

TRUSTEES REPORT

2022

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 2022. 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 P G Oxnam Chairman

Mr J C Morgan Secretary

Professor J Cooke (resigned 5 October 2022)

Professor P J Folkman

Professor R Hay

Dr C L Pankhurst

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.

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 recognise they 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 in 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

The FIT website (www.fungalinfectiontrust.org) averaged ~640 (range 528 – 764) unique visitors per month in late 2021 and 2022. The most popular pages are What we do, Research Grants and Fungal Disease Awareness Week.

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

The FIT continues to support the world's first online Microscopy and Histology course (Microfungi). To date this course has hosted 2,200 distinct users from 132 countries (an increase from 1849 the previous year). The key participants have been from the United Kingdom, Mexico, Brazil, USA, India, Nigeria, Argentina, Colombia, Spain, and Ghana. Currently this course is available in English, Spanish, French, Portuguese and Chinese. So far 470 pass or distinction certificates have been awarded. All those registered on the course can re-enter the course to refresh their knowledge at any point. This makes Microfungi an invaluable life-long learning tool for all healthcare practitioners. Typically 5 – 15 users' login each day.

The Aspergillus Website @ www.aspergillus.org.uk

The Aspergillus Website has been in operation since 1998, so this is its 24th year of operation. 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 has been supported by unrestricted educational grants from various corporate donors, notably Pfizer, Dynamiker and Gilead.

The Aspergillus Website was moved from the obsolete operating system it was based on in late September 2020, so this is the end of its second year on its new platform in WordPress – a move made possible by the continuing success and expansion of that system worldwide and its improved ability to run a website the size of the Aspergillus Website. It has run consistently well on WordPress over the two years.

A drawback of moving the underlying content management system (CMS) of any website is that almost all of the links are changed, which means that all searches in any search engine become out of date overnight. As many visitors to most websites arrive as a result of Google and Bing searches (and others) this means that overall user number sharply drops. In the case of the Aspergillus Website it dropped from an average of 1000 users per day to 400 users per day.

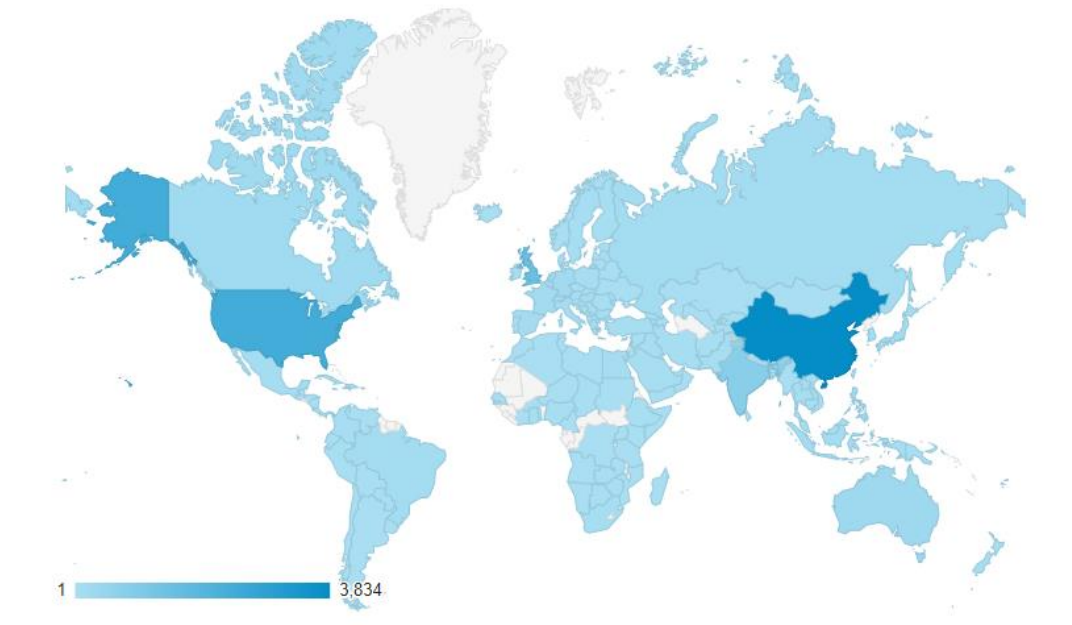
Steps were taken to ensure the new website links would be taken up by search engines as quickly as possible and the number of users rose to 500 per day by end of 2020. The increase continued up until summer 2021 but has dropped in early 2022.

