Upcoming EAACI London Congress 2010

EAACI/UEMS Examination

Science in Brief

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and more...

EAACI – excellence in allergy

www.eaaci.net
In the Centre of the Information Flow

This Newsletter aims to disseminate information about everything that is going on in the life of our Academy. It retains its primary purpose in this new format, which I am sure we all appreciate, with its important contact info, news, upcoming events, and info nuggets bringing us as much up-to-date news as possible about all our activities.

The volume of EAACI activities grows day by day. As you can see from the EAACI events calendar, we keep our members busy throughout the entire year! Many exciting events followed the EAACI Congress in Warsaw last year, and more meetings and events are scheduled for 2010. Read about the successful Pediatric Allergy and Asthma Meeting, held in autumn 2008 in Venice, the high scientific quality of the Winter School organised jointly by the Immunology and Dermatology Sections in Grainau, and how the PAPRICA Programme spreads allergy knowledge. I warmly recommend that you consider attending one or several of the five summer schools this year covering all aspects of our work, from diagnostic approaches to new interventions. Alternatively, why not get involved in one of our 21 Task Forces? Another option is to become enthusiastic participants in the third EAACI/UEMS Knowledge Examination. The Newsletter has some sample questions to show you that it is not that hard to give it a try!

The highlight of all EAACI events is the Academy’s Annual Congress. Even as we approach the allergy event of 2010, the EAACI Annual Congress held in London, we take a glimpse into the future at the EAACI Congress organized in Istanbul. The Scientific Programme Committee and the local organising committee worked all-out to organise the London Congress. An unprecedented number of abstracts (nearly 1,900 abstracts) was submitted for London! The scientific programme includes not only the latest developments in basic and clinical science, but also features novel sessions on clinical immunology as well as interactive clinical sessions. As always, the JMAs have organised an excellent programme for London. They also prepared a challenging “survival guide” for JMAs attending the congress. Meet the HQ staff at the EAACI booth, ask questions, and interact with your colleagues.

In line with the tradition of the EAACI Newsletter to inform you about ground-breaking developments in allergy and clinical immunology, the Immunology Section offers an excellent journal review of key papers that have influenced our immunologic insights, from the antigen-presenting and Th2 skewing activity of basophilic granulocytes, to links between the innate immune status of the skin and the allergic immune response, and the cytokine-delivering mechanism of mast cells.

Doesn’t it feel remarkable to be a member of our Academy?

Ioana Agache
Editor of the EAACI Newsletter
EAACI Shifts into Fast Gear

Participating in the development of the European Academy of Allergy and Clinical Immunology during recent years has been a joy and a huge privilege. The Academy now has its own Headquarters, the volume of activities increases all the time, and the flow of information to members and non-members is more comprehensive than ever. We have a series of websites, organise a number of Allergy Schools, and hold new EAACI Mini-Congresses, but the jewel in the crown of the EAACI remains the EAACI Annual Congress, this year held in London under the chairmanship of a past President of the EAACI, Anthony Frew. All the indications tell us that the London Congress will be very popular, as we have more registrations and more submitted abstracts than for any previous EAACI Congress at time of going to press. The Scientific Programme Committee and the Local Organizing Committee have worked all-out to provide you with the best-ever EAACI Congress. I warmly welcome you to this very special event, which you should not miss if you have any interest in allergy or related areas.

The most important task of the EAACI is to provide effective platforms for communication in the allergy field. We hold congresses and mini-congresses, we publish journals to communicate education, and we maintain websites to provide up-to-the-minute information for professionals working in the field of allergy. We help our members to take initiatives in the form of Task Forces, to help different areas of allergy research to develop efficiently. The Task Forces frequently publish Position Papers and Task Force Reports to reach a wider scientific readership. If you would like to make a contribution to any of our Task Forces, please contact your EAACI Interest Group or EAACI Section to develop a proposal. The deadline for proposals for 2011 is early September.

The EAACI is extending our collaborative efforts well beyond our own organization. In the last decade, the EAACI has collaborated with the AAAAI in a programme called PRACTALL, or Practical Allergology. This year, the focus is on asthma phenotypes, and a publication from this group is under way. Basically, our aim has been to discuss how patients with different types of asthma actually respond to medication, and how future research should be focussed to help the physician to diagnose and treat patients with different types of asthma. Keep an eye out for the publication about this, due out soon. We are also collaborating with the World Allergy Organization (WAO) and the GA²LEN network, to strengthen specific Task Forces and collaborative publications. We will work with WAO in the planning of the 2013 EAACI Congress, in Rome, and this collaboration has already commenced. In relation to EAACI national societies, the EAACI seeks new ways for us to collaborate, all coordinated by ExCom Member-at-Large, Ömer Kalayci. If you represent a national society, please do not hesitate to contact either Ömer or myself directly to discuss any ideas about how we can work together.

Later in the year, the EAACI is organizing three Mini-Congresses, including the International Symposium of Molecular Allergology (ISMA) in Munich, the European Rhinitis and Asthma Meeting (ERAM) in Brussels, and the Skin Allergy Meeting (SAM) in Venice, advertised separately in this EAACI Newsletter and on www.eaaci.net. By developing these events, which are planned to be bi-annual, the EAACI extends its portfolio of educational and scientific events, as we believe these meetings add value on top of the annual EAACI Congresses held in June. They provide a second series of platforms for the communication of science, and also provide physicians with additional opportunities to earn Continuous Medical Education. I warmly recommend that you consider attending one or several of these, and why not one that is slightly outside your normal field of interest?

Last but not least, I hope that you take the opportunity to get involved in the EAACI, for the benefit of research in the area, and for the benefit of our specialities and our patients. Participating in the work of EAACI Interest Groups, EAACI Sections, or other EAACI structures is not only very enjoyable, but it can really make a broad and significant impact on the field, influencing patient care well beyond your everyday practice.

The EAACI warmly welcomes your initiatives.

