Presidential message: the present and future of allergy research

EAACI Congress in Copenhagen - a tsunami of abstracts and more than 300 world renowned speakers

EAACI Interest Groups - 2 year Strategic Programmes

NEWS FROM THE EU: A WRITTEN DECLARATION ON RECOGNISING THE BURDEN OF ALLERGIC DISEASE
"Allergies can make children perform poorly at school, they can make adults miss work and they also cause 80% of asthma cases. We urge the Commission and national governments to follow the example of the European Parliament.

Allergic diseases should be included in initiatives concerning chronic diseases at national and European level.

The European Commission has the capacity to coordinate efforts to respond to the challenges of chronic diseases. Now is the time to act!"

EAACI President Nikolaos G. Papadopoulos
Supporting both the present and future of allergy research

Although direct research financing has not (as yet) been within the Academy’s scope, research support and promotion is a major theme and deserves further development. Our classical resources include the research communication fora, i.e. journals, website and Congress, the reference publications by the different EAACI groups, as well as research fellowships. One of the most important elements for successful research is access to reliable information resources. Hence, continuous effort to keep the content of our journals and website up-to-date, accurate, reliable and with high impact is warranted. It is crucial that every new and thought-provoking idea is communicated and debated, in an open way and in the most relevant forum. This year’s Congress in Copenhagen highlights this fact, using the title ‘Challenging Dogmas’, to remind everybody that this is the responsibility of every scientist in his/her quest to understand and employ novelty for the benefit of patients. More than one hundred young members of the Academy will be supported by a scholarship in order to describe their ideas and challenge ours! Talking about young members, it is from them that we expect the most exciting and revolutionary ideas. In order to culminate such ideas, we support, through the EAACI Research Fellowships, an increasing number of JMA’s to visit high-level labs around Europe, to look at life (and allergy) from a new perspective and boost their research capacity.

These activities have evident results, reflected in the robustness of our Congresses, the impact of our journals and the popularity of our website. Nevertheless, we have also realized that they may not be enough for maximizing the research potential of the allergy community: in the world out there, allergy is not always considered as a high priority for research support. This is not surprising, taking into account both the ‘youth’ we mentioned before, but also the fact that not enough of the key information about allergy and its burden reaches the general public or the policy makers and research funding bodies. I firmly believe that only if EAACI, both at the central administration level and at the level of every single member, puts concentrated effort towards ‘revealing the truth’ to all external stakeholders will all the work done internally be optimized. Thus, our current strategic programme includes such extrovert action as starting to talk to several research-related European bodies. We occasionally face surprise and scepticism: it will take some time before non-specialists realize the true impact of allergic diseases. Nevertheless, we also gain support and expand the basis of decision-makers who recognize the problem. We are also steadily designing tools to approach the general public, campaigning towards the recognition of the burden of allergic diseases.

Finally, we have initiated and supported efforts to obtain objective information for the true burden of different allergies around Europe, taking advantage of, and at the same time empowering, our great network of members. It is, of course, up to all of us to make allergy research a major priority for Europe and the world!

Nikolaos G. Papadopoulos
EAACI President
Dear EAACI members,

Following on from the superb job done by Ioana Agache and the Headquarters team, I take great pleasure in now taking on the editor’s role for the EAACI Newsletter. The Newsletter aims to provide members with useful and scientific information related to EAACI’s activities as well as developments and innovations in allergy and clinical immunology. Any input or suggestions from members are therefore welcome!

As President Nikolaos Papadopoulos reminds us in his message, one of the main goals of our Academy is to support and promote both the present and future of allergy research. In order to achieve this, numerous resources are utilised, including journals, website updates, highly specialised Focused Meetings, Allergy Schools and the Annual Congress, all of which requires the collegial work and effort of EAACI’s many motivated and excellent physicians and scientists, the young and not so young alike. This year’s EAACI Congress in Copenhagen presents a great opportunity to take stock and keep abreast of the allergy scene, enabling specialists to translate the event’s results into everyday clinical practice for the well-being of our patients.

The submission of more than 1,700 abstracts to date is an excellent and promising start!

EAACI’s support and promotion of fellowships is another way of achieving these goals. In this issue, two young physicians offer their views on the relevance of visiting high-level laboratories and allergy clinics around Europe to learn new techniques, the transfer of this newly acquired knowledge to their own clinical practice, and the promotion of human relations and forging of working relationships. It is a global growth, not only a professional one!

Producing systematically reviewed, evidence-based and consensus-validated documents from the EAACI Sections and Interest Groups is a crucial part of the dissemination of knowledge, scientific harmonisation, and the acknowledgement of EAACI as a recognised reference body for allergic diseases policy. Five Sections and 16 Interest Groups currently form part of the Academy. Six pages of this issue are dedicated to the “2-year Strategic Programmes” of each Interest Group. Reading them we can be safe in the knowledge that they are composed of active and dedicated members with a clear strategy specifically designed to accomplish their mission.

Nevertheless, despite the epidemiological weight of allergies and continuous scientific breakthroughs in the field, allergy is seen neither as a burden and chronic disease which can seriously impair a person’s quality of life or as a growing social cost. The need to publicise and broadcast clear scientific information among the general population, policy makers and research funding bodies and promote allergology as a professional, independent specialty in Europe is pressing. For these reasons, the Academy has initiated a European-wide programme of systematic high-powered lobbying, together with patient organisations. The preliminary result, thanks also to certain enlightened Members of the European Parliament (MEPs), is that 178 MEPs acknowledged allergic diseases as a patient and social burden by signing the “Written Declaration”. At the same time, EAACI conducted three days of diagnostic tests for allergies in the European Parliament in Brussels, whose surprising results this edition’s newsletter reveals.

Enjoy the Newsletter!

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The EAACI family congratulates Professor Johannes Ring on his retirement. Professor Ring has been a member of our Academy since 1973 and actively served on the Executive Committee and Dermatology Section. He chaired and organized the 2005 annual meeting, which brought a big leap in the number of participants, reaching over 5000 for the first time.

Professor Ring has had one of the brightest careers in our specialty. In addition to his board licences and habilitation in allergology and dermatology/venerology, Professor Ring also holds a PhD in Bavarian history.

From 1995, he acted as the Director and Chairman of the Department of Dermatology and Allergology at the Technical University of Munich and, from 2009, he was one of the directors of the Christine Kühne–Center for Allergy Research and Education, Davos.


Professor Ring received the Clemens von Piquet Award for outstanding contributions in clinical research in 2010 from EAACI as recognition of his achievements for the Academy and the Allergy specialty.

Cezi Akdis
EAACI Past President
Pedro Morais Silva

Pedro Morais Silva, from Portugal, won the EAACI Clinical Fellowship Award. He spent 3 months at the Department of Dermatology and Allergy Centre at the University Hospital of Odense in Denmark focusing on food allergy.

1. Why did you apply for a Fellowship?
I believe that allergy is an art that needs time to be mastered. To become an expert requires extended training by the best in the field. This Fellowship abroad allowed me to make contact with experienced professionals working in a centre of excellence for the study of allergic diseases.

2. What did you like most about your Fellowship?
The fact that I felt part of the team. An extra care was given so that I felt integrated both in the clinical and scientific activities of the Centre, as well as in the city’s social and cultural life. I feel that I have made good academic partners and good friends.

3. Which advantages did your Fellowship bring you?
I vastly improved my knowledge of how to adequately perform challenge tests. Furthermore, I have set the foundations of what I hope will be a long-lasting collaboration with my host department.

4. What do you recommend for someone who would like to do a Fellowship?
Consider that several factors influence which department is right for you. Scientific excellence is understandably very important but the size of the department, the approachability of the staff and the independence given to the clinical fellow are all factors that should be taken into account.

