



## MedPlant latest news - April 2015

### Midterm meeting in August

Reading and Copenhagen are in the process of planning the Mid-term meeting and an official invitation will follow in 2-3 weeks.

Sunday August 2: Arrival

Monday August 3: Midterm meeting with EU - all participate

Tuesday-Wednesday August 4-5: Project review days - all participate

Wednesday August 5: Supervisory Board Meeting - Supervisory Board (PIs) participate

Thursday August 6: Dissemination workshop - Fellows and PIs (Mandatory for supervisors, associate partners encouraged)

Friday August 7: Visit to Kew gardens and the economic botany collections - Free for all

Saturday- Monday August 8-10: Bioinformatics workshop - Fellows participate

### Fellows deliverables before and for Midterm meeting!

4 weeks before the meeting all fellows must submit an on-line mid-term assessment questionnaire – an email will be sent out with more info and link in May.

At the Midterm meeting all fellows must present a poster about the project and results/achievements so far.

### MedPlant methods manual from 1<sup>st</sup> Summer school in Morocco

The methods manual is being produced and should be ready before the mid-term meeting.

### Nordic Natural Products Conference 2015

Many partners and fellows from MedPlant WP1 (Island, Uppsala, Copenhagen) will be participating in the NNPC at Uppsala University 15-16 June (<http://www.fkog.uu.se/nnpc/>) presenting their MedPlant results.

### When to remember MedPlant acknowledgement?

Do remember to acknowledge MedPlant funding both in publications and communications resulting from the work of the Fellows, but also when PIs are involved in other MedPlant related activities, publications, conference presentation etc. whenever relevant. And please remember to send Mette the citations of publications, presentations, and other outreach/dissemination work where MedPlant is mentioned/acknowledge, so we can add it to the lists on the web and in the reports to EU. If in doubt about what can count as MedPlant activities, just ask. You can use the following sentence to acknowledge MedPlant funding: *The research leading to these results has received funding from the People Programme (Marie Curie Actions) of the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme FP7/2007-2013/ under REA grant agreement n° 317184".*

### Outreach opportunity

As part of MedPlant outreach some of the projects must be presented by videos on the MedPlant website, youtube, faculty homepage ect. We would therefore like to hear from those of you who would like to produce a short video (2-3 min.)

about your project. This is also a great opportunity to practice some of the communication methods you learned during the 1<sup>st</sup> Summer School!

### **Updates from Fellows and Partners**

Astrid Henz, ESR1, has enlarged their in-house data base with over 10.000 entries in her project. She is currently in Taiwan for a course preparing for a longer stay next year.

Matthias Geck, ESR7, has almost completed the official fieldwork and the results look very interesting: some 550 medicinal plant taxa from Chiapas and Oaxaca, will make further analysis an interesting task. In addition to the recompilation of ethno pharmacopoeia, more detailed ethno medical data have been collected in group sessions with key informants. The main focus here are folk illnesses with a marked psychosomatic component and selection criteria for medicinal plants. As a side-note: these group sessions are always rather difficult to organize and guide but have been working really well, with the exception of a case around three weeks ago when two healers started accusing each other of witchcraft and ended up hitting each other. The positive news for that is that I had yet another chance to observe Zoque first-aid as provided by the other participants.

Karen Martinez, ERS3, co-authored a review publication with her supervisor Henrik Toft Simonsen entitled: "Thapsigargin - from Thapsia L. to Mipsagargin" in *Molecules* 2015, 20, 6113-6127. doi:10.3390/molecules20046113. This review describes the discovery of the new drug, the on-going elucidation of the biosynthesis of thapsigargin in the plant and attempts to supply the global market with a novel potent anti-cancer drug.

Natalie Iwanycki, ERS4, has collected *Plantago* major plants and soil so far from 17 countries in over 70 populations around the world. DNA extractions have been made so far from eleven global localities and the first 96-well plate has been sent off to Cornell University for genotyping-by-sequencing analyses (GBS). Field work is being planned in Spain and the Canary Islands, and our growing network of global collaborators will be making collections in Greece, China, Korea, South Africa and many other localities in the world this spring.

Maonian Xu, ERS2, has finished his stay in Akureyri, where he has been focusing on the plant barcoding of Icelandic club mosses (32 specimens of 4 genera). Two-locus barcodes, *rbcL* and *matK*, were used. Currently, above regions of all specimens have been amplified using PCR and they are under sequencing now. Phylogeny of Icelandic club mosses will be finished this month. Two protein-encoding genes of lichenized fungi (*Mcm7* and *SSU*) and algal nuclear ribosomal ITS region have also been amplified and under sequencing now. In addition, a manuscript about secondary metabolites of cetrarioid lichens has been finished and it is under revision among my co-supervisors. Hopefully we will submit it this month.

*This project has received funding from the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme for research, technological development and demonstration under grant agreement no. 606895.*

To reply to this email, please write to [mette.wenoe@snm.ku.dk](mailto:mette.wenoe@snm.ku.dk)

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