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What makes a good year for EAACI: The power of positive thinking

“We become what we think about.”

Earl Nightingale

The positive thinking philosophy has worked well for EAACI in 2018: a top-notch Annual Congress, Focused Meetings, Allergy Schools and Master Classes; 11,167 members and 1110 new members joining in the last year; 53 members on the National Allergy Societies Committee and 20 on the International Societies Council; four top clinical practice guidelines; an innovative educational portfolio, and much more.

A substantially expanded collaboration is needed to strengthen the awareness of allergies and asthma both on a European and on a global level. The European Strategic Forum on Allergic Diseases organised by EAACI on 17 November in Zurich brought the EAACI family together with peer scientific societies (ERS, ESID, GARD, EPA/UNEPSA), patient representatives, research institutes and regulatory bodies (Paul Erlich Institute, INSERM, UEMS), experts in data protection and industry representatives. Research priorities, innovative solutions, strategic programmes and policies for better management of allergic diseases and asthma were tackled in a lively debate around three key areas: drug development and biomedical engineering, allergic diseases and asthma in the context of population and environmental health, and Mobile Health. Translational research and implementation science were acknowledged as the major unmet needs to be prioritised by the scientific community. Standards and quality criteria, harmonisation and standardisation and clinical care pathways were underpinned as critical steps for the growth of our speciality in a sustainable way.

The EAACI NAS platform is in full swing, each day strengthening its joint support for lobbying, quality clinical care pathways, and alignment between countries and research and training centres. Twenty National Allergy Societies have signed the agreement for dual EAACI-NAS membership within the last 5 months.

Communicating to engage is a key pillar of the 2017–2019 strategic plan. My EAACI programme is developing nicely, focusing on improved communication, networking and membership support with the aim of building a stronger sense of identity for the EAACI community. The Members Area will offer a one-stop hub for all member requirements (access to all EAACI resources, claims for CME credits, registration to EAACI events, abstract submission, etc.). Opportunities for networking and engagement within EAACI, beyond the Annual Congress and other events, are continuously being developed via social media channels and the EAACI Newsletter. New membership categories rewarding long-standing members and recognising excellence in contributions to research, education and clinical leadership in allergy and clinical immunology within the EAACI membership were recently approved by the Executive Committee.

The EAACI Science Committee works relentlessly to achieve added value to EAACI’s different scientific activities, to broaden scientific knowledge of allergology amongst students, patients and the general public, and to promote the development of precision medicine in allergology. A patients’ guide to allergic diseases is underway, together with an online course on metabolomics and transcriptomics. EAACI Guidelines on biologicals and atopic dermatitis are expected to be delivered in the coming year. The PRACTALL consensus document on the role of the exposome in allergic diseases and asthma will soon be published and preparations for another focusing on immune modulation for food allergy are well on the way. The newly created Methodology Committee will oversee the development of the infrastructure assisting EAACI groups in developing guidelines, consensus documents and registries with a standardised and coordinated approach.

The latest position papers prepared by the EAACI Speciality Committee focus on training requirements for subspecialists in Allergology and on allergy services in Europe as a collaboration between UEMS and the NAS Committee. Development of European Training Requirements for the speciality of Allergology is ongoing.

EAACI’s avantgarde educational portfolio is continuously expanding. The Immunology Section developed an excellent animation video explaining the immunological mechanisms of food allergy (https://vimeo.com/2948351). At the upcoming EAACI Immunology Winter School young scientists are invited to share and discuss cutting-edge allergy and asthma related immunological research, to fine-tune their own projects and form networks with other researchers. An Allergy School on Insect Venom Allergy and Mastocytosis is planned in April 2019 in Groningen, Netherlands and a Master Class on Biologicals in May 2019 in San Lorenzo El Escorial, Spain.

Our Focused Meetings continue to attract the best science in the field. The first European Rhinallergy Meeting (RHINA) from 21-23 March 2019 will facilitate the translation of emerging discoveries in ENT, AIT and biologicals into clinical practice to benefit our patients. Next year’s fifth edition of the leading European skin allergy meeting, SAM, held in collaboration with the European Society for Contact Dermatitis, will take place at the Technical University of Munich.

The Age of Exploration has had one of the greatest impacts on global relations of any other historic period or event. Join EAACI at its annual congress in Lisbon to co-author our own great historical epic. The next EAACI Congress awaits its participants with 7 plenary symposia, 44 symposia, 13 sister society symposia, 10 interactive workshops, 12 learning lounges, 8 interactive PC courses, an EAACI training course in immunology by Abul Abbas, 5 sessions, 5 hot topics and 6 year in review sessions and many more. Do not miss the deadline of 14 January to submit your abstract, and the 24 January deadline for early bird registration.

In 2018 innovation combined with positive thinking resulted in EAACI’s success in all its endeavours. Let’s continue to support our Academy in 2019 by adding empathy and hope, daring dreams, strong commitment and strive for excellence.

Ioana Agache
EAACI President
Dear EAACI friends and members,

The summer holidays brought several new projects and ideas, and going “back to school” in September saw a burst of activity for the EAACI family. One of the Newsletter’s innovative approaches is to move to being completely online, following the “EAACI goes green” initiative, retaining just a limited number of printed copies for the annual EAACI Congress. This new format, which will begin in 2019, will allow a more attractive and interactive Newsletter, including embedded videos, links to documents and short cuts to register for EAACI events, travel grants and abstract submissions, features which we hope will be useful and time-saving for all EAACI members and other readers.

After the summer, the EAACI Allergy School on Immunotherapy in Children, held in Barcelona and organised by the Pediatric Section in collaboration with the Esponphilic Esophagitis Working Group, brought a multidisciplinary approach to help fulfil the best quality management of these allergic children, with seminary and plenary sessions held by prominent and outstanding speakers. Inside this issue you will find a short report from the Allergy School by Carmen Riggioni, the JM representative of the Immunotherapy Working Group.

Other scientific activities in the last quarter of 2018 include FAAM (https://www.eaaci.org/focused-meetings/faam-2018) and EuroBAT (https://www.eaaci.org/focused-meetings/eurobat-2018), held in Copenhagen, which are also covered in this issue by Karin Hoffmann-Sommergruber and Hans-Jurgen Hoffmann, respectively. Similarly, the International Severe Asthma Forum, held in Madrid from 8–10 November (https://www.eaaci.org/focused-meetings/isaf-2018/about-madrid) covers recent findings and discussions about the new monoclons and approaches to severe asthma.

Another interesting and important initiative included in this issue is the new and updated WHO/IUIS Classification of allergens, which is available at the EAACI website (http://www.eaaci.org/resources-list/resources/4403-allergen-nomenclature.html).

Patients will have a new consultation and advice tool available to them, with the project presented inside this issue by Tomás Chivato, the EAACI Science Editor. I invite you to read the piece to learn all about it!

Inside this issue you will also find highlights from the EAACI journals (Allergy, Pediatric Allergy and Immunology, and Clinical and Translational Allergy). These publications bring you up-to-date clinical and basic research in the fields of allergy and clinical immunology. I cordially invite you to discover the interesting contributions from the Editors in Chief of these important journals.

Next year, from 21–23 March 2019, the 1st European Rhinallergy Meeting (https://www.eaaci.org/focused-meetings/rhina-2019) will take place in Eastbourne (United Kingdom). Please remember that the abstract submission deadline is 30 November 2018. This EAACI Focused Meeting is designed to facilitate collaborations and dissemination of discoveries in ENT, allergen immunotherapy and biologicals in upper respiratory diseases.

I invite all EAACI members to have a look at the EAACI Media Library (http://webcast.eaaci.cym.com), where you will find outstanding talks and hundreds of posters from different EAACI events, providing extended dissemination of the information available during the live congress, and all to be enjoyed at your convenience.

Have you had a look at the Job Center on the EAACI website? EAACI supports medical professionals from the beginning of their studies and throughout their professional careers. If you are a hospital, research centre or university and have positions open for recruitment, please do use the EAACI Job Center at: http://www.eaaci.org/resources/job-center/eaaci-external-positions.html.

Finally, I would like to draw your attention once again to the Dual Membership rate that prospective EAACI members who are already national society members are entitled to: just 30 EUR for the annual EAACI membership. If you would like to apply, don’t forget to indicate which National Allergy Society you are a member of and fill in your valid national society membership number.

EAACI is dedicated to allergy science, committed to your health.

I wish you all the best,

Dario Antolin-Amerigo
EAACI Newsletter Editor
The importance of diet and nutrition in allergic disease and the role of the EAACI family

I qualified as a dietitian and was fortunate enough that my first job was at the Royal Brompton Hospital in London, a specialist world-class centre for cardiothoracic disorders. I love it so much I have been there ever since! As well as working as a clinical dietitian, I have also enjoyed a huge variety of different roles, managing a large number of services including palliative care and psychiatry.