Erilda Kamberi

Erilda Kamberi, from Albania, won the EAACI Research Fellowship Award for “Function of the CD200R in human basophils and mast cells in venom immunotherapy, from bench to bedside”. She spent 6 months at the Department of Immunology, Allergology and Rheumatology at the University Hospital of Antwerp in Belgium.

1. Why did you apply for a Fellowship?
From the time that I began my specialization in allergy and clinical immunology, one of my objectives was to undertake a research project. The possibility of fulfilling this, in collaboration with another European Allergy Centre, was a great opportunity offered by EAACI and so I decided to take it by applying for the Fellowship.

2. What did you like most about your Fellowship?
Getting in touch with translational research in allergy, which gave me a new point of view about clinical allergy, was what I liked most about the experience.

3. Which advantages did your Fellowship bring you?
During my stay I learned a new technique, which is going to be used at our laboratory in a research project very soon.

4. What do you recommend for someone who would like to do a Fellowship?
I would recommend that they apply for an EAACI fellowship: it would be an excellent opportunity.

Angel Mazon and Olympi Tsilochristou, Website Co-Editors

As the new EAACI website Coordinating Editors from the start of this year, we are very conscious of the challenge of ensuring the website lives up to the vigorous and constantly evolving Academy. Our aim is to provide a well-structured, easy to access and comprehensive website for all visitors interested in learning about EAACI’s initiatives and priorities. Therefore we intend to continue the informative and educational character of the Academy’s e-platform, and even to enhance it, by disseminating online materials relating to all EAACI’s activities. Please visit eaaci.org and:
• have a look at the preliminary scientific programme of the upcoming 2014 Congress in Copenhagen. Why not plan your meeting using the useful iPlanner;
• log in and watch eleven webcasts made by outstanding experts, presented during the very successful PAAM 2013 held in Athens; and
• whilst you are logged in, why not take the opportunity to study the slide kits from the ‘Allergic Reactions to Drugs from Phenotype to Genotype’ and ‘Allergy Diagnosis in and beyond the skin’ Allergy Schools?

Don’t forget...
EAACI is also actively present on social media networks, so you can “like” us and “follow” us on our Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn accounts, and stay tuned!
The Award was first established in 2000 on the initiative of Allergopharma and in collaboration with the European Academy of Allergy and Clinical Immunology (EAACI). It is intended that the Award should recognize the scientific achievement of young scientists working in the field of allergy and encourage their engagement in further research. Therefore the Award is open to members of the EAACI, and in particular Junior Members, 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 2012/2014, together with a covering letter detailing the extent of the applicant’s contribution to the research, and curriculum vitae including a full list of publications. The applications will be considered by an ad hoc Commission nominated by the EAACI Executive Committee and Allergopharma. The fifteenth Award will be presented during the EAACI – European Academy of Allergy and Clinical Immunology Congress, Barcelona 2015.

Applications should be submitted before 31 December 2014 electronically to both the EAACI Headquarters (info@eaaci.org) and Allergopharma (steen.klysner@allergopharma.com). 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 Headquarters, Genferstrasse 21, 8002 Zurich, Switzerland (Tel.: +41 44 205 55 33).

Allergopharma GmbH & Co. KG is committed to furthering excellence in allergy diagnosis and specific immunotherapy through investment in scientific research.
Skin Prick Test at the European Parliament and Written Declaration

With European elections approaching, and the European Union heavily investing in visibility in national politics, EAACI is playing its part to give allergy awareness a relevant place on the European Parliament agenda.

Three months ago, 11 Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) proposed a draft Written Declaration recognizing the burden of allergic disease, calling upon the Commission and Member States to acknowledge the importance of allergies and develop policy tools to combat this health issue. A successful outcome would enable over 150 million Europeans to witness the impact of effective legislation, receive better treatment and benefit from scientific research. Diagnostic improvements would allow an increasingly high number of patients to receive appropriate treatment and therefore reduce the social cost of allergy along with the loss in productivity.

The campaign began in 2013 with EAACI President, Nikos Papadopoulos, and EAACI Secretary General, Antonella Muraro, visiting the European institutions in Brussels and Strasbourg in an effort to promote the Written Declaration on Allergies among MEPs. EAACI’s physical presence in Brussels and Strasbourg in January were key to having a solid impact on the MEPs’ busy daily schedule. Networking within the Parliament building was helped by the MEPs who proposed the Written Declaration and spread EAACI’s initiative. To begin with, a session on Skin Prick Testing was arranged across three days, with EAACI representatives providing consultation on site in Brussels. The session was extremely well-received with a long line of people waiting for a SPT from day one! The tests were carried out on over 350 people, including a number of MEPs, and EAACI leadership managed to raise awareness not only of the Written Declaration but also highlighted the fact that allergy is an under-recognized issue that needs to be tackled properly in a harmonized message across Europe. A total of 47% of the people examined tested positively and were encouraged to talk to their GP and follow up with an allergist. EAACI Treasurer Peter Hellings and his team from University Hospital Leuven, Laura Van Gerven, Inge Kortekaas and Brecht Steelant, managed to test a high number of participants. Thanks must go to ALK and Stallergenes who provided all the necessary material, as well as EFA representatives, Susanna Palkonnen and Roberta Savli, who closely collaborated with EAACI in a joint effort to reach our goal. A further meeting with MEPs to provide additional insights was arranged in Strasbourg at the first session of the European Parliament in January 2014 and was again attended by representatives from the Patients’ Organisations.

In parallel with EAACI’s presence in Brussels and Strasbourg, a social network campaign was also launched on Facebook and Twitter. The event broadcasting was extensive, through event creations and photo coverage, while a video of the event was uploaded to the EAACI YouTube channel.

At the end of the consultation period on 21 January, the Written Declaration on Allergies was supported by 178 MEPs. This is considered a good result and is one of the most signed Written Declaration proposals so far. This experience is only the beginning of an exciting journey. It has underlined the strength and potential of EAACI networking mainly in countries where platforms between all the stakeholders, including Patients’ Organisations, had been alerted to this aim such as Italy, Denmark, Finland, France and the UK. Coordinated action has proved to be the key to success and other EU countries are now ready and keen to carry on the hard work laid down. Future development of the EAACI’s EU engagement will work on ensuring that European institutions focus on allergies, leveraging on the progress made so far. We have many challenges ahead. The Written Declaration, and Allergy and Allergic Diseases should be considered and included as a priority by the EU and its new Parliament, as well as by the EU Commission’s health agenda. EAACI is investing in effective measures to influence policy making and calls on all its members and National Societies to join and contribute. Only by working together towards this goal can we turn our dream into reality!

Antonella Muraro
EAACI Secretary General
The International Consensus (ICON) on Drug Allergy

Drug hypersensitivity reactions (DHRs) are drug adverse reactions resembling allergy. Allergic (immunologically-mediated) or non-allergic in nature, they are typically unpredictable. Both under-diagnosed (due to under-reporting) and over-diagnosed (due to an over-use of the term “allergy”), they are also rather frequent (up to 15% of all drug reactions). They can be life-threatening, and therefore require a definite diagnosis in order to institute adequate treatment options and proper preventive measures. A complete drug allergy work up in an expert centre is based on a thorough clinical history and additional tests including skin, biochemical and/or drug provocation tests. Misclassification based on DHR history alone may have consequences on individual treatment choices and be more detrimental for the patient than a complete drug allergy work up.

Several guidelines and/or consensus documents on general or specific drug class-induced DHRs are available to support the medical decision process. The International Consensus (ICON) on Drug Allergy was carried out by leading allergy organizations (EAACI, AAAAI, ACAAI and WAO) to synthesize multiple guidelines into one generally approved and accepted consensus document, which belongs to the International Collaboration in Asthma, Allergy and Immunology (iCAALL). It highlights the key messages that are common to many of the existing guidelines, while critically reviewing and commenting on any differences and deficiencies of evidence, thus providing a comprehensive reference document for the diagnosis and management of DHRs. Although there is no doubt that the use of common systematic approaches for the diagnosis and management of DHRs can considerably improve outcomes, dissemination and implementation remain major challenges. We hope that this document will be utilized by national allergy societies, all allergists worldwide and beyond our community.