The Aspergillus Website is still read very widely across the world, with (in order of usage, highest to lowest) China, USA, UK, India and Australia making up 65% of users. China, USA UK, India, Australia, Germany Canada, Philippines, France and Russia are the most frequent users. The prominence of two non-English speaking countries in the top 6 (and 4 more in the top 10) may reflect our decision to add in automatic language translation of the entire website when the website was moved to WordPress.

The Aspergillus Website provides free easy access to >74,000 pages, over 15,400 scientific articles (including a unique collection of 836 historical articles) and over 17,200 conference abstracts from 1974 onwards. The Aspergillus Website has been mostly viewed on desktop PC (66%) rather than mobile (33%) in 2022, possibly

reflecting the professional nature of its users and most of the rest of the world use mobile phones to browse websites.

Fig 1. 90 days Feb-April 2022



The comprehensive list of drugs and drug interactions with antifungals is continually updated. The drug interaction database (www.aspergillus.org.uk/antifungal-drug-interactions/) (including the antifungal drug interaction app for android phones) is popular and well used. Links from other websites to this specific part of the website have been added.

Leading International Fungal Education (LIFE) (www.LIFE-Worldwide.org) (June 2021- May 2022)

The LIFE Worldwide website recorded 103k users during this period with 119k individual visits. This figure is down on 2020/21 as we began to migrate content away from this platform on to the new www.fungaleducation.org site. We estimate that this traffic will transfer across to the new site during 2022/23 and we will see a steady growth in users as we market these new resources. We launched the new platform www.fungaleducation.org in 2022. Work is ongoing to add and develop content for the new site. It was widely promoted at the international ECCMID meeting in Lisbon. 2022/23 will focus on further marketing the platform and targeting specific global audiences.

The Spanish pages continue to be popular and well-used indicating a need for us to present the website in multiple languages.



Over the last 90 days we have recorded over 700 users on the new site, with around 45% of these accessing the Spanish version of the site.

Our YouTube channel continues to be an impactful part of the LIFE Worldwide educational offering. As well as adding three new videos on drug/drug interactions we also had the exceptional milestone of one of our videos passing 100,000 views. Over the year our channel has received 105,000 watches, equating to almost 4,000 hours of viewing time. Our top 5 countries by audience are India (35%), United States (13%), Bangladesh (4%), Pakistan (3%) and Philippines (2%).

LIFE Worldwide continues to make a substantial impact on Twitter. During 2021/22 our Tweets received over 192,000 impressions, and we saw a steady growth of followers (20.5% growth over the year). The Tweet with the biggest impact was promoting the Center For Disease Control's Fungal Disease Awareness Week. We are using this data to build a marketing calendar for 2022/23 to utilise the various global awareness days and to use these to raise our profile.

A component of the LIFE effort has been to boost awareness of fungal infections generally, by quantifying the problem better. This has involved estimating the burden of serious fungal disease in over 100 countries, to highlight the seriousness of a range of primary and secondary fungal diseases. Additions since last year's report are underlined.