I was also fortunate to get involved in research work from the beginning of my dietetic career, principally in cystic fibrosis, whilst my clinical work included both pediatric and adult allergy. I eventually combined my love of research and allergy by undertaking a PhD at Kings College London. My doctoral thesis was on the validation of a diagnostic questionnaire for pollen-food syndrome (PFS) and its use in a survey of 10,000 UK adults to determine the prevalence of PFS. This developing expertise in adult food allergy enabled me and a medical allergy colleague to establish the first UK specialist adult food allergy clinic, a jointly run clinic which ensured patients had access to both medical and dietary expertise in one session.

Four years ago, I was asked to develop and lead adult food allergy services for the Hospital Trust, so I stepped away from my management roles and became the first consultant allergy dietitian in the UK. I now run my own clinics, undertaking both the diagnosis and management of adult food allergy patients, working alongside my medical allergy colleagues and enjoying their full support. Many of my patients have complex gastrointestinal issues, so three years ago I established a food allergy/gastroenterology clinic, run jointly with a consultant gastroenterologist. One outcome from this service is a new clinic focussed solely on the diagnosis and management of adults with eosinophilic oesophagitis. I continue to be actively involved in research. My post-doctoral research includes the characterisation of UK-born adults with lipid transfer protein allergy, and the prevalence of PFS in patients with irritable bowel syndrome.

Adults with suspected food allergy often have complex histories and relationships with food. I passionately believe that specialist allergy dietitians are perfectly placed to diagnose and manage these patients. Our training enables us to take a full dietary history, which provides clues as to the likely source of symptoms. Many of their issues relate to diet, and whether they have an ultimate diagnosis of food allergy, food intolerance, irritable bowel disease or eosinophilic oesophagitis, they all need dietary advice and management. This is especially true when there is so much online dietary advice which is often incorrect and occasionally dangerous. Nurses and dietitians often have very autonomous specialist allergy roles in the UK, due to the way posts and services are structured, which enables full use of the multi-disciplinary team (MDT) approach, to ensure all patients get timely review and best management.

My belief in the role of non-medical allergy specialists has over the last 20 years led me to develop organisations for the promotion of the specialty. In 2002, I co-founded the British Dietetic Association (BDA) Food Allergy Specialist Group, now one of the largest specialist groups of the BDA. As the first chair of this group, I was co-opted to the council of the British Society of Allergy & Clinical Immunology (BSACI) and have seen a huge increase in the involvement and recognition of dietitians within this society. In 2014, I was awarded the prestigious BSACI William Frankland award in recognition of services to clinical allergy. In 2009, Berber Vlieg-Boerstra, Carina Venter and I created the International Network of Diet and Nutrition in Allergy (INDANA) in order to promote the role of food and nutrition in allergy. This international society was the driver for the establishment of the Allied Health Interest Group of EAACI, and this year INDANA was also adopted as a member of the International Societies Group.

I am proud to be the first Allied Health member of the Executive Committee of EAACI and of leading a task force developing and publishing competencies for allied health practitioners working in allergy. I look forward to my continued involvement in the EAACI family.

Isabel Skypala
EAACI Executive Committee, Member at Large

Opinion Leaders Corner

EAACI CALENDAR – IMPORTANT DATES AT A GLANCE

January 2019
24 – 27 January – 17th EAACI Immunology Winter School, Trysil, Norway

March 2019
21–23 March - European Rhinallergy Meeting (RHINA) 2019, Eastbourne, United Kingdom

“Foot note” - This calendar shows EAACI’s most important events planned for the coming months. Only events with confirmed dates are mentioned here, for a complete list of all events, please view the ‘Meetings’ and ‘Education’ pages on www.eaaci.org.

EAACI Newsletter

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The first European Rhinallergy Meeting (RHINA) will take place in Eastbourne (United Kingdom) from 21–23 March 2019.

RHINA is an interactive interdisciplinary EAACI Focused Meeting and the programme has been designed to encourage scientific collaborations and facilitate the translation of emerging discoveries in ENT, Allergen Immunotherapy (AIT) and biologics in upper respiratory disciplines into clinical practice to benefit our patients.

Challenges in clinical practice, identifying disease mechanisms and advances in novel therapeutics (small molecule, immune modulators, biologics and allergen immunotherapy), regulatory issues and EAACI guidelines will be the key focus at RHINA 2019, in an interdisciplinary collaborative approach by the EAACI Immunotherapy Interest Group (ITIG), Biologics Working Group, and the ENT, Asthma and Immunology Sections.

RHINA 2019 will bring together clinicians and scientists (faculty and industry-based), with a broad range of experience from junior scientists/medical doctors to key opinion leaders, at a focused meeting dedicated to all aspects of upper, lower airway and ocular diseases.

We welcome speakers and participants from all over the world to share their knowledge and expertise with us and partake in a truly interactive interdisciplinary dialogue.

We look forward to warmly welcoming you to RHINA 2019.

Mohamed Shamji
RHINA 2019 Chair, SPC Coordinator and Interest Group Immunotherapy Secretary

Philippe Gevaert
RHINA 2019 Co-Chair and EAACI ENT Section Chair

Meet the person behind

Roy Gerth van Wijk: Specialty Committee Chair

Tell us about yourself. What is your experience with EAACI?
My chairmanship of the EAACI Specialty Committee since 2015 is part of a long line of positions starting in 2001 as an ExCom member, as President of the EAACI Congress in Amsterdam in 2004, several vice-presidencies and, from 2007–2009, as EAACI President. My focus on the allergology specialty started in the last century, serving as a board member and chair of the Netherlands Society of Allergology. Now, with my current position, my personal circle is complete!

What does the work of the Specialty Committee Chair involve?
The Specialty Committee consists of delegates from the EAACI sections and the Union Européenne des Médecins Spécialistes (UEMS) Section and Board (S&B) of Allergology. The chair – adjunct member of the EAACI ExCom and President of the S&B – works at the interface between both organisations.

What are your aims as Specialty Committee Chair?
I aim to address several issues: (1) defining the requirements needed to become a well-trained full specialist; (2) defining the minimal level of training needed for subspecialists in allergology, when the full specialty does not exist in a country; and (3) understanding the current status of the specialty, subspecialties and allergy services in Europe. By addressing each of these aims, we can attempt to define the lower and upper limits of knowledge and skills required to deliver care to allergic patients.

What are the challenges for the future for the Specialty Committee?
The very important task of defining the European training requirements (ETR) of our specialty involves an intensive and laborious process which will hopefully be finalised in 2019. An EAACI position paper on the training requirements of allergology subspecialties has already been published. Furthermore, a collaboration between UEMS S&B and the National Allergy Society Committee resulted in a comprehensive survey and a second EAACI position paper on the specialty and allergy services in Europe. Hopefully, this document will be a source for further communication with relevant stakeholders in our field. From the European survey we have learned that allergology, as a specialty, is already in place in most countries. However, Europe is characterised by a substantial heterogeneity in the level of allergy services and availability of specialists. The strengths and weaknesses of the specialty vary: there is much room for standardisation and harmonisation. Furthermore, intensifying efforts to create awareness, to optimise our public relations and to lobby for the specialty in Brussels and in European countries are the next steps.

RHINA 2019: From bench to bedside
Managing allergic diseases: The role and activities of the POC

Patients organisations aim to improve the quality of life for people affected by health conditions and their families, through patient participation and empowerment, and by promoting prevention.

The historic role of patient organisations in allergy, as in other diseases, was to share patients’ experiences, and this remains a crucial function today. However, this role has now expanded to also include close partnerships with allergy health care professionals, such as allergists, primary and secondary care workers, and with support services such as dieticians and policy makers at all levels. From these partnerships, educational sessions are organised to help patients understand their condition and to empower them, so that they can be active participants in society.

Globalisation and information technology are a great opportunity and challenge for patient organisations. Patients increasingly interact online and although much comprehensive and clear information still exists in print, it is increasingly being supplemented by websites, videos and social media. Patients and carers get a great deal of their information online and post their hopes for the near and distant future while sharing their fears. Patient organisations who have grasped this opportunity have revolutionised advocacy, and the political impact of patient organisations grows as they strive for action and change, as evidenced by the inclusion of patient representatives on official bodies advising on health, care and research policies.

Patient organisations also play an increasingly key role in national and international research funding. Public and patient involvement in European projects has become a key requirement when securing funding.

EAACI established its Patient Organisations Committee (POC) to ensure the input of patients in the Academy’s activities. This resulted, for example, in the identification of the need for patient partnerships in clinical trials. Moreover, the POC has become a well-organised and sustainable platform for communication and guidelines, enabling mutually beneficial interactions between patients and clinicians, and, since its initiation in 2011, it has been a source of added value for numerous EAACI member activities (position papers, statements, Task Forces, etc.). It has also been instrumental in the establishment of the Clinical Challenge activity, to EAACI appearance at the EU Health Platform and other integrated presentations from Sections and Interest, as well as to the Practical Allergy Management Workshop at the Annual Congress.

