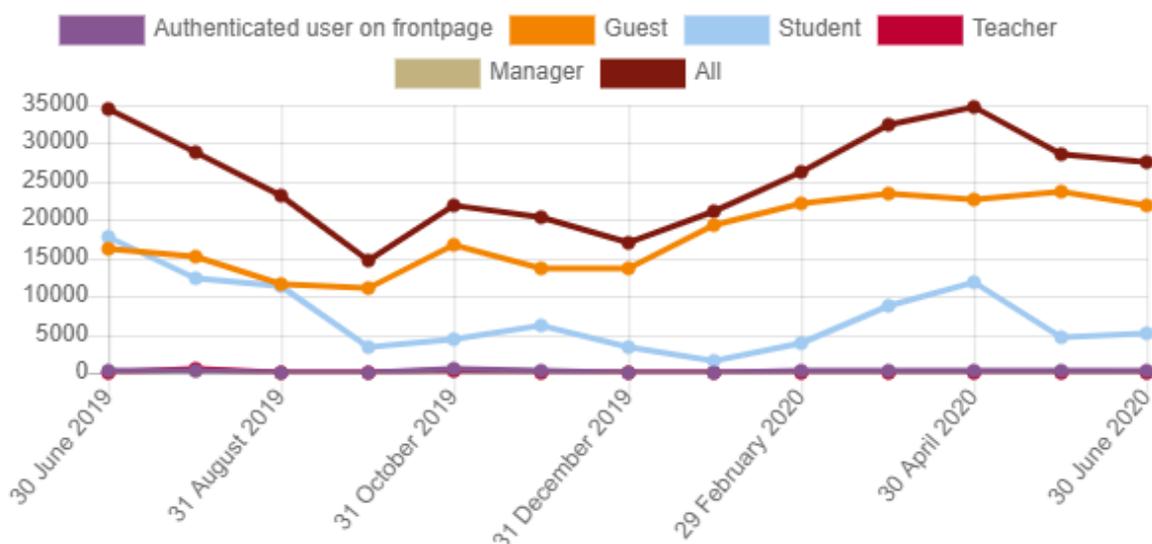
In 2018/19, most of the FIT's activity was devoted to health professional education, public outreach and research. The FIT website (www.fungalinfectiontrust.org) averaged 3,000 to 5,500 unique visitors per month in 2018-19 (low estimate based on server access), visitors coming overwhelmingly (approx. 90%) from the US.

Online education in fungal microscopy and histology (www.microfungi.net/)

The FIT supports the world's first online Microscopy and Histology course (www.microfungi.net). There are now 1621 users from 126 countries. Typically 2 – 10 users login each day. The top countries are: UK (150 users), Mexico, US, Brazil, India, Nigeria, Argentina, Colombia, Spain, Algeria (30 users). 1378 users work in English, 143 in Spanish, 60 in French, 38 in Portuguese and 2 in China.

An example of usage for one month is shown here.

microfungi.net - All activity (all roles)



The Aspergillus Website (www.aspergillus.org.uk)
The Aspergillus Website @ www.aspergillus.org.uk

The Aspergillus Website remains the world's most comprehensive resource for the pathogenic and allergenic fungi Aspergillus and the diseases that they cause. It is completely free to all users. It is supported from the UK National Health Service and unrestricted educational grants from various corporate donors, notably Mayne Pharma, Pfizer, Dynamiker, Gilead and Zambon.

The Aspergillus Website provides simple, free access to >74,000 pages all indexed in Google, ready to be searched, over 14,000 scientific articles (including a unique collection of 831 historical articles) and over 16,500 conference abstracts from 1974 onwards. The collection of abstracts accounts for 0.14% of web traffic, the most commonly visited conference page being the 2006 ERS conference.