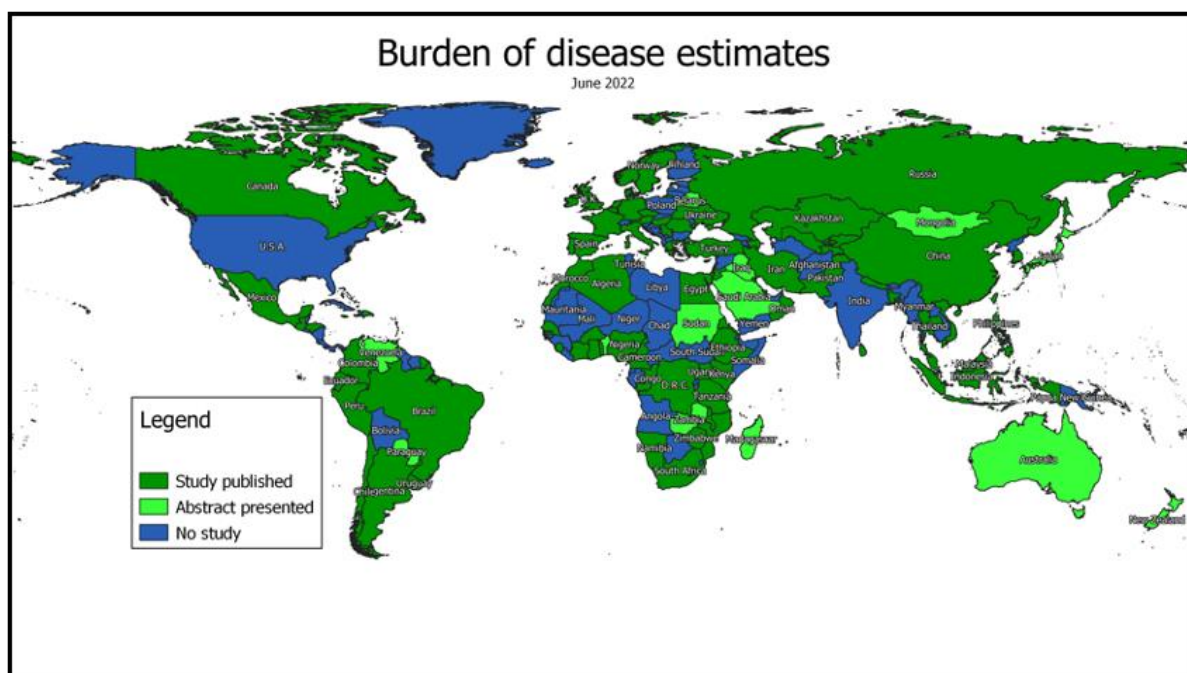
- Published in journals (x81): Algeria, Argentina, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo (Republic of), Cote d'Ivoire, Czech Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, France, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Malawi, Malaysia, Mexico, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, Russia, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Taiwan, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, Uganda, UK, Ukraine, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vietnam and Zimbabwe. Published burden papers are available at <https://www.gaffi.org/media/academic-papers/>.
- Presented in abstract/poster form at conferences but not yet published (x13): Australia, Belarus, Benin, Iraq, Japan, Madagascar, Mongolia, New Zealand, Paraguay, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Venezuela, Zambia (detail is available on the LIFE website in the news section <http://www.life-worldwide.org/media-centre/news>).

Top media Tweet earned 5,468 impressions

It's @CDCgov Fungal Disease Awareness Week. Throughout the week we'll be highlighting relevant resources for you to access to learn more about the global impact of fungal diseases.

#thinkfungus #meded #fungalinfection #awareness #education #research #mycology pic.twitter.com/qV3ZBpxh7D

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The FIT also supported several important research publications and reviews (see Appendix). There were 15 peer-reviewed publications in calendar year 2021 as a direct consequence of FIT grants and collaborations. The notable outputs include:

- Two papers describing the diagnostic performance of the new point of care assay for *Aspergillus* antibody – related to subtle immunodeficiency and in Indonesia,
- Country burden of disease estimates for 6 countries in 2021, including 2 highly populous countries – DRC and Indonesia,
- A review of antifungal drug interactions, linked to the online database: www.aspergillus.org.uk/antifungal-drug-interactions/
- Two papers related to how professional phagocytes in the body actually kill *Aspergillus* fungi.

During the year support was given to research projects at the University of Perugia, Italy; the Medical Research Foundation, Trinidad and Tobago; the University of Lomé, Togo; the Université de Montagnes, Banganté, Cameroon. Travel and Living Allowance Grants for attendance and presentation at scientific conferences totalling £780 (2021 Nil) 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 in the study of fungi (mycology), respiratory medicine and infectious diseases from all over the world
Medical doctors, 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?

Awareness of fungal disease remains low among the general public. The FIT website enables the public to access reliable information quickly on this topic, augmented by the more specialised web resources at LIFE-Worldwide and the Aspergillus Website. The rebranded FIT website also re-posts press and general stories and explanatory articles for easy access for all.

Future plans

In 2022, an update and overhaul of the Microfungi educational website is planned. Efforts to promote the FIT resources internationally are planned at major conferences in Europe, USA, Asia and Africa. The Aspergillus Website continues to provide a valuable resource internationally, with some additional content. The FIT will respond to grant requests as it has done previously.

FINANCIAL REVIEW,

The results for the period are set out on page 9. There was a deficit of Income over Expenditure for the year of £70,200, (2021 £36,150). Corporate Governance expenditure represented 20.70% of total income (2021 14.50%).

During the year the re-design of the Fungal Infection Website was completed at a cost of £1,200. As a result of the restrictions placed upon us because of the COVID-19 Pandemic all Trustees meetings were held using Zoom as a consequence no Trustees Expenses or Meeting Costs were incurred.

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 is 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 Examiner

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

On behalf of the Trustees

Phillip Oxnam

5 October 2022