The concept of the patient as an ‘expert of experience’ has developed. The expert patient now aims to provide input into research and healthcare using his or her unique expertise: their first-hand experience of a disease. Patient organisations have developed processes and methodologies to ensure their members are fully prepared for involvement in areas like research and clinical trials, while ensuring patients are available and able to participate wherever needed: we all need to work together, as allergy is a major public health problem!

Frans Timmermans
EAACI Patient Organisations Committee, Chair

WHO/IUIS classification of allergens

Allergenic sources (pollen, house dust mites, molds and foods) contain hundreds of proteins but only a few are allergens. Identifying, characterising and naming allergens in a consistent manner helps clinicians, researchers and companies focus on the same allergens. That requires rigorous data collection and cooperation among all three sectors.

The World Health Organization and International Union of Immunological Societies (WHO/IUIS) allergen nomenclature system (www.allergen.org) began in 1986, evolving into a standing committee of clinicians and researchers who volunteer to review candidate allergens. Allergen names include abbreviations for genus, species and a protein number (e.g. Ara h 2 for peanut 2S albumin). Criteria and submission forms are available on the WHO/IUIS Allergen Nomenclature website.

Early studies required development of clones, purification of protein and production of antibodies in animals in time-consuming processes. Recent technical improvements allow scientists to purify and characterise proteins more rapidly, and new allergens are proposed each year, many of which are homologues in related sources. In 1980–85, when I worked on the standardisation of allergen extracts, they were standardised based on the concentration of one or two allergens; today diagnostic companies have developed immunoarrays with pure proteins on chips (ISAC, ALEX or FABER).

Identification of allergens and clinical diagnoses both require careful clinical histories of patients and serum donors to connect exposure and reactivity. Skin prick tests (SPTs) and serum IgE binding to proteins have improved. Someday we may have patient specific immunotherapy with recombinant proteins. All this requires clear characterisation of the important allergens. Some putative allergens are identified rapidly using mass spectrometry (LC-MS/MS) or cDNA sequencing with minimal serum IgE binding. However, donors may not be well characterised and low affinity binding to high concentrations of naturally rare proteins do not provide accurate diagnosis. Additionally, function assays (basophil histamine release or SPT) are needed to verify reactivity.

The WHO/IUIS Allergen Nomenclature Sub-Committee includes 21 volunteers of various expertise including clinicians, protein and DNA experts from academia and from companies. We need new people who are qualified to help in the evaluations. If you are interested in contributing, please contact me (regoodman2@unl.edu) or other committee members listed on the www.allergen.org website.

Rick Goodman
WHO/IUIS Allergen Nomenclature Committee, Chair
ISAF 2018: Travel grant winner
Mariana Farraia looks back

Building on the growing success of previous International Severe Asthma Forums, ISAF 2018 (held in Madrid, Spain, from 8–10 November) brought together scientists and clinicians with a broad range of experience of all aspects of severe asthma.

Attesting ISAF 2018, in the beautiful city of Madrid, was my first participation at an international conference as a researcher in the field of respiratory and allergic diseases. I was very excited and honoured to participate in this event and to present my research work developed during this last year. I only have one year of clinical research experience but I have had the opportunity to share my work and results with experts and other fellow researchers.

My own work is about human volatileome analysis and its clinical application to improve asthma monitoring and management. It is known, by mass spectrometry studies, that the exhaled breath of asthmatic patients is different from that from healthy people. Electronic noses, or eNoses, are tools that can possibly bring knowledge from bench to bedside. However, only pilot and case control studies exist. My challenge was to discover if the eNose can detect differences in the breath-prints of a population characterised by respiratory asthma-like symptoms, with or without a medical diagnosis of asthma. This research hopes to bring new understanding about the use of this technology in a representative population recruited from a clinic during patient appointments. We found, independently of the medical diagnosis of asthma, that participants with a poor control of asthma-like symptoms were clustered distinctly from patients with better control. We reinforced the proposal that breathomics is a promising tool to help in asthma management, and that more of our work should be invested in it.

My expectations for the meeting were high and I was very curious to attend all lectures, especially “Breathomics: what can breath tell us about uncontrolled asthma?”, presented by Paul Brinkman, since it is clearly very related to my own research.

I take this opportunity to thank my colleagues and supervisor for their help and motivation. Happily, it is their fault that my increasing research interest areas are breathomics and asthma. They have all participated in EAACI events already and now it has been my turn. Thank you!

Mariana Farraia
EAACI Junior Member
ISAF 2018 Travel Grant winner

EAACI Allergy School on Immunotherapy in Children: A JM Perspective

In September 2018, in the sunny city of Barcelona, EAACI held its Allergy School on Immunotherapy in Children. The School was organised by the EAACI Pediatric Board (chaired by Montserrat Alvaro) with the help of the Eosinophilic Esophagitis Working Group (headed by Antonella Cianferoni), the Immunotherapy Interest Group (coordinated by Lars Jacobsen) and the Food Allergy Interest Group (chaired by Margitta Worm).

The School was held in the heart of modernism, in the Hotel Barcelona Center, just a few meters from the famous Passeige de Gracia where students could have a glimpse of Gaudi houses during the few leisure hours. Over a period of three days, 105 participants (from 35 different countries across Europe and the world, including India, Saudi Arabia, Brazil and Mexico) had the opportunity to closely interact with prominent senior experts in the areas of pollen immunotherapy (Oliver Pfaar), food immunotherapy (Giovanni Paino) and metabolomics (Domingo Barber).

Attendees were encouraged to share their original research, and participants presented 21 posters and oral communications. Audience participation was lively, with many people engaging in workshops and exploring their doubts. Junior Members (JMs) were able to re-examine the Immunotherapy Guidelines, previously published by EAACI, and hear in detail about their content from Antonella Muraro and fellow authors, first hand. It was important to see that EAACI guidelines could serve as a tool for global implementation of immunotherapy.

The Allergy School was also an important platform for EAACI members to act as speakers and share their knowledge, running interactive workshops on immunotherapy and lectures. However, not everything was purely academic and participants were able to take a guided tour of Sant Pau Hospital, a true modernist jewel, and enjoyed dinner in the museum.

For all of us, it was a great experience to share both cutting edge research and day to day pediatric clinical practices. This School confirmed to us that allergy schools are a key place for interaction and learning for both juniors and seniors.

Carmen Riggioni
Allergy School Secretary
JM Allergy Immunotherapy Interest Group
Alberto Alvarez-Perea
Allergy School Faculty Member
JM Assembly Secretary
Pasquale Comberiati
Allergy School Faculty Member
JM Pediatric Section member
The 10th EuroBAT Meeting was held on 18 October 2018 in Copenhagen, with 104 participants attending from across European and the world.

The first session opened with a presentation from Peter Korosec on "Integrating BAT and CRD in food allergy" and was followed by another from Bernadette Eberlein about using BAT results as predictors of clinical reactivity. Other speakers presented their own studies on the usefulness of BAT in food allergy and on the blood stability of the test. New insights into the application of BAT for drug allergy (“BAT in IgE and non-IgE mediated hypersensitivity" by Cristobalina Mayorga, and “Expanding the use of BAT in immediate hypersensitivity” by Vito Sabato) and a comparative analysis of basophil gating strategies were presented in the second session.

After the lunch workshop, presentations were dedicated to future developments of BAT, including "Advantages and limitations of BAT" (by Anna Nopp), "Automated analysis of BAT" (by Paul Rouzaire) and abstracts about automating and miniaturising. A round table discussion on “External Quality Assurance (EQA) of the Basophil Activation Test” closed the meeting.

The BAT-EQA TF was launched in 2018 after a high demand for EQA was identified in a European-wide survey of academic and clinical laboratories using BAT. EQA is requested by authorities to validate the accuracy of entire testing processes in clinical laboratories, and the lack of standardisation and availability of EQA schemes limits the implementation of BAT both in multicentre research studies and in clinical allergy diagnosis.

The aims of the TF are to create standardised operating protocols for both testing conditions and data analysis, and to facilitate the establishment of an official EQA for BAT. The TF is an example of collaboration between academic and clinical experts with proficiency testing organisations, working to set up a scientifically and clinically relevant quality assurance.

Bernadette Eberlein
EuroBAT Chair
Hans Jürgen Hoffmann
EuroBAT Secretary and BAT-EQA TF Chair
Anna Nopp and Sanna Edelman
BAT-EQA TF Secretaries

EAACI at ERS 2018: Breathing in the science

EAACI had the pleasure of exhibiting at the European Respiratory Society’s International Congress (held in Paris, France from 15 – 19 September 2018), both on the Exhibition Floor and in the ERS World Village, alongside other societies, in a setting similar to our NAS Village at the EAACI Annual Congress.