Pascal Demoly
EAACI Vice President Education and Specialty
Anca M. Chiriac
EAACI JMA

on behalf of the authors: Pascal Demoly, N. Franklin Adkinson, Knut Brockow, Marianna Castells, Anca M. Chiriac, Paul A. Greenerberger, David A. Khair, David M. Lang, Hai-Sim Park, Werner Pichler, Mario Sanchez-Borges, Tetsuo Shiohara, Bernard Yu-Hor Thong. Allergy 2013; in press.
The general progress made in the field of allergy and clinical immunology in 2013 was highlighted in a review article published in last December’s issue of Allergy. Allergy is proud to have published several important original contributions. For instance, epigenetic changes in allergy development are currently little understood but are believed to play an important role. Michel et al. investigated whether epigenetic patterns in asthma and allergy candidate genes are influenced by farm exposure. Interestingly, they observed that DNA methylation patterns change significantly in early childhood and are influenced by exposure to farm environment. Furthermore, analyzing the metabolic status of cells, tissues, organs and the whole organism is currently a hot topic. Ibrahim et al. used new technological opportunities to analyze the breath condensates of asthmatic patients. It appears that metabolomic profiling is a promising approach to obtain new insights into pathophysiological mechanisms, as well as new biomarkers and drug targets.

As well as many exciting novel original scientific contributions, Allergy also published a large number of high-quality review articles and position papers that, besides their scientific character, have a high educational purpose and will, therefore, also serve our community in this respect.

Hans-Uwe Simon
Editors-in-Chief, Allergy


References
Clinical and Translational Allergy (CTA) continues to grow in both its number of publications (42 in 2013 with 63 submissions) and the number of monthly pageviews (13,037 in November 2013) – so your online open-access journal is doing well!

My thanks go to all the authors, the reviewers and the editorial team who have contributed to its success. Plans for 2014 include the greater involvement of JMAs in reviewing manuscripts, more invited reviews and editorials. Up to fifty 10% discounts off the article processing charge will be provided for EAACI members and up to ten 50% discounts will be available for JMAs submitting to the journal.

One of the key metrics of success for a journal is the number of citations for each article published. This retrospective assessment will determine the initial Impact Factor for CTA, so it is important that published articles are quoted as well as accessed.

Please consider signing up for article alerts by email so you know what is being published each month, and please also reference relevant articles from CTA even if you are submitting your work to another journal. The editorial team will continue to work hard to promote good science, good allergy practice and a good name for your journal.

Clive Grattan
Editor-in-Chief, Clinical and Translational Allergy

EAACI Journals

- Allergy
- Pediatric Allergy and Immunology
- Clinical Translational Allergy

EAACI members can access all official EAACI journals through their online members area at www.eaaci.org

Just log in and click www.eaaci.org/resources
ISMA 2013

ISMA 2013, the International Symposium on Molecular Allergology, was held in Vienna from 5–7 December 2013.

The venue, the Aula der Wissenschaften, situated right in the centre of the city, is an historic building which once hosted the University of Vienna, a place with a longstanding tradition for meeting and sharing knowledge.

The Molecular Diagnosis IG, together with the Food Allergy IG, developed a highly interesting scientific programme spanning the bridge between up-to-date molecular biology and clinical research in allergy. The meeting attracted 417 participants from 42 countries all over the world. A total of 98 abstracts of high scientific level were accepted.

The scientific programme kicked off with a keynote lecture on the “History of molecular allergology” given by Wayne Thomas, a pioneer in cloning allergens, followed by two sessions dedicated to allergen production and their detailed structural analysis. Max Chruszcz convinced the audience that crystals are scientists’ best friends when analyzing structures of allergens, while Thierry Batard, Paul Rösch and Peter Briza provided excellent astonishing data from the world of nuclear magnetic resonance and mass spectrometry. The following day Tom Platts-Mills presented his work on the IgE responses to Alpha-gal within the context of tick bites. In the following sessions on allergen-immune system interactions, Ben Roediger showed pictures from innate lymphoid cells in mice during the regulation of skin inflammation using intravital multiphoton-microscopy. The sessions on allergen specific diagnosis provided new data on component resolved diagnosis for insect venom allergy and food allergy. Different IgE sensitization patterns in patient groups derived from industrialized versus developing countries were presented, together with the application of allergen microarrays as a diagnostic screening tool.

Finally, aspects of allergen-specific immunotherapy were discussed. During these sessions, insight was provided into the development of hypoallergenic molecules and vaccines for immunotherapy trials, followed by an update on animal models for immunotherapy and allergen specific immunotherapy trials. Within the programme, authors from selected abstracts presented their data together with the invited speakers, which contributed to a lively and interactive atmosphere throughout the meeting.

Although the attendance rate was high right up until the very last presentation, participants could also enjoy the pre-Christmas season in Vienna, with its local markets and some snowfall.

Preparations for the next ISMA have already started, so watch out for the announcement of ISMA 2015.

Karin Hoffmann-Sommergruber
ISMA 2013 Chair
Markus Ollert
ISMA 2013 Chair

EAACI Winter School – Poiana Brasov

The 12th EAACI Winter School on Basic Research in Allergy and Clinical Immunology, organised by the EAACI Immunology section, was held for the first time in Eastern Europe in Poiana Brasov, Romania from the 30 January - 2 February 2014. As part of our ongoing efforts to constantly improve and innovate the activities of the Winter School, this year was the first time that we engaged with local clinicians working in the allergy and asthma field. Following our arrival in snow-covered Bucharest, Dr. Roxana Bumbacea, Dr. Dragos Bumbacea and Prof. Giurcaneanu at the Respiratory, Dermatology and Allergy clinics at Elias University Hospital, Bucharest, gave us a tour of their facilities and discussed the potential for future collaborations. Prof. Giurcanegaarn highlighted the great potential of the Elias University hospital and great willingness to collaborate in scientific studies particularly on the clinical side in allergic skin and airway diseases. We then travelled by bus through Transylvania, up into the wild and beautiful Carpathian mountains, reaching Poiana Brasov in the late afternoon. Once we had all gathered at the conference hotel, Alina Dumitru from the Allergy and Clinical Immunology Department, Imperial College, gave the opening lecture, during which she described how her early participation at EAACI Allergy Schools and meetings had helped her to find new collaborators and develop her research interests and activities, useful advice for those young investigators attending their first Winter School. Thus, for the first time, the Winter School also illustrated to participants the situation of allergy research in one of our European countries and therefore supported the European spirit of our Academy. We continued to be stimulated by an exciting and varied scientific program, which included six guest speakers, 20 short talks and 43 poster presentations. Scientific highlights included discussions on the novel mechanisms underpinning the development of food allergies and food hypersensitivity, the essential interactions between B cells and the innate immune system, macrophage polarization during inflammatory responses, TH2 lymphocyte regulation and the influence of parasites on allergic immune responses. An amazingly interactive and intense poster session challenged all participants later in the day. The social program included a tour of Dracula’s castle, a guided walking tour of Brasov city and late night dancing lessons. Overall, we received positive feedback from all attendees, who were not only exposed to the latest immunological discoveries (including the importance of mucus), but also initiated new collaborations and made new friends.

Many thanks to the EAACI Headquarters team (Viviane, Jeanette and Petra) and EAACI Vice President of Communications and Membership Ioana  Ağache for their essential contributions to the success of the meeting. The Immunology Section Board is already working on the program for the 2015 school; stay tuned for further details.