With very best regards,

Jan Lötvall
EAACI President
Tell us about yourself.
I am Persian, and left Iran when I was a child. After living in many countries, I can speak eight languages and know how to make myself at home in differing cultural backgrounds, as well as adapting to diverse audiences. This laid the first building blocks of my communications skills in getting my “message” across efficiently to my audience. Effective communication is all about conveying messages to other people clearly and unambiguously.

Why do you like working for EAACI?
EAACI provides an ideal platform that enables me to combine my nine years of professional communications and marketing experience with my passion for medicine and health. I always visualised working in an environment where I could make a difference by sharing my know-how.

Furthermore, the family spirit at EAACI creates a perfect work environment for me where I can thrive best.

What are your tasks as Head of Communications?
I was recruited shortly after the birth of the EAACI Headquarters and immediately began work by defining our communications processes and structure. We continue to work on developing and implementing communications –from marcom, branding, online and external communications, to public relations, advertising, promotion, public campaigns and publishing.

Why is branding important?
Branding is one of the most important aspects of any business or organisation. An effective branding strategy can give you a significant advantage. Simply put, the brand is a promise to the audience and tells them what they can expect from our services. Our brand derives from who we are, who we want to be, and who people perceive us to be.

Why is consistent corporate design and identity so essential?
It is the face of the company to the world. It reinforces the brand’s key messages and creates trust. Building a strong brand indicates value and the perception of the services that are provided. It also builds confidence and pride in the workforce, and should never be undervalued.

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How do you differentiate public relations from advertising and marketing?
This is my favourite example: A person goes for an interview. At the end, they tell the company that they are the world’s best manager – that’s advertising. If they say that the company needs a manager and that they are the best for the job, that’s marketing. But if, before they can say a word, the company says they have heard the person is a great manager – then that’s public relations.

You are currently investing quite strongly in the web and social media, why?
The use of social media (blogging, forums, and social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter) is a prominent marketing communications tool in the modern business world, and can be a very effective way to promote products and services. We have just launched an allergy news portal, Facebook and Twitter. The response is extraordinary – our Facebook fans soared from zero to 400 within one week!

What are your future plans?
My key strategy is to build and implement strong communications structures that will strengthen EAACI in the long term.

Are you an EAACI Member?

Here are just a few of the benefits Members receive:

- Discount on registration fees to EAACI annual congresses.
- Subscription to ALLERGY Journal and the Pediatric Allergy and Immunology Journal including supplements.
- Online access to the official EAACI journals.
- The EAACI Newsletter.

For more information contact: info@eaaci.net | www.eaaci.net
With nearly 1,900 abstracts submitted, the programme committee has had its work cut out to review and organise all the free communications for the London Congress. It took us two days to put together 25 sessions for oral presentations and 26 poster discussion sessions, with the remaining abstracts grouped into thematic posters. During the congress, every poster will be reviewed by at least two official invigilators and discussed to make sure that everyone’s work is given due attention. There will be the usual abstract prizes for the best poster or presentation within each session or poster block. As well as reviewing all these abstracts, we have added extra sessions covering hot topics, year-in-review symposia, and six lunchtime Pro&Con debates. Registrations are well on track for this to be the largest allergy meeting ever, and we hope to welcome about 8,000 delegates to London.

Walking round the centre of London in February, we were struck by the liveliness of the city after dark – lots of pubs and eating places as well as all the theatres and clubs. By June, the days will be much longer and we can expect to be in daylight until after 22:00 hours, but the buzz will be the same. Those of us who live in and around London sometimes take it for granted, but it is one of the world’s great cities, with outstanding museums, churches, parks, and public buildings. And did I mention the shopping districts? With the Euro riding high against the pound at the moment, there are bargains for everyone – but if you want my advice, I would go for the traditional shops and goods – the sort of things you do not see in shopping malls and airport duty-free shops.

The British Society (BSACI) is really looking forward to hosting this year’s EAACI Congress, and our team will do everything in its power to make this the best allergy congress yet (something I am sure Istanbul will also target!). We are developing a fantastic social programme to complement the scientific aspects of the Congress. Come and enjoy! Meet your friends and colleagues in London, and of course learn and update everything you need about your science and your specialty.

See you there soon!

Tony Frew
EAACI 2010 Congress President

News from the EAACI Scientific Programme Committee

We held the so-called Marathon Meeting, during which the programme for the annual Congress is finalised, on February 11-13th in London. It was chaired by Congress President Anthony Frew and Scientific Programme Committee Co-ordinator Christian Virchow.

The challenge welcomed at this meeting was the fact that a record number of more than 1,800 abstracts had to be allocated to their respective sessions and dates. With this unprecedented number of abstracts, the 2010 London EAACI Congress has the potential of becoming the largest congress ever. The scientific programme includes not only the latest developments in basic and clinical science, but also novel sessions on clinical immunology as well as interactive clinical sessions, when individual cases can be discussed with experts in the field.

One week after this, the SPC met again to put together the scientific programme for the 2011 Istanbul Congress. Based on an outline excellently prepared by Congress President Ömer Kalayci, Scientific Secretary Sevim Bavbek, and the Local Organising Committee, the members of the SPC were able to arrange the scientific sessions suggested by the Sections, Interest Groups, and the membership into a preliminary programme, which is at this stage already far advanced. This programme promises to be an outstanding collection of educational and scientific sessions, forming the basis for yet another successful EAACI Congress.
The 29th EAACI Congress in London Made Simple – Survival Guide

The U.S. Army Survival Manual uses the word ‘survival’ as a memory device to set important principles firmly in your thinking. Follow this guide and you will have the best EAACI Congress ever!

Size Up the Situation
Your condition?
Fantastic! You are one of the privileged Congress participants. Your great scientific adventure is just starting!

Tools?
All you need to bring with you are:
• Travel grant confirmation letter
• ID/Passport
• Travel grant reimbursement form
• Your poster or overhead (do not forget your digital files...)
• Great mood for the entire meeting!