ERS 2018 was a vibrant congress with over 22,000 participants from the medical field, and was a great opportunity to network with different stakeholders and showcase EAACI’s varied activities, events and resources to a broad target audience.

At the Congress, EAACI’s goal was to increase its membership and achieve more visibility for upcoming meetings, specifically the International Severe Asthma Forum (ISAF 2018) and the EAACI Annual Congress in Lisbon from 1 – 5 June 2019.

As Marketing and Communications Officer, I was on the Exhibition Floor – the heart of the ERS Congress – where participants flocked to the booth and showed great interest in attending upcoming events. ERS attracted many young doctors who are still completing their studies and who were very excited to become EAACI Junior Members: a free of cost category for members up to 36 years of age. EAACI focuses heavily on its Junior Members, as one of the main aims of the Academy is to foster the education of future generations in allergology and clinical immunology.

In the ERS World Village, Chiara Hartmann, EAACI Public Affairs Specialist, promoted ISAF 2018, the Global Atlas of Asthma and the new EAACI White Paper on Research, Innovation and Quality Care. For the first time ever, the EAACI White Paper was handed out in printed copy form, increasing the awareness of this new important advocacy tool. In the ERS World Village Theatre, EAACI President Ioana Agache presented EAACI’s broad range of activities such as our upcoming events, with a main focus on the EAACI White Paper, which you can download for free on our website.

Thank you to all of those who visited our booths. We look forward to seeing you at upcoming EAACI events in the near future!

Kendra Zuber
EAACI Marketing and Communications Officer
The recent very sad news of the death of Professor Anthony J. Frew caused deepest sorrow within the EAACI Family.

Professor Anthony J. Frew was President of EAACI between 2005 and 2007. He also served the Academy as Secretary General between 1999 and 2005, as EAACI Congress Chair in 2010 in London, as Ethics Committee Chair between 2016–2018 and as a leader of many Task Forces. In 2011 he was awarded the EAACI Charles Blackley Medal for Promotion of the Specialty in Europe. Professor Frew was also President of the British Society of Allergy and Clinical Immunology and in that capacity he focused on strengthening the links between EAACI and BSACI. While being a key opinion leader in allergen immunotherapy his research also focused on air pollution and on improving the care pathways for a better and early diagnosis of patients with allergic diseases.

We are deeply saddened by this early and unexpected death. Professor Frew was one of the greatest people in the EAACI, and the whole allergy world. It is an irreparable loss for our specialty and for our Academy. Professor Frew was a fantastic scientist and physician, a dedicated friend and magnificent personality who will be sadly missed by everyone who met him or knew of his achievements.

I would like to convey my heartfelt condolences and sympathy to the grieving family, especially to Professor Frew’s wife and our very good friend Professor Helen Elizabeth Smith.

Ioana Agache
EAACI President
All the EAACI Past Presidents express their deep grief on the news of the death of Prof. Anthony J. Frew, who passed away unexpectedly on 29 November. Allergists all over Europe and beyond have lost an excellent clinician, researcher and a very good friend.

Tony started his strong and longstanding commitment to EAACI in 1999 and was totally dedicated to our Academy from that point, even after his official roles came to an end. After being EAACI President (2005–2007), he took up the position of Chair of the Ethics Committee from 2016 to 2018, and whilst there he was an example of how to make an outstanding contribution for future generations of EAACI leaders.

Tony contributed tremendously to the success of EAACI and his extraordinary vision shaped our Academy as it currently stands. In the old days, during congresses he took on all three roles of Secretary General, Scientific Programme Co-ordinator and Vice-President of Congresses. During his terms as Secretary General and as President, EAACI evolved into the professional organisation it is now. He profoundly inspired and designed our new constitution as well as our by-laws with a system of three vice-presidents, separate from the secretary general. What started with a mere division of tasks evolved into a solid infrastructure that still meets the needs of our large organisation, including our annual congresses, today.

Tony was not only enthusiastically engaged in our Academy. He also gave an example to all of us on how to serve, even in the background, without pursuing personal interests. His sharp intellect and precise way of managing and solving matters was always available to those of us who admired him for his smart discernement combined with his high level of integrity, honesty and transparency.

Within his two major research areas, Tony led multicentre studies from the front and became a worldwide key opinion leader in allergen immunotherapy and environmental influence on asthmatic inflammation, particularly on the role of diesel exhaust particles.

He was also President of the British Society of Allergy and Clinical Immunology, contributing to the development of the specialty in the UK and acting as EAACI Congress President in London (2010), a congress which broke records for the number of participants and submitted abstracts.

Tony was British but above all European and happy to meet his EAACI family at any time during the many meetings and congresses he attended. His motto, “Embrace and Engage”, has been and still is the bottom line of the EAACI mission for the allergy specialty.

He was a pillar of the EAACI membership and his legacy is his perspective of EAACI as an open, friendly scientific organisation where colleagues can work together, whilst standing for science and ethics.

We are all in debt to Tony but, even more than us, the new generation of young allergists will benefit from what he created. We should all gratefully continue to remember Tony for who he was and what he stood for.

Our efforts as Past Presidents will be devoted to making sure that EAACI continues along the path which Tony traced for us.

The EAACI Past Presidents
Antonella Muraro, 2015–2017
Cezmi Akdis, 2011–2013
Jan Lotvall, 2009–2011
Roy Gerth van Wijk, 2007–2009
Ulrich Wahn, 2003–2005
Paul van Cauwenberghe, 2001–2003
EAACI HQ Corner: Chiara Hartmann
EAACI Public Affairs Specialist

Please tell us about yourself
I was born in Bologna, Italy, but have lived in many countries: India, the Maldives, the United Kingdom, Spain and Switzerland. After a Masters in Environment and Development from the London School of Economics, I began my career at the World Tourism Organisation – a United Nations branch based in Madrid – where my writing skills were put to the test in report and communication material development. My next roles, in non-profit associations and UN contexts including in the health sector, enabled me to practice and become increasingly fascinated with content creation. So, I enrolled in a Journalism Masters where I was able to specialise and change my career path in this direction.

What are your responsibilities as the new Public Affairs Specialist? EAACI produces and disseminates state-of-the-art scientific research, and my role is to allow this knowledge to reach and empower the public, be it patients, press or politicians. This involves extracting the main messages from existing content, such as EAACI Guidelines, Atlases and Position Papers, and transforming them into a language that is understandable and engaging. Together with my colleague Ana Antunes, I am developing a new patient website which will foster this aim. I am also the contact point for our valuable national and international member societies and look forward to forging closer relationships with all of them. Similarly, I work closely with our Patient Organisations, important partners in EAACI’s goal to improve the lives of the millions of allergic patients worldwide. Another fascinating aspect of my work is featuring allergy more prominently in Europe’s political agenda and, for this, I collaborate with our colleagues in Brussels on exciting new communication materials such as an Allergy Exchange newsletter to inform the EU Parliament of the latest news on allergy, and a website for the Interest Group on Allergy and Asthma built in collaboration with the EFA.

What do you feel is most rewarding about your job?
As a public affairs specialist, the most rewarding aspect of my job involves connecting with different groups within the EAACI family and outside it to drive the Academy’s vision together. During my first months I have discovered allergy to be a truly cross-cutting disease, touching upon environmental quality, nutrition, employment and many more topics - the potential to leverage this broad range and raise awareness is vast. It is also exciting to work with my colleagues at EAACI HQ every day; an international team with varied strengths and skills who really complement each other and collaborate in the most positive and productive ways.

NAS Junior Committee

This year, a new collaboration was established between the Junior Member Assembly (JMA) and the National Allergy Societies Committee (NASC), with the selection of Chiara Tontini, a JM representative on the NASC, as liaison between the two EAACI sections.

From this joint collaboration comes the idea of increasing the participation of the junior organisations of the national allergy societies by creating a committee of junior representatives from the national societies: the NAS Junior Committee.

The goal of this committee is to increase the involvement of NAS within the EAACI structure, and to give visibility to their junior organisations. Moreover, the NAS Junior Committee will help align the activities of the NAS with EAACI strategy, and overcome the national and language barriers that might hinder active participation of NAS members in EAACI initiatives.

NAS Junior representatives will promote Junior-oriented EAACI activities within their national societies, and will be advocates for national JMs issues and initiatives. By actively collaborating with the JMA and the NASC, the new committee will also be an important asset to help disseminate EAACI documents to a wider and younger non-English speaking audience. Importantly, it will coordinate the translation of guidelines and position papers into different languages, and promote EAACI campaigns and activities within the national networks. NAS Junior representatives will also be actively involved in upcoming NAS activities (i.e. working groups, joint collaborations), increasing the visibility of NAS within EAACI and becoming an active element within the NASC.

