

International Forum for the Study of Itch (IFSI)

IFSI, 2200 Silas Creek Parkway Suite 7B, Winston-Salem NC 27103 USA



1st Global SIG Day of the International Forum for the Study of Itch (IFSI)

Since 2007, Special Interest Groups (SIG) of IFSI are platforms for small focus groups to discuss highly specific issues in depth. The membership application in a SIGs is open to any member of the IFSI. Chairs of each SIG invite applicants to the SIGs to be members or to be part of SIG activities.

The Global SIG day was intended to create a network among SIGs and find uncovered areas and novel projects. It is also aimed to enable exchange of state of the art, and initiate a discussion between science and industry. The first Global SIG Day was held as a preconference session of the 10th World Congress on Itch on November 17 in Sydney, Australia. The agenda is attached.

These are the current SIGs:

SIG	Chairs
Terminology and guidelines (previously named Definition of terms and classifications concerning chronic pruritus)	J.D. Bernhard, S. Ständer
Assessment of Itch (previously named Scoring Itch in Clinical Trials)	J.C. Szepietowski, M. Augustin, S. Ständer
Questionnaires for Itch	E. Weisshaar, U. Gieler, G. Yosipovitch
Itch in Systemic Diseases (including SIG Paraneoplastic Itch, Uremic Itch)	T. Mettang, J.C. Szepietowski
Sensitive Skin	L. Misery
Psychological factors in Itch	A. Evers, J. Kupfer

The current SIG coordinators are S. Ständer, J.C. Szepietowski, G. Yosipovitch and T. Ebata (author of this report). Each SIG presented current data and projects.

1. SIG Terminology, Guidelines and Assessment of Itch

After the welcome remark and introduction by Sonja Ständer, she presented the novel guideline on prurigo. Prurigo is a hot topic now and there are numerous clinical trials going on in the world. This is very timely to start working on it.

A group of 40 members from EU and US are currently working on this. The first consensus conference was held and a first draft of the paper is expected in Q I/2020.

Gil Yosipovitch proposed a responder in clinical trials. Responder definition was derived from several recent psychometric studies. It is not the statistical significance that matters, but minimal clinically important difference is the determinant in establishing the amount of change in itch reported by patients. So far worst pruritus NRS with the recall period of 24hrs seems to be the most important suggested domain.

Suphey Chen presented several tools for assessing itch in children of various age groups. The adaptation of ItchyQoL into each age group such as TweenitchyQoL (8-17yo), KidsItchyQoL (6-7yo), TotItchyQoL (4-5yo) was introduced. A cartoon annotated numeric rating scale, ItchyQuant was also presented.

There was a discussion about difficulties in assessing itch in children, especially those under 4 years old. There were suggestions that using cartoons may be useful for adults as well. Terminology worst itch seems to be better than peak itch. In the discussion of whether to use worst or average itch, worst itch is recommended but average itch is also needed for evaluation of AUC (area under the curve) of itch in a certain time course. There was a suggestion from the pain field that it is not just the perceptual component but emotional aspect of itch should also be taken into account for itch evaluation as well.

Thanks to vigorous activities of SIG Assessment of Itch, HOME (Harmonizing Outcome Measures of Eczema) initiative meeting that was held in Tokyo this spring adapted peak NRS with the recall period of 24hrs for evaluation of itch intensity to be one of the core outcome set for evaluating atopic eczema. It was a great contribution of SIG of IFSI. We thank T. Ebata for the perfect representation of the IFSI-SIG and its activities at the HOME meeting.

2. SIG Itch Questionnaire

Elke Weisshaar presented the process of creating the international itch questionnaire by introducing their position paper and systemic review that was recently published. As the title says it seems like mission impossible to create one, but the importance of the universal itch questionnaire was acknowledged and its completion is strongly expected. There was suggestion from the floor that Delphi method is recommended in the process of taking items from the already reported questionnaire. Merging this SIG with scoring itch SIG was also suggested. And the participation of patients in creating questionnaire was also recommended.

3. SIG Itch in Systemic Diseases

This SIG is an evolutionary combination of former SIG of uremic itch and paraneoplastic itch. It deals with a wide variety of pruritus. Gil Yosipovitch proposed CPUO, chronic pruritus of unknown origin. They propose the term CPUO to define individuals who present with chronic itch in the absence of an etiology. He showed recommended diagnostic workup for CPUO. There was a table discussion following Gil's talk. There were issues about the role of dry skin, inflammation and immunological disorder as contributing factors of CPUO. This discussion should continue in future.

4. SIG Sensitive skin

Since itch is a prominent symptom of sensitive skin, SIG Sensitive skin was initiated in previous WCI meeting. Its position paper published in 2017 described the definition of sensitive skin. Laurent Misery presented the update of the activity of this SIG. They are working on pathophysiology and management of sensitive skin. Association with alterations of the skin nervous system and skin barrier abnormalities are pointed out. To date there is no data to reach a consensus on sensitive skin management. There was discussion about whether to regard sensitive skin as a disease entity or a kind of symptom.

5. New: SIG Psychological factors in itch

New SIG Psychological factors in itch of which the chairs are Andrea Evers and Jörg Kupfer has just started. Andrea Evers presented that the SIG focuses on 3 main themes, that are Psychological determinants of itch and its measurements, Psychological treatments of itch, and Psychoneurobiological mechanisms of itch. Everyone is aware that itch and scratching has a strong connection with psychological factors and this is an extremely important field for the research and clinical aspect of itch. Already there are more than 20 members of IFSI who declared to join this SIG. We are looking forward to further steps ahead in their achievement.

Finally, Toshiya Ebata presented a summary of the first Global SIG Day. It was really a fruitful and successful session with about two hundred participants and it is expected that more and more IFSI members will have interest and will join these SIGs. Everyone is welcome.

Sunday November 17th 2019; 13:00 – 17:00
IFSI Special Interest Groups (SIGs) – MAIN ROOM

**1st Global SIG Day –
International Harmonization of Standards & Proceedings in
Itch**

Organized by the Chairpersons of the SIGs
Sonja Ständer, Germany, Gil Yosipovitch, USA, Jacek Szepietowski,
Poland, Toshiya Ebata, Japan

AGENDA

1300 – 1315 Ständer Introduction and overview

1315 – 1405 SIG Terminology and guidelines & Assessment of itch

- 10 min Ständer Novel Guideline on Prurigo – where are we?
- 10 min Yosipovitch A responder in clinical trials – what is it?
- 10 min Chen Pediatric itch- how do we assess and unique factors?
- 20 min Discussion

1405 – 1430 SIG Itch Questionnaires

- 10 min Weisshaar International Itch Questionnaire – Mission Impossible?
- 15 min Discussion

1430 – 1500 SIG Itch in Systemic diseases

Controversy: Pruritus in the Elderly VS Chronic Pruritus of Unknown Origin

- 10 min Yosipovitch Opening the Scratch: Introduction
- 20 min Podiums Discussion & Consensus: Lerner, Berger, Ebata, Kremer, Szepietowski, Weisshaar, Ständer, Yosipovitch

1500 – 1530 – Afternoon Tea

1530 – 1600 SIG Sensitive Skin

- 10 min Misery Update of an sensitive issue
- 20 min Discussion

1600 – 1645 NEW SIG Psychological factors in itch

- 25 min Evers Aim of new SIG & first activities
- 20 min Discussion & consensus on proceedings

1645 – 1700 Summary – Ebata