Surroundings?
Depending on the moment you could be:
• At an airport (Heathrow, Gatwick, Luton, or Stansted)
• At a train station (Victoria, Paddington or Liverpool Street Station)
• At the congress venue (ExCeL Exhibition and Convention Centre)
• In the JMA hotel (Your name will be on the list and you can easily check in)
• Any exciting place in London

Use All Your Senses, Undue Haste Makes Waste
In each situation use your brain! First think, then talk, then succeed.

Remember Where You Are
• Registration area
  After arrival at ExCeL, check your registration
• Travel grant desk
  Fill in the reimbursement form
• Speaker’s room
  Hand in a digital copy of your oral presentation, if applicable
• CME credits desk
  Scan your badge every day
• Lecture rooms
  Check out the mini-schedule provided with your congress bag
• JMA activities
  Visit www.eaaci.net/juniors/activities for a comprehensive list and do not forget the JMA Poster Session, which takes place before the Opening Ceremony

Vanquish Fear and Panic
Do not worry. Every EAACI JMA has experienced their first Annual Congress. So far, there is no documentation on any victims...

Improvise
Especially if you do not know an answer during your presentation. In such a situation, you should also follow the “U” tip.

Value Living
Enjoy the unique opportunity of combining science with a great social programme and the atmosphere and buzz of London itself!

Act Like the Natives
Do not miss afternoon tea on any day of the Congress.

Live by your Wits, But for Now, Learn the Basic Skills
Participate in as many lectures, sessions, and courses as you can. Not only will you survive this Congress, you will improve your practical skills and knowledge. For more details, please visit: www.eaaci.net and www.eaaci2010.com

Milena Sokolowska
JMA Immunology Section Representative
On behalf of the EAACI Junior Members and Affiliates Working Group

www.theallergynews.com

• Service to physicians and scientists for the most up-to-date scientific information.
• Selected reports about allergy and clinical immunology.
• Organised around four topic-based modules: Asthma and Rhinitis, Immunotherapy/Allergens, Immunology in Allergy, and Skin, Food & Drug Allergy.
• Platform for scientific discussions.
• Personal news selection by the EAACI President.
The Award was first established in 2000 on the initiative of Allergopharma Joachim Ganzer KG and in collaboration with the European Academy of Allergy and Clinical Immunology. It is intended that the Award should recognize scientific achievement on the part of younger members of the EAACI in the field of allergy and encourage their engagement in further research. Applications for the Award are therefore restricted to members or affiliates of the EAACI, under the age of 40 years, who have conducted their research in a European centre.

An application for consideration for the award shall take the form of a full research paper published in an international peer reviewed journal in 2008/2010, together with a covering letter and curriculum vitae including a list of publications. The applications will be considered by an ad hoc Commission nominated by the EAACI Executive Committee and Allergopharma. The eleventh Award will be presented during the European Academy of Allergy and Clinical Immunology Congress, Istanbul 2011.

Applications should be submitted before 31 December 2010 electronically to both the EAACI Head-quarters (silvia.schaller@eaaci.net) and Allergopharma (oliver.cromwell@allergopharma.de). The research paper, curriculum vitae and a covering letter should be included as three separate attachments. If this is not possible, then postal applications can be sent to EAACI Head-quarters, Genferstrasse 21, CH-8002 Zurich, Switzerland (Tel.: +41 44 205 55 33).

Allergopharma Joachim Ganzer KG is committed to furthering excellence in allergy diagnosis and specific immunotherapy through investment in scientific research.

Further Informations can be obtained from: Allergopharma Joachim Ganzer KG, 21462 Reinbek near Hamburg, Germany
Phone +49 40 72765-185, Fax +49 40 72765-318, www.allergopharma.com, e-mail: oliver.cromwell@allergopharma.de
**ISMA 2010**

4th International Symposium on Molecular Allergology  
29 – 31 October 2010 · Munich, Germany

**Highlights**

- Novel concepts in molecular allergology
- Structural and functional biology of allergens
- Changing gears: allergenic molecules for allergy diagnosis
- Allergenic molecules from special sources
- Indoor and outdoor allergen measurements
- Immunomonitoring of allergen-specific immunotherapy with allergenic molecules
- Improving allergen-specific immunotherapy with allergenic molecules
- Genetics of allergic diseases
- Animal models of allergic diseases
- Diagnostic and therapeutic use of allergenic molecules in food allergy

www.eaaci-sma2010.com

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**ERAM/SERIN 2010**

European Rhinitis and Asthma Meeting  
SQUARE Brussels Meeting Centre  
Brussels, Belgium, 4-6 November 2010

**Highlights**

- Upper-lower airways interactions
- Epidemiology of co-morbidities
- The natural course of airway disease
- Phenotypes – phenotypes – phenotypes!
- Treatments for both asthma and rhinitis
- Pediatric rhinitis/rhinosinusitis
- Severe chronic airway disease
- T cell signatures in airway mucosa
- Dendritic cells and the epithelium
- Genetics and Epigenetics of airway diseases
- Innate immunity: PAMPs and DAMPs
- Viral impact on airway disease
- Superantigens in airway disease
- Chronic infection in the airways

www.eaaci-eram-serin2010.com

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**First Announcement**

SAM 2010  
SKIN ALLERGY MEETING  
Venice, Italy, 11-13 November 2010

**Topics to be presented:**

- Pathophysiology - Clinical Picture and Management of Atopic Dermatitis - Contact Dermatitis - Cutaneous Drug Allergy - Food Allergy and Skin - Cutaneous Mastocytosis - Occupational Dermatitis - Urticaria/Angioedema

www.eaaci-sam2010.com
Letter from Congress President EAACI 2011

Dear members,

Our annual congress will take place 11-15th June 2011 in Istanbul, Turkey. Next year will be quite special indeed, since it marks two important anniversaries for the world of allergy. It is the 30th Congress held by the EAACI, and the year also commemorates the 100th year of immunotherapy. We aim to make the congress a scientific, cultural, and social celebration for our members and delegates, and an experience they remember for the rest of their lives.