The proposed NAS–JM steering committee will made up of Chiara Tontini as Chair, a JM Assembly Board member as Secretary, and both NASC and JMA current Chairs and Secretaries. National allergy societies will be invited to participate in the NAS Junior Committee by nominating a junior representative who is also an EAACI JM, following national bylaws. The NAS Junior Committee will become fully operational in 2019. We hope that the creation of this committee will increase the active participation of national junior representatives within EAACI and increase the visibility and resonance of national junior members and national JM-oriented initiatives at a European level.

Chiara Tontini
National Allergy Societies Junior Committee Chair
Ibon Eguiluz-Gracia
JM Assembly Chair
Beatrice Bilo
National Allergy Societies Committee Chair
A few words from the Website Editor

The new EAACI Patients’ website is finally online! Do check it out: patients.eaaci.org.

On the site, you’ll find a lot of useful information including: testimonials, the Junior Member Research and Clinical Blog, many resources including educational films, the Global Atlases, and the ‘Allergen Immunotherapy’ and ‘Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis’ guidelines.

In the news section, you can read position papers or joint projects, e.g. the Worldwide Map of Pollen Monitoring Stations, articles on pollution and asthma written by experts from EAACI and the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology (AAAI), and more. Additionally, we have also summarised information about the EAACI Patients Organisation Committee.

The Patients’ website is quickly developing, so new things are being added regularly. This is also the case for the main EAACI website which continues to be a useful and growing resource:

- I encourage you to visit the Media Library where you can find videos, webcasts and interviews recorded during Congresses as well as at other EAACI meetings. An easy search tool will guide you to the presentation you want to watch: http://webcast.eaaci.cyim.com.
- Details about EAACI events are being updated all the time, including information about next year’s Congress. See: http://www.eaaci.org/eaaci-meetings.
- Two crucial new pages have been created, on Task Forces (http://www.eaaci.org/organisation/task-forces/ongoing-task-forces.html) and on Position papers (http://www.eaaci.org/resources/position-papers.html).
- The EAACI Job Center is open if you would like to advertise a position in the immunology field; please feel free to submit details on the site: http://www.eaaci.org/resources/job-center/eaaci-external-positions.html. [Only ads from industry will not be accepted].

Finally, I would like to bring your attention to the HONcode certificate which our Academy received this year, indicating that the EAACI website is a trustworthy source of information in our field and meets criteria in eight areas: authoritativeness, complementarity, privacy, attribution, justifiability, transparency, financial disclosure, and advertising policy. This is an important achievement which I am proud to be part of!

Sylwia Smolinska
EAACI Website Editor

www.eaaci.org

News

Russian Association of Allergology and Clinical Immunology (RAACI)

RAACI was founded in 1994 as a non-profit organisation that unites allergologists and immunologists within the Russian Federation. The main objectives of this professional society include accumulating and spreading scientific knowledge in the fields of allergology and clinical immunology, harmonising interactions between basic science and clinical practice, and optimising patient treatment.

RAACI has gained worldwide recognition and is a member society of EAACI, and is involved in the creation of international consensus documents on various disease entities. As a public membership-based organisation integrating city, territorial and regional branches, RAACI has seen its membership constantly grow, having more than 2500 members in 2018. Currently we are trying to implement and promote not only scientific achievements but also to keep up-to-date with IT developments. A new portal at www.raaci.ru allows RAACI members to follow recent scientific events and also allows them to receive more comprehensive and up-to-date information from foreign researchers, with translation into Russian and comments by top Russian experts. Our communication is becoming more interactive: remote consulting on complex clinical cases is now becoming possible and experts in related fields are engaged in active cooperation via the new portal.

A main goal of RAACI is to arrange supplementary medical education: to develop and update clinical recommendations, establish professional standards for allergologists/immunologists, develop educational modules for a system of continuing medical education, and much more.

On behalf of RAS academician and RAACI President Rakhim Khaitov, I would like to invite you to take part in the first Moscow Molecular Allergology Meeting, to be held on 27 November 2018 (see: www.nrcc.ru/sobitiya/mmam), and also the 15th International Interdisciplinary Congress on Allergy and Immunology, hosted by RAACI and to be held on 22–24 May 2019 at the Radisson Slavyanskaya Hotel, Moscow (see: www.raaci.ru). The format of both events will be international, with the involvement of both top Russian and non-Russian experts. The 2019 Congress will focus (though not exclusively) on basic and clinical allergology and immunology; special attention will be paid to issues of interdisciplinary interaction. Participation will give opportunities to obtain up-to-date information essential for practical application, to network and gather ideas for future scientific studies.

Musa Khaitov
RAACI Vice-President
EAACI Exam Committee Chair
The new Pediatric Allergy and Immunology (PAI) editorial team took over the journal at the beginning of 2018. The most important change we implemented was the appointment of seven associate editors who now take care of the manuscript review process. We are very pleased to announce that the number of article submissions has increased by close to 20% and we expect to have received around 500 manuscripts by the end of this year. Turnaround times have been significantly reduced, with the median time from submission to first decision down from 57 days last year to 28 days this year, and the median from submission to final decision down from 86 to 44 days.

Each issue of the journal contains one or two reviews and also features a set of original articles. In addition, we publish several ‘Letters to the Editor’ which convey short but essential scientific communications to the readership. Case reports can currently only exceptionally be considered for publication due to limited space; however, we expect to be able to open a new case report section in the future.

PAI is a now a truly global publication with the greatest number of contributions coming from Italy, followed by China, the USA, Japan and Turkey, as well, of course, as from elsewhere around the world.

The editorial team hopes that PAI is one of your major sources of information and inspiration with regards to science and education in pediatric allergy. By submitting your best manuscripts to PAI you will help us to continue striving for excellence.

Philippe Eigenmann
Editor-in-Chief, PAI
The Book of Allergic Diseases

In 2012, the SEAIC Foundation together with the BBVA Foundation published “The Book of Allergic Diseases” in two versions: paper and electronic (both in Spanish). It was a success given that it brought knowledge of allergic diseases to the general public but above all to patients and relatives. Issues such as causes, diagnostic methods or available treatments were explained in a clear, simple and understandable way. The book allowed us to give to anyone interested the information that we sometimes unfortunately do not have the time to transmit to patients in our medical consultations.

Patients must participate actively in decision making. A well-informed and collaborative patient is a guarantee of better compliance and therefore of a better evolution of the different allergic diseases.

EAACI must use all available tools to stop the epidemic of allergic diseases. Undoubtedly one of the healthiest and cheapest tools is the education of allergic patients and their relatives, which will help to lead to the prevention of the appearance of allergic diseases or at least the avoidance of their progression.

In the new edition of “The Book of Allergic Diseases”, EAACI, in collaboration with the SEAIC Foundation and the BBVA Foundation, aim to make this effective and successful tool accessible to all allergic patients. The electronic version, which will be available in different languages, will allow its dissemination worldwide. It is hoped that the book will be available at the end of 2019.

Tomás Chivato
EAACI Science Committee Chair
EAACI 2017 Research Fellowship: Experiencing a unique opportunity

I am a pediatrician with a deep research interest in the field of allergy and immunology. After my residency in pediatrics in Messina University’s Allergy Unit (Italy), under Giovanni Pajno, the EAACI Research Fellowship supported part of my doctoral activities abroad. I joined the Molecular Allergology and Immunomodulation Working Group in the Department of Pediatric Pneumology and Immunology, at Charité Medical University, Berlin (Germany), under the supervision of Paolo Matricardi.

My work in Berlin was a unique opportunity to manage several projects targeted at validating novel diagnostic methods and approaches for allergic diseases. I gained experience collecting, processing and analysing data related to the research projects and I actively participated in other clinical and research activities, seminars and national and international meetings. I collaborated with different international research groups on analytical and clinical validation of novel diagnostic methods for allergic rhinitis, including the determination of allergen-specific IgE antibodies and the response of the nasal mucosa in nasal secretions, and the use of allergy apps and mobile health technologies. Combining different diagnostic tools as part of a multivariate algorithm, I focused on “precision medicine”, targeting the identification, if possible, of an allergen specific immunotherapy tailored to single patient features.

I had the great privilege of collaborating with research groups led by Cezmi and Miübeccel Akdis (University of Zurich, Switzerland), Philippe Gevaert (University of Gent, Belgium), Rudolf Valenta (University of Wien, Austria), together with many other eminent groups. The results of these collaborative projects have been published in some of the main journals in the field (such as the Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology), and others are still ongoing.

I would like to thank all the people I met during this important part of my career and express my gratitude to EAACI for providing such an opportunity to promote quality allergy research among young researchers. I would strongly recommend this experience to junior scientists, allergists and pediatricians keen to learn from and be involved in the scientific network of highly specialised and motivated multidisciplinary teams.