Carsten Schmidt-Weber
EAACI Immunology Section Chair
Liam O’Mahony
EAACI Immunology Section Secretary
The abstract deadline for the 2014 EAACI Congress, to be held in Copenhagen from 7–11 June, has just passed. More than 1700 abstracts have been submitted, most of them within the last few days before the deadline date. While the abstract authors were no doubt very busy up to the deadline, the closing of the submission site now marks an extremely busy time ahead behind the scenes. More than 150 people from the Interest Groups and Sections of the Academy will review and score the abstracts, which cover many different topics. This year we have improved and expanded the process, so more people will read and evaluate the abstracts to help ensure their optimal and transparent evaluation. All this hectic activity leads towards the Marathon Meeting, to be held in Copenhagen from 20–23 February, where all evaluations should be ready and all the threads will be woven into the fabric that constitutes the Final Programme. There will be 35 oral presentations, 12 poster discussions and up to 100 thematic poster sessions, each with a carefully planned order of abstracts and with two chairpersons to orchestrate the presentation of this enormous wealth of new scientific data on allergic diseases and disease mechanisms.

But that is not all. Additionally, 100 of the best poster presenters will be awarded a travel grant, and more than 400 of the Academy’s members will be asked to help to make the Congress a success by chairing one or more sessions in the Invited Speakers’ Programme, which was published some time ago in the Preliminary Programme. All in all, the Marathon Meeting represents a major leap forward (this is also how it got its name) towards establishing the “anatomy” of the whole Congress, which is very likely to be the largest allergy event in 2014, if not ever – just as the other EAACI congresses have been for the past few years.

As Chair of the Congress it will give me great pleasure to welcome participants to the Marathon Meeting in February, but even greater pleasure to welcome all of the global allergy community to participate in the actual Congress in June. Copenhagen is eagerly waiting for you to come and share your data, meet colleagues and learn all there is to know about the latest progress made in the world of allergy.

Should you have brand new data or (by some unforeseen circumstance) you were not able to submit your abstract in time, rest assured: the late breaking abstract submission deadline is 31 March 2014.

We look forward to seeing you in Copenhagen!

Lars K. Poulsen
EAACI 2014 Congress Chair

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EAACI Allergy Schools

**Research Methods**

3 - 5 April 2014
Newcastle upon Tyne, United Kingdom

**Investigating Allergic Effects of Environmental Exposures**

2 - 5 July 2014
Brindisi, Italy

Contact: education@eaaci.org
Drug Hypersensitivity Meeting 2014

Drug hypersensitivity is an area of allergy which is still rather enigmatic for physicians and researchers, and which raises a lot of questions in daily clinical practice. To answer some of these questions, colleagues and scientists from different areas (allergology, immunology, toxicology, pharmacology, dermatology, hepatology etc.) gather at the “Drug Hypersensitivity Meeting” (DHM), a biennial meeting founded in Bern in 2004. It is the meeting to learn about theoretical and practical aspects of drug allergy, and to meet the experts (see www.eaaci.org).

You will have the opportunity to: discuss the handling of patients with acute drug allergy; how to diagnose them by skin, provocation and in vitro tests; get to know new drugs causing drug allergies; get acquainted with possible desensitization; and see how to handle drug allergies in children etc. In addition, the genetics and pathomechanisms of drug allergies will be reviewed, and new scientific data presented by world known experts.

DHM6 offers insights for everybody, communicated by interactive breakfast seminars (12 over 3 days), daily instructive case presentations, 6 plenary and 12 focused symposia. We also expect over 220 poster presentations covering everything from interesting case reports to in depth functional and genetic studies.

If you are interested in drug allergy, join us at DHM 6 in Bern, Switzerland (9–12 April 2014).

DHM6 Chair
Werner J Pichler

Skin Allergy Meeting 2014

Europe’s most important meeting devoted to skin allergy is to be held in Krakow, a world-class city of art and science, and the cradle of Polish allergology. The third edition of the biannual Skin Allergy Meeting (SAM) – SAM 2014 – will take place from 18-20 September 2014 in Krakow. SAM 2014 will be the ultimate dermatological allergy experience of the year. To ensure the highest scientific and educational value of the meeting, a novel format has been implemented: each of the sessions will be built around one relevant clinical problem and combine keynote lectures given by acclaimed experts with “pro & con” discussions of present controversies, along with cutting-edge free communications, case reports and practical demonstrations. The sessions will be focused on the following topics: contact dermatitis; atopic eczema; urticaria and angioedema; mastocytosis and anaphylaxis; drug allergy and the skin; food allergy and the skin; diagnostics in skin allergy and hand eczema.

Europe’s leading researchers and clinicians in these fields will share their expertise with participants. Throughout the meeting, social events will create opportunities for further discussion of the most fascinating topics in the field of skin allergy, while tasting delicious Polish food and drink. Free contributions on these topics are also welcome – abstract submission will open in March 2014. Please check the official website (www.eaaci-sam.org) for more information and updates.

Krakow attracts more than 10 million visitors each year, for good reason. This beautiful city is a former Royal capital of Poland and home to a stunning collection of monuments and artifacts from Polish, Austro-Hungarian, German and European-Jewish history. Krakow, however, is not only culture and art: it is also a thriving technology centre, with international giants having their innovation and logistic centres located in the city, whilst some of the city’s indigenous university spin-ups are now present on all five continents.

September is a good month to visit Krakow, with pleasant mild temperatures and the highest average count of sunny days. The city is the perfect location for international meetings, conveniently connected with Europe and the rest of world. Can you really miss the opportunity of visiting a place where magnificent history combines with an exciting future?

We look forward to welcoming you to SAM 2014 in Krakow!

SAM 2014 Chair
Radoslaw Spiewak
Carsten Bindslev-Jensen

Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Meeting 2014

We are moving rapidly towards the 2014 FAAM meeting to be held in October 2014 in Dublin, Ireland. FAAM 2014 should be a memorable encounter between our Irish hosts and the experts and delegates attending the conference. We hope that FAAM 2014 in Dublin builds on the strong academic and social record of its predecessors.

The programme is in the final sign off stage with the Scientific Programme Committee and, though they are biased (of course), it has already been called “exciting” with “something for everyone”!

The meeting venue has been finalized and will be the modern Dublin Convention Centre (www.TheCCD.ie) which fought off strong competition, winning with its delegate and exhibitor-friendly lay out and facilities.

The CCD opened in 2010 and lies right in the middle of the city, on the north bank of the River Liffey. It is on a direct bus link from Dublin airport (www.aircoach.ie) and is surrounded by hotels (within 5 minutes walking distance) which can cater for all budgets.

We look forward to seeing you in Dublin (9 - 11 October 2014).

FAAM 2014 Chair
Jonathan O’B. Hourihane
The EAACI Epidemiology IG was founded in 2011 to raise the profile of allergy epidemiology within EAACI, to support population-based research and clinical trials and to provide a platform for educational activities within the allergy epidemiology field.

We founded the ‘Allergic Disease Registries Task Force’ (A-Reg TF) in our inaugural year. This went on to become an official Collaborating Partner of the EU-funded PARENT initiative on chronic disease registries in 2012, and this collaboration will continue for the next few years. As part of the A-Reg TF, we also conducted a survey of all allergic disease registries across Europe. In addition, we submitted a report on the feasibility of EAACI’s engagement in the setting up of allergic disease registries to the Executive Committee, and we are now preparing a paper describing the status quo of allergic disease registries and potential for future allergic disease registry developments. Furthermore, we took an active role in the European Adverse Systemic reactions Survey in allergen-specific immunotherapy (EASSI), in collaboration with the Immunotherapy IG. In addition, last year we also created a TF which will provide an ‘Overview of Systematic Reviews in Allergy Epidemiology’ in order to identify gaps in the current literature to guide future research in allergy epidemiology.

