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Note to media: See www.worldallergy.org/wisc2012

WISC 2012

2012 WAO International Scientific Conference

Hyderabad, India

6-9 December

<http://www.worldallergy.org/wisc2012/>

Rising prevalence and increasing severity of allergic disease and asthma require new treatment strategies and preventative approaches

World Allergy Organization International Scientific Conference (WISC 2012) in India will address the rising global prevalence and burden of allergic diseases and asthma

HYDERABAD, INDIA – For the first time in India, the World Allergy Organization (WAO) will host the WAO International Scientific Conference (WISC 2012) from 6-9 December, providing a multidisciplinary forum for a wide range of health care professionals who treat patients with asthma and allergic diseases including allergists, pulmonologists, ENTs, dermatologists, internists, pediatricians, gastroenterologists, clinical immunologists and primary care physicians.

To be held under the patronage of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India, the conference expects to gather nearly 1,500 delegates from around the world. As the discipline of allergy spans various specialties, the scientific program will offer a wide range of courses and subjects: 24 postgraduate courses, 5 plenary sessions, 16 parallel symposia, 6 keynote lectures, 3 poster sessions as well as a half-day program on "Highlights in Immunotherapy," a General Practitioner Program, and a Patient and Public Forum, all delivered by a faculty of 90 internationally known experts. Two-hundred fifty-four abstracts were accepted from clinicians around the world, and travel grants have been awarded to 5 junior clinicians.

Allergic diseases and asthma, like other non-communicable diseases, are escalating to epidemic proportions worldwide and up to 30-40% of the world's population are now affected by some form of allergy. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates 300 million individuals have asthma worldwide, a figure that could increase to 400 million by 2025 if trends continue. [1] The complexity and severity of allergic disorders, including asthma, continue to increase especially in children and young adults. This is paralleled with a rising prevalence of life threatening allergies like food allergies, drug allergies and anaphylaxis and more complex forms.

"As the prevalence of allergic disease and asthma rises in countries around the world especially in children regardless of their economic status, so do the socioeconomic costs both direct such as interference with breathing during day or night, emergency department visits, and hospitalizations, and indirect such as reduced quality of life, reduced work productivity and absenteeism," said Professor Ruby Pawankar, Conference President and President of the World Allergy Organization. "This offers an opportunity for low-, middle-, and high-income countries to join forces in addressing a major global challenge that threatens health and economies alike", she said.

According to Professor Stephen Holgate, Scientific Program Chair, "The enormous rise in asthma and allergy prevalence worldwide – but especially in those countries which are developing so rapidly – is a concern such as is occurring in India. We must try to uncover the causative agents involved and deliver a prevention program." Moreover, comorbidity of allergic diseases emphasizes that we must understand more about why different organs in individuals express allergy and others do not."

The WISC 2012 meeting in Hyderabad, India, according to Professor Lanny Rosenwasser, Organizing Chair, "will bring international experts to India in a timely exchange of ideas and new information to manage these global public health concerns. The emerging science of allergy and immunology makes new and effective means of treatment for serious diseases such as asthma, allergic rhinitis and allergic skin diseases."

New research and international expert consensus recommendations will be presented that will impact on the future management of these globally prevalent conditions, including the early origins of disease and evidence-based treatment strategies as well as associations with climate change, biodiversity, the role of the microbiome in non-communicable diseases, and practical aspects that help to improve daily clinical care and practice parameters and lead to improved quality of life.

The Opening Ceremony of the WISC 2012 will take place on Thursday, 6 December from 18:00 to 19:30 in the HICC, Hall 3. Shri Ghulam Nabi Azad, Honorable Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare, will be the Chief Guest and inaugurate the conference, and Shri Kiran Kumar Reddy, Honorable Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, will preside over the function. Shri Vasant Kumar, Minister of Tourism, Sport and Culture of Andhra Pradesh, and Dr DL Ravindra Reddy, Minister for Health & Family Welfare Andhra Pradesh, will be the Guests of Honor.

Members of the media receive complementary full-access registration to the Conference. For more information, visit www.worldallergy.org/wisc2012/press/index.php.

[1] Pawankar R, Canonica GW, Holgate ST, Lockey RF eds. *WAO White Book on Allergy* (Milwaukee: World Allergy Organization), 2011. http://www.worldallergy.org/definingthespecialty/white_book.php

Ruby Pawankar, MD, PhD, FAAAAI is Professor of Allergy, Department of Pediatrics, Nippon Medical School, Tokyo, Japan; President, World Allergy Organization.

Lanny J. Rosenwasser, MD, is Dee Lyons/Missouri Endowed Chair in Pediatric Immunology Research, Children's Mercy Hospital, University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Medicine; President-Elect, World Allergy Organization.

Stephen T. Holgate, CBE, FMedSci, is MRC Clinical Professor of Immunopharmacology, Southampton General Hospital, University of Southampton; Treasurer, World Allergy Organization.

About the World Allergy Organization

The *World Allergy Organization (WAO)* is an international alliance of 89 regional and national allergy, asthma and immunology societies. Through collaboration with its Member Societies, WAO provides a wide range of educational and outreach programs, symposia and lectureships to allergists/immunologists around the world and conducts initiatives related to clinical practice, service provision, and physical training in order to better understand and address the challenges facing allergists/immunologists worldwide. For more information, visit www.worldallergy.org.

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