Stefania Arasi
EAACI Junior Member and Research Fellowship winner

EAACI 2017 Research Fellowship: Exceeding expectations

Thanks to this EAACI fellowship, which financially supported my stay and laboratory expenses, I had the fantastic opportunity to discover new and different points of view on doing research in a multidisciplinary laboratory. Under the careful and dedicated supervision of Beatriz Cabanillas, an expert in food allergens, together with Natalija Novak, I was able to learn new techniques relating to food immunoreactivity. Their laboratory is one of the best equipped and organised work places I have ever seen, taking in to account all the installations and core facilities we needed to do the experiments. With all the acquired knowledge, I was able to complete the proposal for my PhD thesis project and to improve my critical thinking.

My experiences, in this laboratory and in the city of Bonn, exceeded all my expectations and have enriched me both personally and professionally. I was able to work in an inspiring and motivating environment, and I highlight my stay in Bonn with the EAACI fellowship as a fruitful and valuable period for my career and for both my host and home teams: we even published an article together in 2018 in Food Chemistry*, a high impact factor journal within our field.

I am very thankful to EAACI for this fellowship, which was one of the best opportunities I have had in my period as a PhD student, and for the continuous support and assistance I received during my stay abroad (and before it), as an EAACI Junior Member.

África Sanchez Giraldo
EAACI Junior Member Research Fellowship winner

Launch of the Portuguese version of the Global Atlas of Asthma

In October 2018, the Portuguese version of The Global Atlas of Asthma was launched at a session during the 45th Brazilian Congress of Allergy and Immunology in the city of Recife, Brazil. EAACI, in partnership with the Brazilian Association of Allergy and Immunology (ASBAI), distributed 250 copies of the Atlas to participants at the session, which was also attended by Marek Jutel (EAACI Treasurer, Poland) and Carsten Schmidt-Weber (EAACI Vice-President Congresses, Germany), representing EAACI.

Asthma affects patients of all ages and is a serious challenge to public health, having large effects on the school and work performance of patients. Since its original issue, The Global Atlas of Asthma has become an important reference document on asthma by clearly addressing different topics related to the prevention and control of asthma, including the magnitude of the problem, risk factors, associated diseases, barriers to treatment and sustainable strategies to confront asthma in settings with restricted resources, and this new Portuguese edition will certainly contribute a lot to the approach given to patients with asthma in Brazil.

The Atlas includes 59 chapters written by 80 contributors addressing all the nuances of asthma, making it a comprehensive educational tool easily accessible to students, related health professionals, primary care physicians and medical experts involved in the management of asthma patients. The launch of the Portuguese version of the Global Atlas of Asthma will also facilitate continuing medical education in asthma in other Portuguese-speaking countries.

Translation of the Atlas was undertaken by the ASBAI Board of Directors and publication organised by EAACI. We thank EAACI, especially EAACI President Ioana Agache, and the Latin American Society of Allergy and Immunology (SLaaI) for making this work viable.

EAACI Task Force on Immunopharmacology: New position paper

The Task Force on Immunopharmacology (TIPCO) was established in 2017 within EAACI’s Immunology Section with the task of connecting basic and clinical scientists from different scientific backgrounds – physicians, pharmacologists, biologists – to examine recent breakthroughs in basic mechanisms of immune regulation and review their application in novel therapeutic approaches for allergy and clinical immunology-related diseases.


In the position paper, we aimed to compare the distinct pharmacological properties and clinical applications of small molecule drugs (SMDs) and antibody-based strategies, their specific limitation and challenges; moreover, we wanted to highlight how their integration is desirable in order to achieve a sustainable therapeutic approach in chronic respiratory diseases.

The idea to ‘compare and contrast’ biologicals and SMDs – that is, to highlight both similarities and differences – has previously been used for oncology therapeutics to illustrate how they differ, how their differences and similarities adapt to widen therapeutic options, and how they can sometimes be used together to create powerful combinations. In TIPCO, we envisioned that a similar approach focused on therapies for chronic inflammatory respiratory diseases could be important for the EAACI community: in fact, while biologicals are taking centre stage for their critical role in changing the lives of patients with severe asthma, SMDs continue to be critical to provide access to targets not accessible/not responding to the biologicals approach and for overall therapeutic sustainability.

By reviewing both pharmacological and clinical aspects of these two therapies, we found that both approaches appear to have as a common critical point an inadequate patient stratification – particularly ill-addressed in the case of SMDs – whose complex causes are discussed in the review. We point out that there is a need for specific patient stratification strategies based on disease mechanisms, as well as for relevant biomarker development, and we call for clinical studies evaluating combinations of SMDs and biologicals. The review also provides up-to-date, comprehensive tables listing and comparing both pharmacological and clinical studies on biologicals and SMDs and provides links to extensive biologicals and SMD databases.

Cristiana Stellato
EAACI Task Force on Immunopharmacology Chair

Franziska Roth-Walter
EAACI Task Force on Immunopharmacology Secretary
EAACI Patients’ website: JMs blog initiative

EAACI has recently launched an exciting information campaign to make details of scientific and clinical advances available to the general public. The EAACI Task Force (TF) on Public Outreach Activities on Immunological Mechanisms in Allergy and Asthma, organised and led by the EAACI Basic and Clinical Immunology Section, has just initiated a blog campaign in close collaboration with the EAACI Junior Members (JMs). This blog will highlight the scientific research and clinical work of highly talented EAACI JMs at the forefront of basic and clinical allergy research. To reach a broad audience, all blog posts are featured on the newly launched EAACI Patients’ website (http://patients.eaaci.org), an information platform dedicated to patients with allergic diseases all over the world.

This open-access awareness campaign is closely linked with the EAACI JMs’ Mentorship Programme. All mentors of this programme have been invited to collaborate and to provide supervision for their mentees when writing a blog post, highlighting their research or clinical work in a way accessible to the public. Moreover, an infographic should summarise each blog post to facilitate understanding.

We have the great pleasure to announce that the first blog post and infographic is now available on the Patients’ website, on the topic of “Working towards a safer and more effective oral immunotherapy – a treatment for food allergy”. The post was written by EAACI JM Mentee Sarah Ashley (Max-Delbrück Center, Berlin, Germany) and supervised by her EAACI Mentor, Eva Untersmayr-Elsenhuber (Institute of Pathophysiology and Allergy Research, Medical University of Vienna, Austria). We are very grateful to EAACI HQ and the JMs Board for the support given to start this exciting initiative.

To make this long-term open access initiative successful, EAACI aims to feature new blog posts and infographics on the EAACI Patients’ website every month. Therefore, we would like to warmly invite all EAACI JMs to contribute and submit a blog post. Help us to make scientific and clinical knowledge available for everyone and to have a global impact by successful public outreach. The guidelines on how to prepare a blog post are available online via the main EAACI webpage: see: http://www.eaaci.org/organisation/task-forces/ongoing-task-forces.html.

Eva Untersmayr-Elsenhuber
EAACI TF on Public Outreach Activities on Immunological Mechanisms in Allergy and Asthma Chair

Milena Sokolowska
EAACI TF on Public Outreach Activities on Immunological Mechanisms in Allergy and Asthma Secretary

Jürgen Schwarze
Basic and Clinical Immunology Section Chair

Florentina Sava
Basic and Clinical Immunology Section JM Representative

EAACI on visual social media: A picture of health

Of all the large professional allergy organisations, and since the creation of its Pinterest account in 2018, EAACI is unique in having active accounts on all the most important and popular social media platforms providing complex social and professional networking, media sharing and microblogging. The number of followers of EAACI’s social media accounts has increased during 2018, now exceeding 4700 for Twitter, 5900 for Facebook and 4000 for LinkedIn.

Visual content is a powerful component of many interactive online applications and EAACI’s active presence on the top visual social media (Instagram and Pinterest) was therefore considered a priority this year. Instagram is a photo and video-sharing social media community claiming more than one billion users, while Pinterest is an online visual discovery, collection and storage tool, with more than 250 million active users each month.

Improved 2018 analytics of shareable visual social media have revealed EAACI’s Instagram expansion in the first half of the year with the promotion of #EAACIGoesGreen, #EAACI2018 #moments and #EAACI_Newsletter snippets. Since then, Instagram posts with notable numbers of likes include those related to #EAACI high-quality resources, especially #EAACIBibliographicUpdates, #EAACIMediaLibrary and #EAACIPositionPaper documents, together with more recent social-media-friendly posts related to the promotion of #EAACIMembership, #EAACIAS18 (Allergy School) and #ISAFO2018, #FAAM2018 and #EUROBAT2018 (Focused Meetings). All this EAACI Instagram activity correlates to a constant increase in the number of account followers (over 1000 in September).