Finally, we ran two very successful post-graduate courses as part of the EAACI Congress in Geneva (2012) and Istanbul (2011), on ‘Epidemiology for the Clinical Allergist’ and another on ‘Conducting systematic reviews: working with the Cochrane Collaboration’, and similar activities could be organised as part of EAACI summer schools or other standalone educational events in the future.

Our vision for the coming years

In addition to the above ongoing projects, we have started expanding our TF portfolio, with a particular emphasis on collaborations with other IGS/Sections. For instance, we are involved in the “Immunotherapy Adverse Events Registry” initiative, a TF which is well on the way to setting up an immunotherapy pharmacovigilance registry for the Balkan area. We are also participating in the “Clinical epidemiology of anaphylaxis” TF, which was approved last year and aims to collect Europe-wide data on the epidemiology of anaphylaxis, partly informed by anaphylaxis registries.

Last but not least, the ‘EAACI Framework Guideline’ TF has seen us join forces with other IGS and Sections to develop an evidence-based and systematic approach to the formulation of EAACI clinical guidelines.

As an overall aim, we want to continue supporting EAACI’s educational role in clinical allergy and research, for instance through training in critical appraisal of the scientific literature and state-of-the-art systematic reviews. As an example, we just launched a TF that will organise ‘Methodological workshops during Allergy Schools’ and another which will support ‘Position paper meetings’, focusing on the provision of methodological workshops within the context of EAACI’s Annual Congresses and Allergy Schools. We are keen to build further collaborative links with other IGS/Sections as part of our educational and research activities, not only within epidemiological and clinical allergy but also where our field overlaps with translational and laboratory research.

George Konstantinou
EAACI Epidemiology IG Chair
Carsten Flohr
EAACI Epidemiology IG Secretary

The Occupational Allergy Interest Group (OA IG) intends to maintain a standing watch over relevant areas of occupational allergy within the EAACI, to keep members updated on the initiatives related to occupational allergy, and to encourage the exchange of information. Several activities involved our members in 2013.

Three Task Forces (TFs) have completed their work: ‘Asthma and exposure to cleaning products: an EAACI task force consensus statement’, coordinated by A. Siracusa; ‘Assessment of cough in the workplace’, coordinated by G. Moscato; and ‘Monitoring of occupational and environmental aeroallergens’, a concerted action of the OA IG and the Aerobiology & Air Pollution IG, coordinated by M. Raulf-Heimsoth and I. Annesi-Maesano. Two Position papers have already been published (1, 2), and a third is in press (3).

Another TF, on ‘Irritant-induced occupational asthma’, coordinated by O. Vandenplas, J. Walusiak and M. Raulf-Heimsoth, is expected to be completed this year. The TF on ‘Occupational anaphylaxis’, coordinated by A. Siracusa, is still in progress, whilst a new TF on ‘Occupational hypersensitivity pneumonitis’ has recently been approved and will be launched in 2014. The web page, showing a list of occupational agents able to induce allergic diseases, is also continuously updated by J. Sastre and S. Quirce.

Future initiatives include the collection of data about the applicability of allergenic molecule-based diagnosis, using panels of native or recombinant allergens, or multiplex microarray technology in the diagnosis of occupational Ige-mediated allergy. This approach may help to discriminate between genuine allergy and latent sensitization, thus improving diagnostic performance.

Santiago Quirce
EAACI Occupational Allergy IG Chair
Gianni Pala
EAACI Occupational Allergy IG Secretary

The well-established EAACI Aerobiology & Pollution Interest Group is working on the effects of bio-contaminants, chemical pollutants and other environmental stressors on allergy. Members of the IG have an established role in teaching, through Meet the Professor, Postgraduate courses and by contributing to Symposia.

Over the next two years, the group aims to increase the profile and involvement of all the researchers, physicians and health professionals who deal with the diagnosis and management pathway of allergy related to environmental stressors. One of the major aims is to advance knowledge and competencies in pollen and moulds count, allergen assessment and other environmental stressors (endotoxins, bacteria, viruses, chemical pollutants, diet, climate change, etc.). Investigations into climate changes will continue with an the study of their impact on pollens and moulds.

Two specific tasks of the IG are: (1) an investigation of the interactions between environmental stressors; and (2) an update of the EAACI position paper on ‘Projections of the effects of climate change on allergic asthma: the contribution of aerobiology.’ (Allergy, 65 (9): 1073–81). Ongoing Task Forces include those on ‘exposure to multi-pollution and thresholds’ and ‘recommendations for improving indoor air quality and preventing allergies in schools (RIAQS).’ A new Task Force has been approved on ‘the environmental burden on asthma in children/adolescents’.

The IG is planning an ICON on Pollen Allergy, whilst a request for two new Task Forces (on ‘nanoparticles and allergy’ and ‘pollen assessments through remote sensors’) will be submitted soon. The IG will continue to interact with the EC in order to promote initiatives aiming at reducing environmental hazards.

In the field of education initiatives, the IG will arrange a Summer School in 2014 on methods in the study of allergic effects of environmental exposures, and in 2015 it plans to organize a basic course in aerobiology, as a joint partnership of the EAACI/EAS/IAAA.

Please join the IG in these exiting initiatives and help improve patients’ health!

Isabella Annesi-Maesano
EAACI Aerobiology & Pollution IG Chair
Jeroen Buters
EAACI Aerobiology & Pollution IG Secretary

The Allergy Diagnosis Interest Group (IGAD) aims to stimulate interest in laboratory testing and in vivo procedures in the diagnosis of allergy.

We intend to establish a dynamic platform within the EAACI for scientists and clinicians who are designing, researching and applying diagnostic in vitro and in vivo allergy tests.

The spectrum of issues covered will include scientific, regulatory and clinical issues, resulting in the exchange of scientific knowledge, independent information and standards for clinicians, as well as stimulating discussion about unresolved issues.

Particular emphasis will be placed on exchanging ideas to promote discussion of the potential and limitations of current and future in vitro and in vivo tests applied for allergy diagnosis.

This IG will suggest and outline scientific and educational sessions on allergy diagnosis for the organising committees of future EAACI meetings.

The chair of the IG aims to integrate the board in scientific activity, complete the Task Forces on clinical impact of basophil activation and on IgE detection and interpretation of this test. We will disseminate the findings of these Task Forces within the EAACI, at EAACI international congresses, IGAD focused meetings, EuroBAT and ISMA, and through digital media.

Hans Jürgen Hoffmann
EAACI Allergy Diagnosis IG Chair
Paolo Matricardi
EAACI Allergy Diagnosis IG Secretary

Drug hypersensitivity reactions (DHR) are caused by the release of cellular mediators through specific and non-specific immunological mechanisms. Most of the studies looking for genetic predictors of DHR have been performed using a gene-candidate approach, although most of them have not been replicated. Therefore, there is limited knowledge about the relationship between risk factors, pathomechanisms and the variability of clinical manifestations; for this reason, there is a need to perform a critical analysis of the literature published to date, in all the different populations.

The EAACI Interest Group on Drug Allergy has a Task Force on genetic predictors of drug hypersensitivity chaired by Professor J. L. Gueant (Nancy, France), with the following objectives: to share existing data on candidate genes; to perform meta-analysis to increase knowledge of the major physiological mechanisms involved and the predictive value of the identified candidate genes; and to establish the phenotype/genotype relationship.

This study will provide consensus about the genetic associations found and the clinical implications provided, and will also give direction to the strategies to follow for conducting future studies. This knowledge will be very valuable for both clinicians and scientists involved in this area, and will help to clarify the contribution of pharmacogenetics in defining predictive biomarkers of drug hypersensitivity.

