

IAA Mortality Working Group

Proposal to IAA MWG for an IAA MWG Information Base Editorial Committee

We believe that the MWG Information Base is a valuable and much-used asset of the IAA. Without regular updating it will fall into disuse.

At the Zürich meeting of the MWG in April 2015, the MWG agreed to set up an IAA MWG Information Base Editorial Committee. The members have communicated solely by e-mail, and wish to make the following proposals to the MWG. First, we consider what the Information Base is for, then we make proposals for the organisation of the Editorial Committee, then we make proposals for the editorial process and finally we propose criteria for acceptance of new materials.

This paper is for discussion and proposed approval by the MWG.

1. Information Base purpose, target market and present situation

(See www.actuaries.org/mortalityinfo)

1.1. Purpose of the Information Base

- “To facilitate the sharing of mortality knowledge across the various regions served by the IAA” (text taken from the ToR of the MWG)
- “Collecting and disseminating research from both actuarial and non-actuarial sources” (also from the ToR of the MWG)
- To facilitate the work of the members of the MWP and maintain a record of the MWG’s work for members and outsiders
- To make it easy to do the above, by providing hyperlinks to papers/presentations

Clearly academics and professionals specialising in the area will (a) use citations, abstracts, Google Scholar and other search methods, (b) be willing to weed out relevant from irrelevant, and (c) have access to firewalled resources such as Athens. Our Information Base aims at those who do not have that time and those resources, and aims to provide easy access by subject, as far as possible without a firewall, to a pre-selected group of recommended papers and presentations.

1.2. Target market

Worldwide:

- actuaries
- other professionals with an interest in mortality and longevity
- researchers and students wishing to study the subject
- researchers wishing to publicise their own work in our Information Base
- decision-makers, press, public and others wishing to research areas of mortality and longevity

1.3. Present situation

- We now have 13 different “subject areas” on our Information Base. These are subjects that we have considered and reported on over the past seven years.
- Each subject area has selected papers of interest with a brief description and a hyperlink. In total we recommend more than 100 papers and nearly 40 websites
- The Information Base is well used
- Each subject area is looked after by a member of the MWG: the “Page Owner”

2. Editorial Committee: *proposal for the purpose, structure and method of working*

2.1. Purpose

- to ensure (as far as possible) that the Information Base meets the needs of the MWG and the users
- to encourage members of the MWG and others to submit papers that add value to the experience of users of the Information Base
- to ensure through the MWG that there is an active “Page Owner” for each page
- to assist “Page Owners” to vet proposed papers, to ensure an adequate standard

2.2. Structure

The Editorial Committee will have a chair, a secretary, and members drawn from the MWG.

- Role of chair: to convene email “meetings” and ensure progress is achieved against objectives. Brian Ridsdale has as a temporary chair since the last meeting. We would like to identify a volunteer chair at the Vancouver meeting.
- Role of secretary: follow up on proposals by “page owners” and others for new papers, circulation of papers/links to the Editorial Committee and the passing agreed new papers/links to the IAA secretariat for putting up on the Information Base. We would like to identify a volunteer secretary at the Vancouver meeting.
- Members, drawn from the membership of the MWG are at present: Eduardo Trigo Martinez, Ermanno Pitacco, Bridget Browne, Dieter Gaubatz and Brian Ridsdale

2.3. Method of working

Work between meetings will be entirely by e-mail. *We are all very busy, and it would be quite acceptable for people not to comment on every paper. A few comments will be much better than the present position where we have none.*

3. *Proposal for the editorial process*

The current process for adding and reviewing references to papers for the Information Base is that “page owners” are asked to review their web pages regularly (normally before each MWG meeting), and to suggest any changes. *NB when we decide to add a reference to a new paper to the website,*

we are not normally talking about holding the paper itself on the website, merely including the title, author and perhaps a few details of why we have included it – plus, of course, a hyperlink.

We propose that we follow roughly the same **regular process**:

1. Ask "page owners" to review their pages and let us know any changes, including new papers, in advance of each half yearly meeting
2. Review papers presented at our own MWG meetings and at major conferences such "Living to 100" and the UK "International Symposium"
3. Circulate links to the papers to the Editorial Committee for comment.
4. Decide to include or exclude as appropriate and pass them to the IAA secretariat for addition or amendment of the appropriate subject area page.

When time is available, we propose that we also review the overall set of subject areas and the structure of each page.

4. *Proposal for* Criteria for acceptance of papers/presentations

If we agree the proposed Purpose and Target Market (above), then we have a very wide range of acceptability for papers: from peer reviewed academic papers to relatively simple presentations. The criteria could then be fairly simple:

- relevance to the subject
- quality of thinking and presentation
- not duplicating existing papers (if better, could replace existing papers)

For papers from our own team we need the author to confirm our right to hold the paper on the website. For external papers where there is a stable hyperlink, we use the hyperlink. (There are papers on our website where we have been asked by the author to hold a copy on our website, because there is no stable hyperlink, or because the original is firewalled)

5. Actions requested from the MWG

1. Commit as a group to the further development of the IAA MWG Information Base
2. Consider and approve or amend the proposed approach signalled in sections 1 to 4 of this paper
3. Appoint a chair for the Editorial Committee
4. Appoint a secretary for the Editorial Committee
5. Appoint "Page Owners" for all vacant Information Base pages.
6. Members to commit time to review papers and pass papers of relevance to the Editorial Committee

Brian Ridsdale for Editorial Committee

30 Sept 2015