Our new presence on visual-curating social media is represented by the EAACI Pinterest account which rapidly gained more than 500 followers, due to its more than ten visually appealing EAACI Pinterest boards with EAACI Pins. By continuous EAACI brand promotion on Pinterest and a majority of Pins with links to images from the EAACI website, social media activities on Pinterest have a new potential to generate more website traffic.

A significant part of the future of online search is going to be about images, not just keywords, and EAACI’s presence on this social media, with its first of its kind “Pinterest’s Lens” visual search tool, is therefore important for future artificial intelligence online recognition of our organisation’s logos and activities.

Florin-Dan Popescu
EAACI Social Media Editor
Tips for the EAACI-UEMS Exam

The popularity of the EAACI-UEMS Knowledge Exam has grown significantly, with the number of participant countries doubling from 2008 to 2018. If you are considering taking the exam, you might find these tips useful.

Strategy for preparation
Do use the EAACI-UEMS Knowledge Exam Blueprints, which outline the subjects and areas which will appear in the exam and are an excellent study aid. Establish a daily studying programme. If you are not a member yet, joining EAACI will give you access to many of the recommended EAACI Guidelines and publications: do consider it and don’t forget that joining EAACI is free for Junior Members.

If you have not yet taken a national exam, combining basic information from books together with updates from the guidelines is probably the best approach. If you have already taken a national exam, concentrating on updates for each subject can save time. Ask for guidance from your teacher/supervisor/experienced colleagues. Do not skip courses. Write flashcards to help you memorise information.

Attending allergy schools and the EAACI Annual Congress are also great ways to keep you updated. If you are not able to attend, check out the EAACI website and apps, including EAACI TV.

Please do remember to apply your newly acquired knowledge in your clinics and use the sample questions on the EAACI website to verify your understanding.

The day before
Check where the Exam Room is located. Get enough sleep and eat in the morning. Try to relax!

During the Exam
You will have three hours to answer 120 multiple choice questions. There are two types of questions: Type A, dealing with basic knowledge and factual information; and Type K which require analysis, synthesis and evaluation of the information.

Calculate the time you have for each question. Start by analysing them and approach them logically. Read carefully and follow any instructions. Analyse the wording of each question: it will give you a hint about the right answer. Always be aware of negative phrases and answer accordingly. Think of the correct answer. Always be aware of negative phrases or “none”: they might not be correct statements. Finally, answer the questions in order and try not to leave any unanswered.

Good luck!

Ileana Ghiordanescu
EAACI Exam Committee member
Editor of the EAACI Knowledge Exam Teaching Materials

Master Class on Biologicals: From mechanisms to treatment

We are delighted to announce that the third EAACI Master Class on Biologicals is to be held from 3-4 May 2019 in El Escorial, Madrid, Spain. Since its initiation in 2016, this educational event has been extremely successful and well received. The aim of the Master Class is to improve the understanding of how and when to prescribe biologicals in the context of atopic and autoimmune diseases, and to foster basic knowledge of the individual mechanism of action for the benefit of our patients. The main target audience is those clinicians in all subspecialties who are frequently using biologicals in their clinical practice or are planning to do so in the future, as well as experienced basic researchers with an interest in the field of biologics.

Two days of intense knowledge exchange and teaching by combining theoretical and highly interactive practical sessions are scheduled. The first day will cover the current state-of-the-art and provide an update on the role of biologicals in mucosal inflammation, atopic skin disease and allergen-specific immunotherapy (AIT). The second day will be made up of two theoretical and two practical sessions in a workshop format focusing on the mechanisms underlying adverse events and hypersensitivity reactions to biologicals, and how to perform the right diagnostic and treatment approach. Another important aspect will be to share protocols on how to perform desensitisation to biologicals. Finally, safety data and specific considerations on the usage of biologicals in pregnancy, and for children, adolescents and elderly patients will be discussed. We encourage participants to send their own case reports related to biologicals; these case reports will be interactively discussed and complement this exciting programme.

It is also worth mentioning that this third EAACI Master Class on Biologicals will be held in a picturesque setting near to the Royal Monastery of San Lorenzo de El Escorial. In this inspiring environment, world renowned experts will exchange knowledge on how to bridge the gap from science to clinical management. Special emphasis will be placed on teaching how biologicals work at different levels to ensure a more conscious choice of the best treatment approach. Moreover, management of side effects and allergic reactions to biologics will also be taught.

We look forward to meeting you in El Escorial.

Thomas Eiwegger
EAACI Biologicals Working Group Secretary, Local Organising Secretary

Oscar Palomares
EAACI Biologicals Working Group Chairperson, Local Organising Chair
Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis meeting: A big success!

From October 18–20 Copenhagen hosted the 5th FAAM Meeting. The Congress was located in the city centre next to the famous Tivoli Gardens. At the opening ceremony, Congress Chair Carsten Bindslev-Jensen shared a unique video with the audience: the onset of an anaphylactic reaction in a patient in real time! He thus reminded us of the overall aim/goal of FAAM: to provide the best state-of-the-art treatment and management of food allergic patients!

Indeed, the FAAM 2018 offered a densely packed programme with highly renowned speakers from Europe and overseas sharing the very latest scientific news! In the first plenary, insights into the mechanisms of anaphylaxis were provided, the severity scoring of symptoms and potential biomarkers were presented, and non-IgE mediated anaphylaxis was discussed. Plenary 2 provided an update on individual allergens and their modifications during food processing, as well as discussion of the interaction between allergens and the immune system. Plenary 3 was devoted to the treatment of food allergy, including novel immunotherapeutic therapies. A total of 10 symposia provided updates on eosinophilic esophagitis, prevention and dietary management of food allergy, the role of the microbiome in health and disease, food technology and allergen risk management.

Another highlight was the release of “Food allergy”, the first in a series of videos providing information on allergic diseases for patients and an interested lay audience. Patients’ organisations also provided their important input and highlighted the needs and expectations of patients and their families. Pro and Con sessions, workshops, year in review presentations, poster and meet the expert sessions completed the excellent programme. A total of 1065 participants enjoyed the friendly atmosphere of the meeting and took the opportunity to foster their previous collaborations with colleagues and to start new projects.

Many thanks are due to all who took part, as well as to the sponsors and exhibitors who contributed to this meeting. Looking forward to meeting you at the 6th FAAM meeting in 2020!

Karin Hoffmann-Sommergruber
EAACI Vice-President Communications & Membership

ERRIN health partnering event: Making connections across Europe

From 19–20 November 2018, a health partnering event of the Health Working Group of the European Regions Research and Innovation Network (ERRIN) took place in Brussels (Belgium). ERRIN is a platform of more than 130 regional stakeholder organisations from 24 European countries, with its members mainly being drawn from regional authorities, universities and research institutes. I had the honour to represent EAACI at this meeting and to share with other stakeholders the efforts made by the Academy for the dissemination of research and good clinical practices in allergy and clinical immunology.

During the first day, attendees had the opportunity to learn about and discuss the research politics of the European Union, and the European-level funding opportunities that will be offered by the Commission in the upcoming years. This presentation was followed by interactive discussions in smaller workshops about European research priorities. I took part in the workshop about precision medicine, where I was able to explain EAACI’s different campaigns and initiatives to promote the development of precision medicine in our field.

The second day was allocated to the presentation of the different organisations and scientific societies invited to the ERRIN meeting. I introduced the different activities and resources promoted by the Academy, including our journals, the guidelines, atlases and the recent White Paper, the effort of EAACI task forces to produce official statements and position papers, and our varied and successful scientific meetings. Moreover, I highlighted the important advocacy initiatives supported by EAACI to promote the recognition and the growth of the allergy specialty across Europe. I also had the chance to discuss the situation of undergraduate education in allergology with many representatives from European universities, and also promoted an increase in the presence of our specialty at university level.

The presentation of scientific societies was followed by different workshops, and I had the opportunity to discuss mHealth in the field of allergic diseases with representatives from different patient organisations and healthcare systems. Overall, the ERRIN meeting was very interesting and inspiring, and provided many chances to show the activities of EAACI and to disseminate our efforts in precision medicine, mHealth, and in the promotion of the allergy specialty and undergraduate education.

Ibon Eguiluz-Gracia
EAACI JMA Board Chair
Instagram posting – fast, visual and informative, and used to display major EAACI activities on social media – is important not only because its platform community is constantly growing but also due to its popularity and the diversity of users. Instagram photos and messages from the EAACI presence at the ERS Congress (held in Paris on 15–19 September 2018) significantly increased the number of our followers and provided an opportunity to promote the benefits of the #EAACI membership, the upcoming #EAACI2019 Congress in Lisbon and the International Severe Asthma Forum #SAFO2018 in Madrid.