Maria J. Torres
EAACI Drug Allergy IG Chair
Patrizia Bonadonna
EAACI Drug Allergy IG Secretary
**EAACI Food Allergy Interest Group**

Over the last two years, one of the main tasks of the Food Allergy IG has been the development of the Food Allergy Guidelines, in collaboration with other IG and Section members of the Academy and with the support and involvement of the EAACI Board. In the coming two years, the Food Allergy IG will help promotion of the guidelines.

We aim to establish the regular organisation of Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Meetings (FAAM) in even years, and Food Allergy Schools in odd years. This year’s FAAM meeting will be held in October 2014 in Dublin, and we plan to organise a Food Allergy School in 2015 (possibly with the topic of “food allergy in adults”). The scientific programme for FAAM 2014 has already been developed, in collaboration with the Pediatric and Dermatology Sections, Allied Health professionals and Junior Members of the Academy. Besides providing an exciting programme for experts and people active in the field, there will also be a half-day programme for education and promotion of allergy amongst Irish primary care doctors.

In the coming two years, the ongoing Task Force on ‘Histamine release’, led by Lars K. Poulsen and Karin Hoffmann-Sommergruber, will be finalised. An application for a new Task Force on ‘food allergy severity’ will be submitted in 2014, aiming to bring together EAACI experts and investigators involved in the EU funded project iFAAM, in order to reach a consensus and develop a tool for grading food allergic reactions useful for the assistance and for intervention studies.

The members of the new Board, elected during the Annual Conference in Milan, are: Barbara Ballmer-Weber (Switzerland), Karin Hoffmann-Sommergruber (Austria), Anastasiou Konstantinopoulos (Greece), Bodo Niggeman (Germany), Rodrigo Rodrigues-Alves (Portugal), Marco Caminati (affiliated junior member) (Italy), Clare Mills (Secretary) (UK) andMontserrat Fernandez-Rivas (Chair) (Spain).

**EAACI Biologicals Interest Group**

The Biologicals Interest Group (IG) was established in 2012 in order to focus activities on biological agents (also termed biologicals or biologics). Over the next two years, this IG principally aims to stimulate basic and clinical research in the area of biologicals, especially those used for the treatment of immune-mediated diseases and for immunotherapy, to facilitate the scientific exchange between networks of clinicians and researchers interested in this topic, to create a comprehensive database on desired and adverse effects of biologicals, and to formulate guidelines for future research and clinical trials on biologicals.

As a first step, the group has formulated and begun Task Forces focusing on position papers, including a first one on biologicals used in allergic disorders, the publication of which is due this year; a second position paper will deal with biologicals used in clinical immunology. Another new Task Force includes work on the establishment of standard operating procedures for diagnosing and testing hypersensitivity reactions to biologicals.

The group has also been active in educational efforts to promote the interest and interaction of professionals in this field, for example by helping to organize scientific meetings, such as a satellite symposium during the annual meeting of the Italian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy this year. The long-term aim of the group is to strengthen and broaden these activities in order to benefit professionals active in the use of and research into biologicals, and to position EAACI in this field.

**EAACI Insect Venom Hypersensitivity Interest Group**

After the election of the new Board of our Interest Group in 2013, we are happy to announce two major projects for the near future.

The EAACI position papers ‘Diagnosis of hymenoptera venom allergy’ and ‘Prevention and treatment of hymenoptera venom allergy: guidelines for clinical practice’, published in *Allergy* in 2005, are now outdated and must be overhauled. Therefore, our main focus in the next year will be to generate valuable up-to-date position papers for the clinical routine to strengthen the role of EAACI as an opinion leader in hymenoptera venom allergy.

Our second huge and very important project over the next few years will be a multi-centre study on the role of beta-blockers and ACE inhibitors in anaphylaxis and venom immunotherapy. Since the introduction of beta-blockers in the early 1960s and the availability of ACE inhibitors from the early 1980s, there has been an ongoing discussion about the negative effects of these substances on allergic reactions and side-effects during immunotherapy. To stop the endless debate, we will initiate a well-planned multi-centre study with approximately 1200 participants. This project is currently in the planning phase and is expected to start in spring 2014. Any contribution to this study will be highly appreciated.

**Contacts**

- **EAACI Food Allergy IG Chair**
  - Montserrat Fernandez Rivas
  - Clare Mills

- **EAACI Biologicals IG Chair**
  - Onur Boyman
  - François Sertini

- **EAACI Insect Venom Hypersensitivity IG Chair**
  - Gunter Sturm
  - Ewa Cichocka-Jarosz

- **EAACI Food Allergy IG Secretary**
  - Lars K. Poulsen
  - Karin Hoffmann-Sommergruber

- **EAACI Biologicals IG Secretary**
  - Marco Caminati
  - Rodrigo Rodrigues Alves

- **EAACI Insect Venom Hypersensitivity IG Secretary**
  - Anastasiou Konstantinopoulos
  - Bodo Niggeman

- **EAACI Biologicals IG Chair**
  - Ewa Cichocka-Jarosz

- **EAACI Biologicals IG Secretary**
  - Ewa Cichocka-Jarosz

- **EAACI Insect Venom Hypersensitivity IG Chair**
  - Gunter Sturm

- **EAACI Insect Venom Hypersensitivity IG Secretary**
  - Ewa Cichocka-Jarosz
The Interest Group on Allergy, Asthma and Sports (IGAAS) is planning a large range of activities in the next two years. The Task Force on the pathogenesis of Exercise-Induced Anaphylaxis (EIAn), led by Paula Robson-Ansley, is about to finish its work and proceed with submission of the final document summarizing its activities and giving a review of the existing theories on EIAn etiopathogenesis.

Dr Robson-Ansley is also active as a local organizer of the Allergy School on Research Methods to be held this April in Newcastle upon Tyne, UK. Participation of expert speakers in the field is planned and the topics to be covered include: effective information retrieval, data collection, matching research methods with scientific questions, experimental design and statistical analysis.

The group is also creating a free-access web-database of publications in the field of Sports Allergy and Respiratory Diseases, which might be of interest to many EAACI members, in order to facilitate navigation in the constantly increasing load of scientific information in this area. Furthermore, a collection of the most relevant scientific achievements of the IGAAS, since its birth, will be created with the aim of promoting the contribution of sports allergy clinicians and basic scientists in the framework of the Academy.

Our Interest Group will continue to offer the chance of participating in Task Forces and becoming co-authors of reports, position papers or guidelines to all those interested in sport and allergy issues. Finally, the IGAAS will work to strengthen links with sports medicine scientific societies and other institutional organizations, mainly through the organization of both ad-hoc events and sessions within EAACI congresses focused on allergy and asthma in a sports context. Promotion of sports allergy issues at a national level is being undertaken by active IGAAS members and is expected to continue in the future.

Matteo Bonini
EAACI Allergy, Asthma and Sports IG Chair

Marcin Kurowski
EAACI Allergy, Asthma and Sports IG Secretary

Our main goal is to increase awareness of the interest group on Functional Genomics and Proteomics inside EAACI.

A Task Force position paper ‘Genomic and proteomic approaches for diagnosis in allergy, asthma and clinical immunology,’ will be published in 2014.

A new Task Force ‘OMICs studies in CRS and a systems biology approach to understanding CRS’ will be established in the next year, which will screen and collect available large ‘omics’ data sets for an initial systems biology approach. The aim will be to conduct comparisons between different studies by gathering experts in OMICs techniques, CRS and bioinformatics to form a Task Force tasked with cataloguing and integrating the large amount of data generated from studies on CRS.

Encouraged by the great success of the EAACI Allergy School 2013 in Greifswald, our IG will suggest, promote and establish this new kind of practical oriented course as a new educational tool inside EAACI. A combination of thought-provoking lectures, poster presentations and group laboratory work enables extensive discussions between the participants and speakers and all participants are also able to work with their own samples, providing them with an opportunity to perform preliminary analyses with new OMICs approaches.