Istanbul is now one of the most dynamic cities in the world, and an ever-growing attraction for culture, economy, and business. The city heralded the start of this year as the European Capital of Culture for 2010. As travel writer Jan Morris said: “If culture is to mean the whole range of human experience and achievement, then nowhere is better qualified to be the Cultural Capital of Europe than Istanbul. It is his style, his history, his lively intellectual life, his own shifting circumstances, that qualify the city for its status, in 2010, as cultural capital of us all”.

Istanbul has been the capital of the Roman, Byzantine, and Ottoman empires, and is now crowned EU Capital of Culture for 2010. In 2011, we have the unique opportunity to build on this cultural celebration and make Istanbul “Capital of the World of Allergy” for four days. The theme of our congress is “Bridging Science and Culture”. We intend to bridge the past and present, Asia and Europe, and bridge and embrace all religions and cultures, and finally bring them all to a common language, the language of science.

Our congress will be held at the brand-new Istanbul Congress Centre and Istanbul Convention and Exhibition Centre, which are located beside each other in the heart of the city. We target increased participation, not only from Europe, but also from all corners of the world including the Americas, the Middle East, the Russian Republics, and North Africa.

I would like to extend an invitation to all EAACI members to this congress. We promise to make it an unforgettable scientific and cultural experience.

Ömer Kalayci, MD
Congress President EAACI 2011
EAACI/UEMS Knowledge Examination in Allergology and Clinical Immunology

Dear colleagues,

The third European examination in allergology and clinical immunology provided by the EAACI takes place at the EAACI Congress 2010 in London (5th June).

The previous EAACI/UEMS Knowledge Examination in Allergology and Clinical Immunology took place on 7th June 2009, during the EAACI Congress in Warsaw. Several candidates that are members of national societies took the examination.

The examination is based on revised questions from a question pool, with many new questions prepared by EAACI Task Force members and members from different European centres. Approximately 70% of the questions addressed topics of allergology including allergens, dermatological, respiratory and pediatric allergy, anaphylaxis, venom hypersensitivity, drug and food hypersensitivity, as well as issues such as pregnancy and allergology, occupational allergies, eosinophilic disorders, mastocytosis, and CI-INK deficiency. The examination also assessed basic immunology and clinical immunology (auto-immunity and immune deficiency). The questions were carefully evaluated by the EAACI Exam/Knowledge Exam Task Force and a specialized, professional institution (The Institute for Medical Teaching, IML, Bern). The exam lasts for about 150 minutes and comprises about 100 multiple-choice questions, all in English.

The EAACI/UEMS Knowledge Examination in Allergology and Clinical Immunology takes place every year during the EAACI Congress. It does not replace or provide a substitute for existing national examinations held regularly by national bodies, although we expect it to help raise the standard of allergology and clinical immunology in Europe. Equally importantly, we hope it will facilitate the exchange of young people trained in allergology and clinical immunology in Europe. Furthermore, EAACI members are encouraged to take the opportunity to use this Knowledge Test as a tool for self-evaluation.

We strongly encourage you to participate in this exam and test your knowledge. Please visit http://www.eaaci.net/v2/activities/eaaci-exam/open-calls for more details and application forms.

Looking forward to seeing you in London very soon!

Peter Schmid-Grendelmeier
EAACI Exam/ Knowledge Exam Task Force Chairman

Luis Delgado
EAACI Vice-President Education and Specialty

Sample questions for the EAACI/UEMS Knowledge Examination in Allergology and Clinical Immunology

The EAACI/UEMS Knowledge Examination in Allergology and Clinical Immunology does not automatically replace or substitute the currently existing national examinations, that are regularly held by national bodies. Our view is that this examination will help to raise the standard of allergology and clinical immunology in Europe, and facilitate the exchange of young people trained in those fields. Success in passing the examination does not imply the right to practise allergology and clinical immunology; this depends furthermore on the according national prerequisites.

The examination will be evaluated by the IML (The Institute for Medical Education, IML, Bern, Switzerland), which can be visited to view several sample questions in allergology (http://www.iawf.unibe.ch/self-assessment/) for self-assessment.

Sample questions for the EAACI/UEMS Examination:

1) Type A question (one answer is correct, 4 or 5 answers to choose from) (about 2/3 of all questions)
Which drug/compound/device is the main cause of perioperative anaesthesia?
A) Antibiotics
B) Neuromuscular blocking agents
C) Plasma expanders
D) Latex containing material
E) Chlorhexidine containing antiseptics
B is correct: 1 point

References

2) Kprim question (4 answers (+ or -) to be given)

Please indicate in the following statements which you consider correct (+) or not correct (-).

In which type(s) of occupational asthma is/are specific IgE measurements sensitive and specific diagnostic markers?
A) Cow-derived proteins asthma
B) Isocyanate-induced asthma
C) Latex-induced asthma
D) Persulfate asthma in hairdressers

Correct answers +/-+/-

When all 4 answers are correct:
1 point
When 3 of 4 are correct:
½ point

References

More...

Did you know... The launch of our new eaaci.net created such interest that visits were up 2,000 in November 09 year on year?

Don’t forget... Visit our new EAACI website for travel grant applications and abstract submission deadlines for all EAACI events!

All this news is reason enough to click through to www.eaaci.net right now – and we plan to offer even more. Stay tuned!

On behalf of the EAACI Web Management Team,
Chrysanthi Skevaki
Coordinating Editor
The PAPRICA (Prime Allergy for Primary Care physicians) Symposium, co-organised by EAACI and GA²LEN, bridge current clinical state-of-the-art knowledge in allergology and primary care practice. Three Symposia were held in 2009; in Eger, Hungary in June; in Moscow, Russia in July; and in Malta in September.

The first Symposium was held in conjunction with the Hungarian Paediatric Society Annual Meeting, which organised a session on anaphylaxis. In Russia, we reached a large number of Russian primary care physicians also attending the international Europediatrics Congress, with lectures on themes such as respiratory diseases and food allergy. The session in Malta was co-organised with the Malta Institute of Continuous Medical Education and the Mater Dei Hospital.

