



The inaugural International Forum on Disability Management (IFDM) was launched by the National Institute of Disability Management and Research (NIDMAR) in Vancouver, Canada in 2002. The global forum has since taken place in Maastricht, Netherlands in 2004; Brisbane, Australia in 2006; Berlin, Germany in 2008; Los Angeles, USA in 2010; and London, UK in 2012. The IFDM offers leadership, evidence-based research and guiding solutions to governments, employers, workers, unions, insurance providers and representatives from the health, safety, rehabilitation and workers' compensation communities.

*Photo LR:
Nathan Clarke, Executive Director, PIEF
hands over the IFDM flag to Dr. Mohammed
Azman, Deputy CEO, SOCSO/ PERKESO,
the host for IFDM 2016 in Malaysia*

IFDM 2014 pushes “beyond the boundaries” with innovative keynote speakers and plenary sessions



In 2014, the IFDM returned to Australia. Held at the Grand Hyatt in Melbourne, from November 17 to 19, the Forum was hosted by the Personal Injury Education Foundation (PIEF). The highly successful event attracted over 460 participants from 19 countries, representing 160 organizations.

Keynote speakers and agenda highlights

The theme for the 7th IFDM was “Disability Management: pushing beyond the boundaries.” According to PIEF Executive Director Nathan Clarke, “We chose this theme as we believe that it is time disability management is taken to the next level, where all stakeholders are involved in driving the change agenda.”

The three-day agenda from November 17 to 19 included keynote addresses, panel sessions, concurrent abstract sessions, workshops, networking events and dinners, and a social program. On the third day, the 2014 Australasian Compensation Health Research Forum (ACHRF) was held following the IFDM. The topic, “The influence of mental health and psychosocial factors on recovery outcomes,” was geared to policy-makers and researchers.

International keynote speakers for IFDM 2014 included Tom Shakespeare, PhD, University of East Anglia Medical School, United Kingdom; Hans-Horst Konkolewsky, Secretary General of the International Social Security Association, Switzerland; and Dr. Joachim Breuer, German Social Accident Insurance (DGUV), Germany.

The East Anglia Medical School's Dr. Shakespeare presented research on medical and social models, contributing factors, statistics and solutions in his address: “Work for those who can, support for those who can't; The difference that disability makes.”



Mr. Konkolewsky's keynote address, entitled "From 'Payer' to 'Player': The ISSA's Return to Work Guidelines for Social Security Organisations," introduced the concepts behind the new ISSA Centre of Excellence, calling it, "A roadmap to good governance, high performance and service quality in social security administration." He further reviewed the centre's role "3-D approach" to prevention, involving risk prevention, health promotion and return to work.

Dr. Breuer's highly visual PowerPoint presentation on disability management investigated the territory between "global thinking and local acting" and examined the process by which social innovation comes about.

Plenary session uses humour in hypothetical situation

One of the plenary sessions of note was entitled, "How do you design an effective and holistic work integration scheme that covers all sections of the community?," and was facilitated by Stella Young, a comedian, disability advocate and editor of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) *Ramp up* website, the online space for news, discussion and opinion about disability in Australia. Invited speakers for the panel included the DGUV's Joachim Breuer, ISSA's Hans-Horst Konkolewsky, CEO Denise Cosgrove from the Victorian Workcover Authority, and Hector Upegui of IBM Cúram, who focused their discussions on what has worked or not worked in their part of the world.

It was noted at the session that the global annual cost of injury is currently over US \$1.25 trillion, more than 270 million workplace accidents occur each year and unemployment rates for people with disabilities have not significantly improved. The panel discussed whether these figures indicate a failure of the current disability management systems. In addition, they explored barriers to improvement, the role of governments, and whether a different or re-designed approach is needed in regard to prevention and work retention programs.

About the hosts and supporters of IFDM 2014

PIEF was established in 2006 by a consortium of Australian and New Zealand accident compensation regulators, insurers and claims management organizations that shared the vision of creating leading educational programs, initiatives and events focused on the needs of those working in the accident compensation industry. The programs developed by PIEF have been designed to enrich and enhance the

range and depth of personal injury management skills, leading to better outcomes for all accident compensation schemes and the communities they are designed to serve. PIEF is a not-for-profit organization with members from across Australia. For more, please visit <http://www.pief.com.au/>.

In 2003, the International Disability Management Standards Council (IDMSC) was established by senior representatives of business, labour, government, and other stakeholder groups from around the world. The goal of the IDMSC is to reduce the human, social and economic costs of disability in the workplace. To achieve this end, it promotes standards that are international, professional and based on consensus. The International Forum on Disability Management forms part of the IDMSC strategy to achieve these standards and consensus.

Plan ahead for IFDM 2016 and 2018

The IFDM heads to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in 2016. The forum will be hosted by Malaysia's Social Security Organization (SOCO/PERKESO), which launched the country's first return to work program in 2007. The event in 2016 will mark the 10th year that SOCO formally introduced disability management structures in Malaysia and will showcase the organization's DM leadership role.

SOCO organizers advise that topics will cover the biopsychosocial context of disability management and will cater to a wide-variety of stakeholders, from the medical fraternity, employers, and employees to academics, insurance providers and those involved on the frontlines of disability management. For further details, please visit the website: <http://ifdm2016.com.my/>

In 2018, the Forum returns to its birthplace in Vancouver, Canada. Pacific Coast University for Workplace Health Sciences (PCU-WHS) will host the IFDM (please visit the website: <http://www.ifdm2018.com/>) and has announced the chosen theme for IFDM 2018: **Innovation in Integrated Workplace Health.**