Christian Scharf
EAACI Functional Genomics and Proteomics IG Chair

Cornelis van Drunen
EAACI Functional Genomics and Proteomics IG Secretary

The Allied Health Interest Group is a comparatively new group established in 2011. Over the next two years, the group aims to increase the profile and involvement of all allied health members in the diagnosis and management of allergy, and to advance knowledge and skills in particular areas such as diet and nutrition. Our Task Forces include those concerned with the development of paediatric and adult diet history tools; in 2014, these tools will be validated and linked into the EAACI food allergy and anaphylaxis guidelines. A new Task Force will be established to develop competencies required for allied health professionals working in allergy, which will inform educational needs and demonstrate their efficacy in allergy diagnostic and management pathways.

The group also aims to support education initiatives for allied health professionals, and to ensure the recognition and utilisation of highly skilled individuals educated in specialist fields, for the benefit of all members. Allied Health Interest Group members now have an established role in teaching on postgraduate courses, and the group plans to develop a summer school or training course in 2015 for nurses, dietitians, technicians, trainees and others, to improve knowledge and skills in allergy at a grass roots level.

Berber Vlieg-Boerstra
EAACI Allied Health IG Chair

Isabel Skypala
EAACI Allied Health IG Secretary
EAACI Immunotherapy Interest Group

At the beginning of 2014, the EAACI position paper on ‘Clinical Outcomes in AIT-trials’ will be published. With this paper, the Academy will have an important impact on the harmonization of AIT-trials in the future. Moreover, the work of our Task Force (TF) on ‘Contraindications in AIT’ has just been finalized and the group’s first reports are also expected in the first quarter of 2014.

The ‘Pan European Survey for evaluation of the frequency of systemic adverse reactions due to Specific Allergen Immunotherapy in real life setting’ (EASSI), as well as the prospective register on ‘Adherence to Specific Immunotherapy in Europe’ (PASTE), will be successfully finalized in 2014, and represent the well-established and important activities of the IT Interest Group (IG).

An open question in relation to AIT is whether it is possible to identify biomarkers for prediction and monitoring of the treatment. A new TF for Biomarkers for monitoring the clinical efficacy of allergen immunotherapy will be established this year, collaborating with EAACI’s Immunology Section. The primary purpose of this TF is to create an overview of potential biomarker candidates and eventually propose a way forward in this research area.

EAACI have been closely involved in discussion with the European Medicines Agency (EMA) regarding the development of products for immunotherapy in children. In collaboration with the Pediatric Section, the IT IG will establish a new TF for AIT in children.

Moreover, in order to increase the comparative potential for immunotherapy trials and the validity of clinical outcome of treatment, a new TF defining clinically-relevant thresholds for allergen exposure for the analysis of outcomes in AIT will also be initiated. In addition, a new TF will identify specifics in relation to AIT allergen-specific immunotherapy with rare allergens.

Finally, the IT IG have already successfully organized three Allergy Schools on AIT, in Germany, Finland and Spain. The next one is planned for September 2014 and will take place in Athens, Greece, in collaboration with the Greek Society of Allergology.

Oliver Pfarr
EAACI Immunotherapy IG Chair

Lars Jacobsen
EAACI Immunotherapy IG Secretary

EAACI Ocular Allergy Interest Group

Ocular allergy includes a group of very common and less common hypersensitivity disorders of the ocular surface, diagnosed and managed not only by ophthalmologists but also by allergists, pediatricians and rhinologists. However, ocular allergies are frequently mis-diagnosed and not properly managed. The diagnosis is usually based on clinical history and signs and symptoms, applying in vivo and in vitro assays when identification of the specific allergens(s) is required for clinical management. To date, no specific tests are available to diagnose the different forms of ocular allergy. The lack of recommendations on diagnosis of these forms is considered a medical need for both allergists and ophthalmologists.

After the publication of new nomenclature and classification (Allergy, 2012), the Interest Group on Ocular Allergy has almost completed a manuscript on the use of ‘Conjunctival provocation test in daily practice’, for submission in early 2014. The next stage is to prepare a new document focused on tools and recommendations for the diagnosis of different ocular allergic diseases, for use not only by allergists but also by ophthalmologists. Our ambitious goal is to raise awareness of the ocular and vision problems related to allergy and other immune disorders, and for EAACI to promote and support basic and clinical research on Ocular Allergy.

Andrea Leonardi
EAACI Ocular Allergy IG Chair

Virginia Calder
EAACI Ocular Allergy IG Secretary

EAACI Infection & Allergy Interest Group

The Infection & Allergy (I&A) IG, formulated over a decade ago, now includes approximately 2,800 scientists and physicians, translating to one third of the Academy’s membership. A new Board took over at the EAACI-WAO Congress 2013 in Milan, and has already established a new palette of activities while at the same time supporting the on-going efforts of the group. Indeed, with four Task Forces (TF) running and another two submitted for approval it seems that the next few years will produce many exciting position papers in the field. Specifically, the collaboration of the I&A IG with related scientific bodies led to the development of a TF aimed at summarising current scientific evidence regarding the impact of influenza on asthmatics and the safety and effectiveness of available vaccines. Another example of our work is the group’s most recently launched TF which focuses on the usefulness of anti-infective agents in the treatment and/or prevention of asthma onset and exacerbations. Such contributions will provide the basis for organising related scientific sessions in the context of EAACI events but also for composing lay summaries. We are planning on organising online educational webinars and Board Members have been assigned to represent the group’s interests in all of the Academy’s endeavours, therefore bringing the I&A IG to the forefront of our community.

Chrysanthis Skevaki
EAACI Infection & Allergy IG Chair

Hermelijn Smits
EAACI Infection & Allergy IG Secretary
EAACI Primary Care Interest Group

The Primary Care Interest Group, formed at the Milan meeting, will act as a platform for education and research, to be an advocate of primary, holistic patient-centred care for patients with allergy. We will work closely with other groups and sections within EAACI and hope to bring new members from the community to the EAACI family.

Our plans for 2014 include:

- Task Force One: Assessment of Educational Needs – with the aim of ascertaining what primary care workers perceive their educational needs are and, of equal importance, in what manner they would like to have these needs met: ranging from lecture format, small group work, printed and online media, apps, twitter, webcasts and others.
- Task Force Two: Primary Care Atlas of Allergy – with the aim of creating an atlas describing the allergy landscape of primary care, the rise in allergic disease, approaches to disease management and indications as to when to refer for specialist opinion.

As a group we will work synergistically with our specialist colleagues, recognising that our concern to deliver high quality care mirrors theirs, nurturing a culture of learning and leadership in quality improvement across clinical boundaries.

We also plan in 2014/2015 to run a Primary Care Allergy School – a meeting aimed at raising the profile of allergy in the primary care community with both educational and research elements.

Dermot Ryan
EAACI Primary Care IG Chair
Elisabeth Angier
EAACI Primary Care IG Secretary

EAACI Comparative and Veterinary Allergology Interest Group

The Comparative and Veterinary Allergology Interest Group is a new group just established in the summer of 2013. Nevertheless, in the last 6 months a satellite symposium at the ISMA conference in Vienna was organised, and a task force was established to write a position paper on veterinary allergens. One of the aims of the group will be to have this position paper written and submitted within the next year.

Another aim is to increase our membership by recruiting not only members from within the EAACI but also to gain new members from outside the Academy. To this end, contacts with the International Committee for Allergic Diseases in Animals and with the European and American College of Veterinary Dermatology have been established, and will be intensified within the next two years.

Finally, we would like foster research relationships between human and veterinary researchers in allergology. This will hopefully lead to a few collaborative studies within the next two years.