The 200 delegates attending PAPRICA in 2009 came from various backgrounds. In Malta, for example, allergy treatment is usually provided by pulmonologists. All the delegates were unanimous in their appreciation of the obvious educational gains they made during the PAPRICA Symposium in regard to allergic diseases and standards of care.

The three Symposia would not have been possible without the help of local colleagues; Lajos Rethy in Hungary, Leila Namazova in Russia, and Victor Grech and Cecil Vella in Malta.

The faculty for these symposia were Ian Balfour Lyn, Philippe Eigenmann, Susanne Halken, Sue Hill, Omer Kalayci, Jörg Kleine-Tebbe, Jose Lopes dos Santos, Stephen Montefort, Antonella Muraro, and Petr Pohunek.

**Philippe Eigenmann**
Geneva, Switzerland
The European Pediatric Allergy & Asthma Meeting was organized by the EAACI Pediatric and Asthma Sections and held in Venice, Italy, on 12-14th November, 2009. It was designed to increase and refine knowledge about pediatric allergies by focussing on the most recent therapeutic strategies, with the ultimate goal of improving the quality of care for children with allergic disease. This meeting was actually the first international meeting on pediatric allergy and asthma and benefited from the experiences of prior annual meetings of the Pediatric Section.

Prominent scientists from all over Europe and the U.S. were invited to give talks on the different aspects of pediatric allergy, ranging from asthma to food allergy, and focussing on epidemiology, clinical phenotypes, risk factors, treatment, and prognosis.

The Scientific Programme comprised 2 postgraduate courses, 11 practical courses, 14 poster sessions, and 4 poster symposiums. The Pediatric Section awarded six Poster Presentation Awards and three Travel Grants. Participants appreciated the exceptional Social Programme, which included a Jazz Concert with Cheryl Porter and The Luppia Jazz Orchestra. Although the Venetian region boasts excellent opportunities to experience art and culture, not to mention the delicious local cuisine, participants were very much involved in the Congress and were not distracted by the famous city of Venice.

The scientific sessions started on November 12th, with presentations on inflammation and remodelling in asthma due to impaired repair of epithelial damage. There were lectures devoted to the measurement of lung function, which represents an important part of the clinical assessment and management of both pre-school children and adolescents. The increased variability in children at pre-school age was underlined, as was the need for pediatricians to be aware of this issue and to be trained in the measurement of lung function.

The postgraduate courses attracted a very good turnout, as did the sessions dedicated to allergen-specific immunotherapy and its mechanism of action. These sessions were particularly well appreciated. Presentations regarding clinical updates on the role of subcutaneous and sublingual immunotherapy, the safety issues, and the optimal dose range in children were all extensively assessed. This treatment is now recognized to be efficacious and well tolerated for allergic disease. Therefore, the Scientific Programme included a specific session devoted to insights into this treatment, covering everything from basic research to immunotherapy for inhalant and food allergens. The role of components-solved as novel tools for allergy diagnosis in daily practice was discussed in detail, providing the practising pediatrician with adequate know-how. Participants were given the opportunity to acquire significant theoretical and practical knowledge in allergen-specific immunotherapy.

The meeting benefited particularly from the support, collaboration, and participation of sister pediatric societies including The European Academy of Pediatrics, The European Respiratory Society – Pediatric Assembly, and the European Society for Pediatric Gastroenterology.
Hepatology and Nutrition (ESPGHAN). Joint sessions were organized with the ERS Pediatric Assembly and ESPGHAN, the first of a fruitful long-term collaboration.

The ERS Pediatric Assembly contributed to the First Symposium with lectures about risk factors for asthma, assessing also genetic and environmental factors, and presented the ERS Initiative for Problematic Asthma. The second joint Symposium with the European Society for Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology, and Nutrition was devoted to non-IgE mediated food allergy, gastrointestinal allergy, and the use of prebiotics and/or probiotics in preventing and treating allergic diseases. The link between early allergy and asthma development was evaluated in the light of new therapeutic strategies including anti-IgE therapy and specific immunotherapy. New pathogenic findings on atopic eczema were illustrated, focusing on their impact on clinical management of the disease. The concept of intact skin barrier was highlighted, emphasizing the need for early treatment.

Drug allergy is becoming a crucial issue for children, and leading scientists in the field provided delegates with information about the most recent developments in epidemiology, clinical manifestations, mechanisms, and diagnosis. One full day provided the most recent findings in food allergy, from basic research to clinical data. In particular, a specific workshop was organized by the EAACI Task Force on Food Allergy Clinical Practice Guidelines. The TF aims to oversee guidelines by gathering suggestions from all stakeholders, to harmonize the diagnosis and treatment of food allergy not only across Europe but also worldwide. In this regard, a joint activity with a U.S. group at NIH has been initiated and perspectives were presented in Venice. In addition, a panel discussion debated the impact of food allergies in the community and their related social outcomes. The panel comprised well-known representatives from patient organizations and the European Food Security Agency.

The programme ended with a session on the diagnosis, co-morbidities, and treatment of allergic rhinitis.

All sessions placed special emphasis on allowing time and space for discussion and interaction with clinicians. In this regard, 11 practical courses were planned on several controversial issues to provide delegates with hands-on training and to facilitate immediate profit from the formal lectures.

In conclusion, the European Pediatric Allergy & Asthma Meeting enjoyed great success, with more than 900 participants from all over the world. Physicians attended from Australia, Canada, China, Japan, the Philippines, Thailand, South Africa, Turkey, and the U.S. Invited speakers of the highest profile collaborated in such a way as to provide all new information in as detailed and extensive a manner as possible, and most importantly, inform clinicians and pediatricians about new treatments in pediatric allergy and asthma. The presentation and practical use of new therapeutic strategies played a key role in the success of the meeting. It reached its main goal of improving the quality of care for children with allergic disease.