The article database section of the website accounts for 2.7% of all web traffic to the Aspergillus Website. The comprehensive list of drugs and drug interactions with antifungals is continually updated. The drug interaction database (including the antifungal drug interaction app for apple and android phones) is popular and well used. This database is also available as an 'App' via iPhone and Android smartphones to allow ease of access and use, both are updated regularly. Nearly 2,300 potentially harmful interactions are listed. Over 3,300 (Android) and 501 (iOS) APPs have been downloaded.

The Aspergillus Website received an average of 114,078 page views per month in the 12 months to the end of March 2020. The top performing pages in terms of page views are (percentage of total page views):

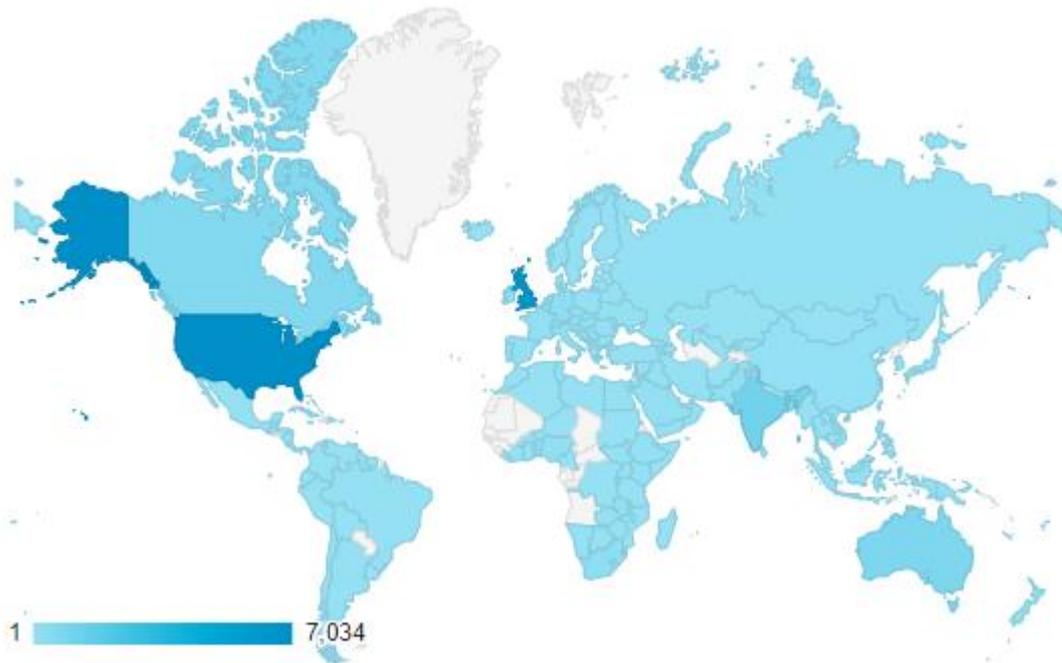
1. Home page (9.26%)
2. What is Aspergillus and aspergillosis? (3.76%)
3. Aspergillus Otomycosis (2.07%)
4. What is Aspergillus and aspergillosis? In German (1.71%)
5. Video of suction clearance of superficial fungal infection of the ear canal (1.69%)
6. Blog post (My Story: When I was dying....) (1.39%)
7. Allergic Bronchopulmonary Aspergillosis (ABPA) (1.27%)
8. Chronic Pulmonary Aspergillosis (CPA) and Aspergilloma (1.12%)
9. What is Aspergillus and aspergillosis? In Japanese (0.93%)
10. Marijuana use and aspergillosis (0.79%)

Externally there are over 23,000 active links to www.aspergillus.org.uk and www.aspergillosis.org.

As shown in the table below, devices used to access our websites vary with users of the Patient Website favouring mobile and users of the Aspergillus Website being equally split between desktop and mobile, with tablets only a very small percentage.