EAACI social media accounts were also effectively used to announce the AAAAI & EAACI #AsthmaAirQuality Twitter Chat. The EAACI Instagram account was used to promote this informative chat on how air pollution affects asthma, and many Twitter generated impressions and retweets came from the social media accounts of active EAACI members. In the case of the #EAACIAS18 Allergy School on Immunotherapy in Children for the Treatment of Respiratory and Food Allergy (held in Barcelona on 20–22 September 2018), its social media promotion and presentation was successful due to the great contributions from Montserrat Alvaro, Carmen Riggioni and Alberto Alvarez-Perea, amongst others.

The #EPAllergyAsthma European Parliament Interest Group on Allergy and Asthma Policy meeting, held on 9 October 2018 and co-hosted by MEPs Nessa Childers (Ireland), Anna Záborská (Slovakia) and David Borrelli (Italy), was actively promoted on EAACI’s Instagram, Twitter and Facebook accounts. Instagram was used to increase visibility of the #EPAllergyAsthma meeting by uploading the poster and agenda of the event, and by sharing of important data on the location, timing and topics for prioritising research challenges and funding for allergy and asthma, and for access to high quality care and patient engagement, and more. The event itself was a great success and was captured in real time in significant posts. With the major contribution of EAACI_HQ and its editorial contributors, EFA_Patients, and with Twitter activity from MEPs and their followers, a significant exposure of more than 700,000 impressions was reached over a ten-day period around the event.

One of the EAACI Instagram posts concerning the European Parliament meeting with the greatest number of likes was that in which President Ioana Agache presented EAACI’s vision for the management of allergy and asthma and the #EAACIWhitePaper key tool. Very relevant Instagram posts were also those in which MEP Nessa Childers introduced the impact of allergy and asthma on society, economy and healthcare, and in which MEP Anna Záborská underlined that non-communicable diseases deserve more EU attention, while the social media activity and interactions of MEP David Borrelli were important for our followers. As mentioned in the Instagram post presenting the event, this was a great opportunity to discuss research needs in the context of the EU framework programme #HorizonEurope!

Florin-Dan Popescu
EAACI Social Media Editor
UPCOMING EAACI EVENTS

Annual Congress 2019

EAACI Congress 2019
1 – 5 June 2019
Lisbon, Portugal
www.eaaci.org

Focused Meetings

European Rhinallergy Meeting (RHINA 2019)
21 – 23 March 2019
Eastbourne, United Kingdom
www.eaaci.org/rhina2019

Pediatric Allergy and Asthma Meeting (PAAM 2019)
17 – 19 October 2019
Florence, Italy
www.eaaci.org/paam2019

Skin Allergy Meeting
Joint meeting with ESCD (SAM 2019)
4 – 6 April 2019
Munich, Germany
www.eaaci.org/sam2019

Drug Hypersensitivity Meeting (DHM 2020)
2 – 4 April 2020
Verona, Italy
www.eaaci.org/dhm2020

Allergy Schools
www.eaaci.org/allergy-schools

17th EAACI Immunology Winter School
"Basic Immunology Research in Allergy and Clinical Immunology"
24 – 27 January 2019
Trysil, Norway

For more information visit www.eaaci.org or contact events@eaaci.org
EAACI Congress 2018: Do probiotics and micronutrients matter in allergic diseases?

This interesting session was held on the third day of the EAACI Congress in Munich earlier this year.

Our first speaker, Markus Ege (Germany), discussed our relationship with milk and its role in a protective farm environment. It has previously been published that consumption of farm milk may offer protection against asthma and allergy. Other research has also revealed that breast-feeding protects against respiratory infections in early life. Given the co-evolutionary adaptations of humans and cattle, bovine milk might exert similar anti-infective effects in human infants. If the health hazards of raw milk could be overcome, the public health impact of minimally processed but pathogen-free milk might be enormous, given the high prevalence of respiratory infections in the first year of life. Findings suggest that the protective effect of raw milk consumption on asthma might be associated with the whey protein fraction of milk.

Something else to be considered is the fat content of milk, particularly ω-3 fatty acids. It has been well studied that continuous farm milk consumption in childhood protects against asthma at school age, partially by means of higher intake of ω-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids, which are precursors of anti-inflammatory mediators and have been detected in unprocessed cow’s milk. However, raw milk produces more infections than ultra-heat treated (UHT), pasteurized or boiled farm milk. This is the reason that, in 17 states in the USA, raw milk was banned from 2010 to 2012, after 979 illnesses and 73 hospitalisations were directly attributed to ingesting raw milk. To sum up, Markus Ege concluded that farm milk protects against asthma, pollen sensitisation and respiratory infections. However, high heat (boiling or UHT) treatment deactivates the protective components. He also emphasised the need for minimally processed full-cream milk.

Our second speaker was Linette Willemsen (The Netherlands) who spoke about the influence of dietary lipids in the development of allergic diseases, and introduced us to hygiene and the biodiversity hypothesis. She made an in-depth review of the literature which showed that reduced intestinal microbiome diversity affects immune maturation. Something else to consider, she said, is that dietary lipids (fats and oils) obtained from meat, dairy food, fish and/or vegetables are essential in a healthy diet. With regard to the allergy risk of dietary poly-unsaturated fatty acid, increasing intake of vegetable oil results in n-6 PUFA: an n-3 PUFA ratio of 15:1 in Western countries, while for Inuits (who consume mainly fatty fish) this ratio is 1:1. Alongside this, a high intake of vegetable oils and margarine during pregnancy is associated with an increased risk of eczema in offspring whilst for high fish intake this risk is reduced (LISA birth cohort). Finally, daily maternal n-3 LCPUFA supplementation (of 1–3 g) starting early in pregnancy (in week 20) may reduce the incidence of infant atopy (IgE sensitisation, atopic dermatitis, food allergy).

Linette Willemsen went on to discuss vegetable oil (n-6 PUFA) versus fish oil (n-3 LCPUFA) in terms of allergy risk. In this sense, a partial replacement of dietary soybean oil by fish oil in a murine food allergy model for cow’s milk whey protein reveals susceptibility to developing allergic diseases and its severity. Also, a mouse model for orally induced cow’s milk allergy confirmed that fish oil suppresses the induction of allergic type immunoglobulins (IgE, IgG1) and reduces the acute allergic skin response and anaphylactic symptoms. It also reduces TH1 and TH2 in mesenteric lymph nodes (MLN) and increases regulatory T-cells locally in the intestine and systemically. Overall the conclusion is that dietary fatty acid sources and composition may have an impact on the risk of developing allergic diseases and in the severity of associated allergic symptoms. Indeed, allergy prevention has been demonstrated by the intake of fish oil.

Our last speaker, Mairead KIELY (Ireland), talked about vitamin D and the risk of allergic diseases. It is well-known that Vitamin D is a potent immunomodulator which can induce macrophage production of antimicrobes such as cathelicidin. It can also enhance skin barrier function, modulate Toll-like receptor production by monocytes, enhance IL-10 production by mast-cells, induce T-reg cells and inhibit B-lymphocyte function. The speaker then discussed an interesting article about vitamin D deficiency in Europe (Cashman et al) which states that one in eight Europeans have serum 25-hydroxyvitamin (OH) D of less than 30 nmol/L. This deficiency predisposes people to rickets and osteomalacia. In addition, 40% have serum 25 (OH) D of less than 50 nmol/L which is inadequate for the maintenance of bone health. Another interesting point about vitamin D is that those who have a diet rich in fluid milk products, fat spreads and fish have a serum 25(OH) D concentration more than 50 nmol/L. Further research on vitamin D suggests an association between challenge-proven food allergy in infants and insufficiency of vitamin D (Allen et al). This study describes how infants of Australian born parents with 25(OH)D less than 50 nmol/L were more likely to be peanut and/or egg allergic than those with adequate vitamin D status. However, the most important research study paper presented by the speaker was a meta-analysis of 16 birth cohort studies (Feng H et al) in which the in utero exposure to 25-(OH) D and risk of childhood asthma, wheeze and respiratory tract infections were evaluated. This meta-analysis suggested that increased in utero exposure to 25(OH)D was inversely associated with the risk of asthma and wheeze during childhood. Vitamin D was also studied over the first decade monitoring susceptibility to childhood allergy and asthma. With regard to this topic, results described by Hollams et al pointed out that vitamin D deficiency in early childhood was associated with an increased risk of persistent asthma. Based on several studies, Mairead Kiely concluded that Vitamin D supplementation protects against acute respiratory tract infection, particularly in deficient individuals who use daily or weekly supplements. This supplementation may also reduce the severity of symptoms in patients with atopic dermatitis (AD). Furthermore, antenatal vitamin D supplementation may reduce risk of wheeze in high risk families and influence the neonatal immune system, which may contribute to being a form of protection from asthma-related outcomes in early life. However, further studies are required with maternal–infant intervention.

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