Future challenges include strengthening the relationships between Pediatric Sister Societies, reinforcing ties between the EAACI Section on Pediatrics and the pediatricians that deal daily with allergic children, and providing guidance on how to use the latest techniques to the best of their advantage. Lastly, our goal is to provide the pediatric community with updates on pediatric allergy by organizing an International Congress every two years.

See you in 2011!

Antonella Muraro
Padua, Italy
The 8th EAACI-GA²LEN Immunology Winter School took place in Grainau near Garmisch-Partenkirchen in Germany at the foot of the Zugspitze – the highest mountain in the German Alps.

This year’s Winter School was organized by the EAACI Immunology and Dermatology Sections and hosted by Thilo Jakob and his team in the Allergy Research Group, at the University Medical Centre in Freiburg, Germany. The main topic of the 2010 Winter School was “Basic Immunology Research in Allergy and Clinical Immunology”, which aimed to guide participants through a broad spectrum of the molecular basis of clinical immunology and allergology.

After a vigorous review of all submitted abstracts, 70 participants were selected and invited, of which 25 abstracts were chosen for oral presentations. For some juniors, it was their first and very valuable experience of public speaking. A total of 60 EAACI junior members from 19 countries received a grant comprising the registration fee and full board accommodation, and eight juniors received a grant that covered full travelling expenses.

The Winter School 2010 included six sessions on four main topics: innate immunity, adaptive immunity, the mechanisms of allergic inflammation, and the regulation of allergic immune responses. Each session opened with a keynote lecture, followed by presentations by the selected participants. The opening lecture “Control of immune responses by regulatory T cells” was given by Shimon Sakauchi (Kyoto, Japan). He provided the audience with new data and a critical point of view on the role and mechanisms of the action of regulatory T cells, which initiated serious discussion that continued during the other sessions and coffee breaks.

On Friday morning, Carsten Schmid-Weber (London, UK) continued the story of T cells, giving an exciting lecture on different T cell subsets and phenotypes. This keynote lecture was followed by five presentations by selected participants referring to the mechanisms of immune regulation and tolerance induction. In the afternoon, Stefan Martin (Freiburg, Germany) and Jean-François Nicolas (Lyon, France) held a lively and critical discussion on the aspects of the contribution of innate and adaptive immunity in contact dermatitis, looking from different angles at the pathogenesis of this disease. The session continued with presentations on new concepts of the mechanisms of allergic contact dermatitis given by the junior participants.

On Saturday morning, Michel Gilliet (Houston, U.S.) provided exciting new insights into the role of antimicrobial peptides in immune sensing of self-nucleic acids. Thomas Bieber (Bonn, Germany) continued the dermatological aspects of immune responses with the lecture “Atopic dermatitis: Novel concepts of an old disease”. After the keynote lectures, participants presented their data on the differing mechanisms of allergic inflammation. In the afternoon session, Bieber also presented new ideas on the editorship of Allergy, the European Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology, and encouraged delegates to publish their best data in this journal.

Finally, Caroline Sokol (Boston, U.S.) captured the attention of the audience on Sunday morning by showing exciting results on the role of basophils in allergic immune responses. This Sunday keynote lecture was followed by oral presentations on “Novel approaches in immunotherapy”.

The Friday and Saturday evenings continued with poster sessions in a cozy atmosphere and high-standard presentations from the selected participants, accompanied by beer, wine, and dessert buffet. The first session included posters on various aspects of allergens, allergen carriers, immunotherapy, and immune regulation. During the second poster session, participants presented their data on T cell subsets, dendritic cells, mast cells, and basophils as well as on the differing pathogenetic mechanisms of asthma, COPD, and atopic dermatitis. During each session, delegates enjoyed a unique opportunity to discuss their data with each other, keynote lecturers, and organizing committee scientists.

The feedback and the evaluation forms proved that once again, the 8th EAACI-GA²LEN Immunology Winter School created a challenging and engaging scientific environment in which immunological concepts in allergy and dermatology were covered in very active discussions. One goal of the meeting was to create a warm scientific environment for discussion on basic immunology in different allergic diseases. Indeed, every dinner and coffee break became a real social event thanks to the informal and friendly atmosphere. In addition, between the morning and the evening sessions, there was an amazing and unique opportunity to practice winter sports or go sightseeing. Not only junior participants but also lecturers enjoyed skiing, skating, and tobogganining.

Planning for the 9th EAACI-GA²LEN Immunology Winter School is already under way. Look out for the announcements on the EAACI and GA²LEN websites.

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Many interesting key immunology research papers were published in 2009 that influenced our immunologic insight. One example of this is the clarification that T cell subsets are not fixed, but that the system is plastic. This was demonstrated by the close relation between the transcription factors involved in Th17 and regulatory T cells (Tregs). This text discusses a rather subjective selection of novel immunology papers with a direct link to the allergic immune response.

New insight in the early induction of an allergic/Th2 skewed immune response came from the extended analysis of the antigen-presenting and Th2 skewing activity of basophilic granulocytes. A unique set of three back-to-back papers presented ample proof of this special role.

During inflammatory reaction, mast cells (MCs) can release potent pro-inflammatory cytokines such as TNF. It is not clear how these peripherally released cytokines reach the draining lymph nodes to exert their effect. Interestingly, MCs are revealed to have their own “parcel service” delivering these active compounds in special heparin-based particles.

The innate immune status of the skin can result in increased IgE, asthma, and multiple food allergies, as was described in patients suffering from Netherton Syndrome. Via a lack of serine protease inhibitor activity in the skin, keratinocytes release the pro-Th2 cytokine TSLP that instruct dendritic cells (DCs) to drive the allergic immune response.

The following text discusses these significant findings in greater detail.

1) Basophilic granulocytes are important cells in inducing an allergic immune response via their Th2 skewing, antigen-presenting functional capacity.