Device	Aspergillus Website	Patients Website
Desktop	48%	33%
Mobile	47%	60%
Tablet	5%	7%

Mapping of www.aspergillus.org.uk (see figure below for 1 April 2019- 30 March 2020, darker shading = more users) shows that the website reaches people in over 170 countries, up from 140 in the previous period. USA is the country from which we get most visits with UK and India in the next 2 places, Australia and Japan in 4th & 5th place respectively.



Website for patients and carers (www.aspergillus.org)

The Patients Website had a complete refresh in 2019 which includes moving it to a new domain name aspergillus.org. It launched on 28 September 2019. For the 6 months from 1 October 2019 to 31 March 2020 the website averaged 7749 page views per month. Traffic to the website has increased in February and March as the NAC comms team have been producing regular content regarding coronavirus and social distancing/shielding advice for this audience.

SEO on the Patients Website is lacking, organic search drives 68% of traffic to the site, compared to the Aspergillus Website which is 85%. Referral and social channels bring 7% and 6% of traffic to the two websites respectively, with direct traffic (i.e. website visits that arrived on the site either by typing the website URL into a browser or through browser bookmarks) is 18%.

Referrals come mainly from the Aspergillus Website but also the British Lung Foundation, the Aspergillus Trust and the Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust (MFT) respiratory services website.

93% of all social traffic comes from Facebook. NAC has a very active Facebook page and numerous group pages all of which are used to drive traffic to the site through news and blog post shares.

Top countries utilising the Patients' Website by origin are: 1. USA, 2. UK, 3. Australia, 4. India, 5. Canada.

Many patients and carers use online support discussion groups and the FIT supports these people in several ways:

- Our (Facebook) worldwide communities are very active with >2,300 participants (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/aspergillussupport/>),
- The NHS Choices (Now NHS online) online community has over 2000 members
- Local online Facebook groups (30 groups, 11 in the UK serving >700 people)
- Facebook group specifically for carers (190 members) (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/aspergillois.carers/>)
- The Professional LinkedIn members (Aspergillus and Aspergillois Group) has 538 members.

The provision of live and recorded online events held by the National Aspergillois Centre, happen each month are now hosted within the Facebook communities and generally get >500 viewers each month.

Leading International Fungal Education (LIFE) (www.LIFE-Worldwide.org)

The LIFE worldwide website received on average 25.5k unique page views each month, although many were single-page sessions.

The most frequently visited page, with nearly 17k page views (over 5% of all web traffic), is the [fungal culture](#) page which provides information on how to culture fungi and interpret the growth. The majority of traffic comes from organic search (80.2%), followed by direct (18.7%).

The US accounts for 28% of all users followed by India (13.5%), Mexico (6.6%), Colombia (4.7%), the UK (4.6%) and Spain (3.2%). The majority of users (59%) use a mobile device to access LIFE worldwide, followed by desktop (38%) and tablet (2.8%).

A component of the LIFE effort was to boost public awareness of fungal infections generally. This has involved estimating the burden of serious fungal disease in over 87 countries, to highlight the seriousness of a range of primary and secondary fungal diseases. Additions since last year's report are underlined.

- Published in journals (x67): Algeria, Argentina, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Congo (Republic of), Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, France, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, India, Iran, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Malawi, Malaysia, Mexico, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, Russia, Senegal, Serbia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, Uganda, UK, Ukraine, Uruguay, Uzbekistan and Vietnam. Published burden papers are available at <https://www.gaffi.org/media/academic-papers/>.
- Presented in abstract/poster form at conferences but not yet published (x20): Azerbaijan, Australia, Belarus, Benin, China, Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Iraq, Indonesia, Japan, Madagascar, Mongolia, Morocco, New Zealand, Paraguay, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Togo, Venezuela, Zambia (copies are available on the LIFE website in the news section <http://www.life-worldwide.org/media-centre/news>)

The FIT also supported a number of interesting and significant findings. There were 15 peer-reviewed publications in calendar year 2019 as a direct consequence of FIT grants. burden of fungal disease estimates (as above) and infrastructure support in prior years and are shown in Appendix 1. The notable outputs include:

- A summary of diagnostics that should be listed as Essential by the WHO
- Country burden of disease estimates for 10 countries including South Africa which has the highest prevalence of HIV infection in the world.
- The first prospective study of chronic pulmonary aspergillosis after tuberculosis in Africa (Uganda).

