100 years of allergen immunotherapy European Academy of Allergy and Clinical Immunology celebration: review of unanswered questions

Improved understanding of immunology has shown a great deal about the underlying mechanisms involved in allergen immunotherapy; however, despite these developments, a number of important questions remain unanswered.

Several of these questions related to the practice of allergen immunotherapy in the clinic have been discussed in a special paper entitled “100 years of allergen immunotherapy European Academy of Allergy and Clinical Immunology celebration: review of unanswered questions”, published in Allergy.

This paper was born out of the results of the EAACI “SummIT on allergen immunotherapy”, that took place in February 2011 in Geneva, Switzerland. The SummIT was one of the main events that the Academy organised to celebrate the 100 anniversary of immunotherapy in Allergy during 2011.

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100 Years of Immunotherapy, from Noon till dawn!

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In 1911, The Lancet published the first original paper by Leonard Noon describing the use of allergen extract injections to treat hay fever in a similar fashion to the recently established vaccine strategy to prevent infectious diseases. To celebrate the anniversary of allergen
immunotherapy, EAACI developed a number of initiatives.

In February, the 2011 SummIT on allergen immunotherapy took place in Geneva, gathering some experts in the field, but also other stakeholders such as patient representatives, regulators and allergen manufacturers. The current status of different issues regarding immunotherapy were discussed, assessing certainties and controversies, identifying niches for further research, while established knowledge was set “black on white”. The resulting output, the document “One hundred years of allergen immunotherapy European Academy of Allergy and Clinical Immunology celebration: review of unanswered questions”, was published in Allergy.

A document titled the “European Declaration on Allergen Immunotherapy” was prepared in order to provide a robust statement on the use of immunotherapy, its availability for allergic patients, and the need for resources to fund research, among other points. It was signed by national and supranational allergy societies, patient organizations, allergen manufacturers and other third parties. The aim was to be able to use this document to increase awareness on immunotherapy among regulators and politicians and to lobby in favor of it in different scenarios.

Finally, in a festive spirit, EAACI made a call for the “Leonard Noon Award” which was granted to Dr. Alfred William Frankland, an outstanding personality in the field of immunotherapy.

So, Noon was a 100 years ago and dawn is now!