Occasionally, scientific journals publish so-called back-to-back papers when two research groups have made important progress on a closely related topic. Nature Immunology published a rather unique set of three back-to-back papers in summer 2009, all describing a breakthrough in understanding how important the role of basophils is in inducing allergic immune responses. The findings show that basophilic granulocytes not only have the ability to function as antigen-presenting cells, but that they also promote Th2 responses.

In short, naïve T cells that are stimulated can develop in Th1, Th2, Th17, and Tregs. These distinct lineages overlap significantly in humans, in contrast to, for example, mice. Many factors, such as bacterial compounds, have been found to promote Th1 responses via the induction of IL12. However, the factors that promote Th2 responses remain less well understood, although the presence of IL-4 (a product of Th2 cells) has been found to be pivotal.

Sokol et al studied the strong Th2 response induced by papain in mice. In their setup, papain mimicked the protease activity of allergens and parasites. Remarkably, the removal of classic antigen-presenting cells did not affect the Th2 response but diminished the induction of both Th1 and Th17 responses. The presence of basophils turned out to be crucial for the induction of the Th2 responses. The authors demonstrated that basophils not only expressed MHC-II molecules, they also contained the machinery to take up, process, and present antigens to T cells on MHC-II molecules.

The study by Perrigoue et al showed that Th2 responses were induced via infection with the gastrointestinal nematode parasite Trichuris muris. It also demonstrated that basophils present the antigenic peptides of the parasite on MHC-II molecules to naïve T cells. Via the simultaneous release of IL-4, the basophils skewed the T cells towards the Th2 phenotype. Basophils were crucial for the Th2-response because depletion of peripheral blood basophils with Mar-1 antibodies blocked the development of Th2 cells. Finally, further evidence for the important role played by basophil-derived IL-4 in the induction of Th2-responses was provided by research from the group lead by Yoshimoto. This group studied the role of basophils in the induction of Th2 responses by infection with the nematode Strongyloides venezuelensis. This model also showed that IL-4 released by basophils was crucial for Th2-skewing. In addition, this group demonstrated that activation of basophils did not depend on the presence of IgE antibodies on their membrane. This is an important finding, since it indicates that basophils may be responsible for the initial induction of IgE.
Since IL-4 was revealed as mast cell and basophil product, almost 20 years ago, it has been hypothesized that these cells are important in the early induction of Th2 cells and the development of allergy. However, studies did not demonstrate this convincingly. The three papers described above present clear indications that basophil granulocytes induce Th2 responses via the peptide presentation on MHCII. Simultaneous release of IL-4. How these results, obtained in murine models, can be extrapolated to humans remains unclear. The expression of MHCII on human basophils has not been convincingly demonstrated and mouse basophils appear to be morphologically distinct from human basophils. We await follow-up papers in the near future that will address the potency of human basophils.

References


2. The innate skin immune response triggered by proteases induces an atopic immune response.

Netherton Syndrome (NS) is a severe skin disease highlighted by severe ichthyoses combined with atopic dermatitis, high serum IgE levels, asthma, and multiple food allergies. The serine protease inhibitor Kazal Type 5 (SPINK5) is the defective gene in NS. SPINK5 encodes the multidomain serine protease inhibitor lymphoepithelial Kazal-Type-related inhibitor (LEKTI). LEKTI is expressed in the epidermis and potentially inhibits kallikrein 5, 7, and 14. Using Spink5 knockout mice, the authors demonstrated that a marked inflammatory infiltrate was present in the affected skin, as well as the over-expression of pro-inflammatory mediators.

Moreover, pro-Th2 cytokine thymic stromal lymphopoietin (TSLP) was over-expressed. These effects were secondary to the activation of protease-activated receptor 2 (PAR2). Subsequently, the authors studied skin tissues and keratinocytes from NS patients and clearly demonstrated that the increased presence of KLK5 in NS directly activated PAR2 and resulted in the production of TSLP and other pro-inflammatory cytokines. TSLP subsequently activated resident Langerhans cells in the skin, which then migrated to resident lymph nodes and promoted the differentiation of naïve T cells into Th2 cells.

This paper is an excellent example of a so-called “experiment of nature” and provides insight into immunomechanisms. By examining a relevant murine model next to the NS patient, the work clearly demonstrates that a local barrier effect can result in a potent systemic Th2 skewing.

References


3) Mast cells deliver their inflammatory cytokines via special packages towards draining lymph nodes.

Mast cells (MCs) reside in peripheral tissue sites, such as the skin, lungs, and gut, where they have contact with the environment. Upon activation, MCs release inflammatory mediators and cytokines. However, it remains unclear how these released cytokines can exert effects in draining lymph nodes.

Kunder et al focussed on MC-derived TNF and investigated why after release TNF degraded or diluted and how it interacted with extracellular matrix components. They demonstrated that MC-released TNF is partly packed into submicrometer heparin-based particles. By microscopy, techniques, such as confocal, the authors demonstrated elegantly that MCs release these particles into their surroundings. Subsequently, these stable particles enter the lymph vessels and end up in the draining lymph nodes. The delivery of TNF into the draining lymph node results in lymph node enlargement. This paper demonstrated a dedicated physiological drug delivery system in MCs, facilitating communication between peripheral sites of inflammation and remote secondary lymphoid tissues.

References


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Basophils, first described in 1879 by Paul Ehrlich, were originally considered mast cell precursors but this idea was subsequently discarded. Both basophils and mast cells (MCs) express high-affinity receptors for immunoglobulin E (IgE). Both can be activated by allergen-IgE dependent ways, when they release histamine and a broad range of other biologically active mediators. However, the biology of basophils is more similar to that of other granulocytes than to the biology of MCs. In contrast to MCs, basophils are released from bone marrow as mature cells and in peripheral tissue usually survive only several days, so basophils, as all granulocytes, can be considered inflammatory cells, which migrate to inflamed tissue, while MCs are resident in the peripheral tissue. Although basophils are a very rich source of histamine, MCs but not basophils are responsible for most signs and symptoms of immediate allergic response. However, basophils, but not MCs, are responsible for histamine present in inflamed tissue during the late phase of allergic response. Basophils infiltrate allergic lesions several hours after allergen exposure and by releasing histamine and other biologically active mediators may amplify allergic inflammation.