During the year support was given to research projects at Salford University, the University of Manchester and to the Advances Against Aspergillosis and Mycoses Conference in Lugano, Switzerland. In addition Travel and Living Allowance Grants for attendance and presentation at scientific conferences totalling £2,517 (2019 £4,952) were made during the year as part of the Trust's policy to support scientists in the early stages of their careers in mycology.

Who benefited from the Trust's Activities?

Researchers all over the world

Doctors all over the world, especially through the Drug Interactions database

Patients and their carers.

Students of medicine, pharmacy, biology and microbiology

The public – school children, their teachers and parents.

How do the Trust's Activities Benefit the Public?

The Aspergillus Website has been pivotal in making the topic easier to access for all users, creating strong online communities. There is a continual need to keep pace with the revolution in social media that has strongly influenced the development of communities on the World Wide Web.

In 2015, The Aspergillus Website added provision of live and recorded online events held by the National Aspergillosis Centre in Manchester, happening on a monthly basis. These provide several means of support including factual, social and information on present and possible future means to diagnose and treat aspergillosis. These recordings were viewed 250-450 times per month in 2018. Support for carers is being actively promoted via specialist speakers from the Manchester Carers Group. These meetings have spawned 6 regional group meetings across the UK, led by patients.

The Patient's Website, affiliated to and managed by The Aspergillus Website team, has made it possible for patients to start writing (and update periodically) their own stories complete with pictures and in some cases have videoed patients telling parts of their stories. Website users now have use of Facebook pages for Aspergillus & Aspergillosis, Mycotoxin Research as well as Patients Support and all updates of the website are broadcast via Twitter (@AspergillusWeb).

Future plans

For The Aspergillus Website, the addition of Russian papers and a focus on new antifungals coming through will occupy some of the new information to be added. A much more detailed website section on dampness and mould in the home is planned, offering information and support to tenants & landlords. The antifungal drug interaction database will continue to be updated, with the help of a consultant pharmacist, to ensure information quality is as high as possible. Integration of the 50,000-strong Aspergillus Website community with Facebook (local patients & carers support in UK and US), LinkedIn (professional groups), Yahoo Groups (patients & carers), HealthUnlocked (patients and clinical trials), Wikispaces (patients' own stories), Slideshare (patients support meetings, aspergillus study day for professionals, audio & slides), is ongoing.

The online Microscopy and Histology course will be launched in English, with an infographic and press release, and then translated into Spanish, French and Portuguese.

FINANCIAL REVIEW,

The results for the period are set out on page 10. There was a surplus of Income over Expenditure for the year of £76,952, (2019 - £ 49,217). Corporate Governance expenditure represented 2.20% of total income (2019 5.86%).

Investment Policy

The trustees do not consider that they have sufficient free reserves to invest surplus funds for any medium to long term. Consequently, funds are maintained in a bank deposit account

Reserves Policy

The charity have established a policy to maintain unrestricted funds not committed or invested in fixed assets i.e. 'free reserves' at a level of between one and two years of unrestricted expenditure. This provides sufficient levels of funds to be able to continue the current activities of the charity and to provide sufficient time to consider and replace existing funding sources should there be a significant change in present funding arrangements. The reserves policy will be reviewed annually.

Secretariat

The trustees wish to express their appreciation of the work undertaken by Mr J Morgan in running the secretariat and administrative functions of the Trust during the past year.

Independent Examiners

In accordance with the Trust Deed, a proposal to re-appoint Company Solutions Ltd for the forthcoming year will be put to the general meeting.

On behalf of the Trustees

Phillip Oxnam

8 October 2020