Ralf Mueller
EAACI Comparative and Veterinary Allergology IG Chair
Jozef Janda
EAACI Comparative and Veterinary Allergology IG Secretary

EAACI Junior Member and Affiliates Section – 2-year Strategic Programme

The Junior Member and Affiliates (JMAs) constitute the largest section of EAACI, currently with 3210 members. Working for our members’ best interest, the JMA Working Group (JMA WG) is formed of one JMA representative from each EAACI Section and Interest Group, as well as by our Webmaster and myself (as Chair).

Having one representative from each section and IG conveys a unique dynamic to the JMA section and allows us to be naturally involved in all initiatives of the Academy. Capitalizing on this unique structure and supported by EAACI’s leadership, the JMA Working Group aims to address the needs and facilitate the development of young clinicians and scientists who devote their careers to the field of allergy and clinical immunology. In 2013–2015, the JMA WG aims to:

- enhance education in the field of allergy and clinical immunology, and enhance the participation of JMAs in EAACI Allergy Schools and other educational activities;
- promote and coordinate the EAACI Mentorship Programme;
- encourage JMAs to apply to EAACI Fellowships;
- increase the number of JMAs taking the EAACI knowledge exam;
- facilitate effective communication amongst JMAs, and between JMAs and senior members of EAACI;
- promote the collaboration of JMAs with EAACI journals;
- organise JMA-dedicated sessions, and facilitate the involvement of JMAs in EAACI Congress and Focused Meetings as attendees and as faculty members;
- disseminate information about EAACI and allergy and clinical immunology, particularly that of special interest to JMAs, via eaaci.org, the EAACI Newsletter, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and other social media;
- collaborate with other international and national allergy societies.

Step by step, with growing enthusiasm and dedication to the field of allergy and clinical immunology, JMAs are the future of the Academy!

Alexandra Santos
EAACI JMA Chair
Early origins of allergy

Environmental factors can alter early programming in pregnancy and the early postnatal period, and can shape the risk of future chronic diseases. There are significant differences in the developmental trajectory of the innate immune function in children with allergic disease that might contribute to the recognized differences in postnatal adaptive T-cell immunity. Several defective perinatal immune responses were associated with the development of allergic disease, such as inflammatory responses, Th2 skewing, immature Th1 and Treg, and reduced mucosal defence (IgA). Postnatal immune maturation, such as established Th2 skewing, attenuated Th1/Treg maturation and microbial responses, and higher CRP, were also described as risk factors.

There is emerging evidence for a central role of infectious agents in the development of allergies. Environmental exposures determining childhood illnesses operate early in life. Maternal exposure to animal sheds during pregnancy exerts a protective effect on atopic sensitization in children lasting until school age. The inverse relation between asthma and growing up on a farm was described. It was shown that microbial diversity explains about 26% of the farm effect on asthma.

Maternal atopic status confers a higher risk for the child, suggesting uterine programming of the foetus beyond genetics. This is reflected by an up-regulated immune signature in the mucosal lining fluid in the newborns of atopic mothers. The mother’s use of antibiotics during pregnancy, Caesarean section and airway colonization in neonates with specific pathogenic bacteria increase the risk of asthma together with an up-regulated immune signature in the airway mucosa, while increased diversity of the neonatal gut flora is associated with reduced risk of sensitization. An imbalance of the neonatal bacterial colonization triggers the immune system towards an atopic trajectory in genetically predisposed newborns. The human microbiome may have changed due to a shift in nutrients, the use of antibiotics and changing hygiene, which may contribute to the increasing disease prevalence and could represent a future focus for prevention.

Indre Butiene
Vilnius University Department of Pathology, Forensic Medicine and Pharmacology, Lithuania

The complexity of the immune response in allergic diseases

In the past, research has mainly focused on genetic predisposing factors and on the structural characteristics of pollen derived allergens. However, pollen-exposed epithelia do not encounter pure allergen and studies have extended to the analysis of non-allergenic, adjuvant mediators co-released from pollen, which might add to the generation of an overall Th2 promoting milieu. As well as active proteases and oxidases, extracts of pollen contain low molecular weight molecules such as pollen-associated lipid mediators or adenosine, with the potential to stimulate and modulate cultured human immune cells.

There is clear evidence that lamina reticularis thickening starts very early in asthma, suggesting that a barrier between activated epithelium occurs, with the aim of down-regulation of the allergen-induced inflammatory response. Bronchial epithelial cell shedding, mucus production, ciliary movements and coughing are mechanisms that attempt to decrease the amount of allergen exposure. The relevant organs’ epithelial barrier function of patients with atopic dermatitis, asthmatic and chronic rhinosinusitis have been demonstrated to be defective.

A major burden of asthma is caused by exacerbations which have been strongly and consistently associated with respiratory infections, and rhinovirus (RV) has been shown to be the most relevant pathogen. Epithelial RV infection and the resulting inflammation are central pathophysiological events in asthma exacerbations. It is known that antiviral epithelial responses are defective in asthma, with innate interferons being key mediators. An atopic environment results in epithelial antiviral defects and skew towards remodelling. Interferon dysregulations have also been described in allergic rhinitis.

Indre Butiene
Vilnius University Department of Pathology, Forensic Medicine and Pharmacology, Lithuania

Update on anaphylaxis

Stelle Simons, from Canada, explained that correct management of anaphylaxis is critically important and frequently very difficult in vulnerable patients, such as teenagers (because of their risk-taking behaviours), in pregnancy or in elderly patients. Simons underlined that, in fact only 7% of teenagers always carry epinephrine and only 40% avoid food triggers. In pregnancy, the management of anaphylaxis is particularly difficult, with the risk of fetal distress that might necessitate emergency Caesarean delivery. The favoured position for patients is to lie on the left side, to prevent inferior vena cava compression. In elderly patients, anaphylaxis is very dangerous because it might lead to myocardial infarction and arrhythmias by unmasking subclinical coronary disease.

Margitta Worm, from Germany, described the risk factors for severe anaphylaxis, such as exercise, alcohol abuse, genetic features, NSAID use, infections, additional indirect activation and combinations of these. Fred Finkelman, from the USA, discussed markers that may be used to distinguish IgE and non-IgE mediated anaphylaxis, such as increased IL4 and IL4 effects in IgE mediated anaphylaxis, and decreased neutrophil FcyRIII in IgG mediated anaphylaxis. He also argued that conventional desensitization treatment is less effective for IgG mediated anaphylaxis. Polyclonal rapid desensitization would yield different results for the two types of anaphylaxis.

Annalisa Santucci
Rimini Infermi Hospital, Italy
The prevalence of allergic diseases has increased over the last few decades. Allergen-specific immunotherapy (SIT) is the only treatment for allergic rhinitis, asthma and venom induced anaphylaxis with long-lasting effects, which continue after treatment and contribute to the prevention of disease progression. The efficacy of both routes, subcutaneous and sublingual, seem similar for treating respiratory diseases.

Patients react to the same allergens in different ways and this difference affects the clinical response to SIT. The benefit of SIT seems to be higher in the earliest stages of the sensitisation process, so SIT should be prescribed as soon as possible if it is indicated.

Until now, dietary avoidance was the only option for allergy to egg, nuts and cow milk proteins. Oral immunotherapy provides protection in the majority of children and holds promise for the treatment of food allergy.

To achieve the best results with SIT we need to speak the same language in terms of practice guidelines and indications. A very good selection of patients is crucial. At present there are several standardised regimens. Difficulties arise from the fact that every pharmaceutical company has its own way to quantify and present their products so allergen extracts being used for SIT are not comparable. A harmonization of relevant outcomes in SIT clinical trials is also needed.

Efforts to develop safer and more effective SIT are in progress. New indications such as atopic dermatitis emerge. The adherence to SIT should be also improved. Alternative delivery modalities such as intralymphatic or epicutaneous are both achieving promising results for food and inhalant allergies. Vaccine modifications, such as the introduction of relevant T cell epitopes or the use of viral-like particles as an adjuvant, have been evaluated, but more studies are needed to have concluding results.

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