Basophils are the most abundant source of interleukin 4 (IL4), IL13, and thymic stromal lymphopoietin (TSLP), mediators that are crucial for the development of Th2 type immune response and IgE synthesis. It was tempting to speculate that these cells can provide “early” IL4 during the initiation phase of immune response and skew the immune response towards Th2 type. Basophils stimulated with papain, a cystein protease, similar to proteases secreted by parasites, secrete IL4 and TSLP. Those proteases are well-known inducers of Th2 type immune response. Interestingly, many allergens also possess enzymatic activity. The main house dust mite allergen Der p1 is a cystein protease. Innate activation of basophils results in “early” secretion of IL4 with subsequent promotion of Th2 type immune response. Moreover, papain-stimulated basophils transmigrate to regional lymph nodes where they can expose T cells to high concentrations of IL4 during antigen presentation. Papain, however, does not directly activate dendritic cells (DCs) in vitro. When naive CD4+ T cells are cultured with peptide-bearing DCs in the presence of basophils, T cells differentiate into Th2 cells, which release IL4 and IL13. However, if basophils are removed from such a culture, no Th2 type cytokines are produced, which indicates that basophils are necessary for the development of Th2 type immune response. These observations did not exactly conform to accepted positions for many years, when DCs were held responsible for antigen presentation to naive T cells and induction of antigen specific T cell immune response.

The exact role of basophils in antigen presentation was not known until recently. In particular, it has not been known if or how basophils interact with DCs and T cells in the process of antigen presentation. A series of elegant experiments performed in three separate laboratories demonstrated that basophils are potent antigen presenting cells and are crucial for the development of Th2 type immune response and IgE synthesis. Moreover, the process is independent of DCs. In vitro experiments demonstrated that papain-stimulated basophils co-cultured with T cells could induce Th2 type immune response in the absence of DCs. Moreover, papain-treated DCs were unable to induce Th2 type immune response in vitro. On the other hand, expression of molecules which are necessary for antigen presentation, major histocompatibility complex class II (MHC class II) molecules, and co-stimulatory molecules such as CD80 and CD86 was demonstrated not only on DCs but also on some basophils. Together with the ability to secrete large amounts of IL4, this makes basophils potentially strong inducers of Th2 type immune response. In fact, basophils derived from IL4-deficient mice fail to induce the development of Th2 cells, indicating that endogenous IL4 from basophils is essential for the development of Th2 cells from naive CD4+T cells. Moreover, in co-cultures of basophils with T cells, the Th2 differentiation is lost if MHC class II T cell receptor interaction is blocked by anti-MHC class II antibodies.
In vivo experiments also support the role of basophils in the initiation and propagation of the Th2 type immune response. Interestingly, activated by papain, ex vivo mice basophils after being injected into mice can efficiently stimulate Th2 type immune response in vivo. Similarly, the adoptive transfer of antigen-pulsed basophils derived from wild type mice into mice that lack expression of MHC Class II molecules leads to the effective induction of Th2 type immune response, indicating that expression of MHC Class II molecules exclusively on basophils, but not on DCs, is sufficient for the induction of Th2 type immune response. It is also possible to target an antigen to basophils via antigen-IgE complexes that activate basophils and make them capable of efficiently presenting the antigen complexed with IgE. Injections of basophils activated ex vivo by antigen-IgE complexes as well as injections of antigen-IgE complexes themselves result in the expansion of Th2 cells and the phenomenon was dependant on basophils. Antigens delivered in complexes with IgE were not able to trigger T cell proliferation in mice in which basophils were previously depleted using specific antibodies. On the other hand, strong enhancement of T cell activation was seen in mice pretreated with IL3 before the administration of antigen-IgE complexes. IL3 promotes the differentiation of basophil precursors into mature basophils and activates bone marrow-derived basophils enhancing expression of MHC Class II and co-stimulatory molecules, therefore mice pretreated with IL3 show an increased number of basophils, which are susceptible to activation. This demonstrates that amplification of basophil function by IL3 leads to more efficient induction of Th2 type immune response.

IgE is characterized by a very high affinity to individual antigens that is even greater than that of IgG. Therefore, antigen uptake mediated by IgE allows for basophil activation by antigens present at very low concentrations. This facilitation of antigen presentation is restricted to basophils because MCs, despite the high expression of IgE receptors on their surface and the production of IL4, are not able to substitute for basophils in presenting antigens to T cells. The main factor that restricts basophil function as an antigen-presenting cell seems to be the ability of those cells to uptake an antigen. Only soluble antigens can be efficiently taken up, processed, and presented by basophils, while particular antigens are more efficiently endocytosed and subsequently presented by DCs. However, antigen presentation by DCs leads to the development of Th1 or Th17 type immune responses. DCs express the broad spectrum of pattern recognition receptors, which upon binding of ligands such as lipopolysaccharide lead to the release of Th1 type cytokines such as IL12 or Th17 type cytokines such as IL23. The IgE dependent antigen uptake by basophils, which is effective at low antigen concentrations, may explain why in allergic patients exposure to allergen at concentrations that do not trigger clinical symptoms amplifies the allergic reaction.

Basophils can also augment IgE production by their direct effect on B cells. They secrete IL4 and IL13, necessary for the switch of immunoglobulin production by B cells, and upon activation, they express CD40 ligand that interacts with CD40 present on B cells and provides the necessary co-stimulation for effective IgE synthesis.

In summary, the initiation of Th2 immune response is different from Th1 immune response. Basophils, but not DCs, are the most important cells that induce and amplify Th2 type immune response and IgE synthesis. Basophils may be activated by both innate (immunoglobulin independent) and cognitive (immunoglobulin dependent) contact with antigens. The involvement of basophils in antigen presentation explains the important role of IgE in perpetuation of the inflammatory response in allergic patients.

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