September 20, 2011

Dear Colleagues,

There has been a great deal of activity in WAO over the past month, and I would like to share updates on two of these important and exciting initiatives.

**New WAO Allergic Rhinitis Working Group**

As allergists/immunologists we are aware that the disease of allergic rhinitis has become increasingly prevalent worldwide, and it significantly affects patient quality of life and societal economic burden. It is essential, therefore, that resources on allergic rhinitis and its associated conditions can be freely and easily accessed by physicians anywhere in the world to assist in their patient care and disease management efforts. To help increase awareness of the disease globally, WAO established the Allergic Rhinitis Working Group with Sandra González-Díaz (Mexico) as Chair and Steering Committee members Claus Bachert (Belgium), Eli Meltzer (United States), Susan Prescott (Australia), Elham Hossny (Egypt), Nelson Rosário Filho (Brazil).

Sandra and the Steering Committee identified the key initial goals of this worldwide initiative: To gather educational and scientific materials on allergic rhinitis into a central online repository and to provide an interactive learning program on allergic rhinitis in children and adults.

On 15 September the Working Group completed its first objective and launched the WAO Allergic Rhinitis Working Group website at [www.worldallergy.org/allergic rhinitis](http://www.worldallergy.org/allergic rhinitis). The Steering Committee members also expanded the Working Group by establishing a Content Committee to focus on developing a new online learning program on allergic rhinitis in adults and children which will offer continuing medical education and be available in Spring 2012. The Content Committee authors are up-and-coming professionals in our field: Herberto Chong Neto (Brazil), Tineke Dutré (Belgium), Alexander Greiner (United States), Michael O’Sullivan (Australia), and Shereen Saad El-Sayed (Egypt). And likewise, Claudia Gallego Corella (Mexico), a founding member of the WAO Junior Members Group, joined the Working Group in the role of Content Editor of the allergic rhinitis website in collaboration with the WAO Web Editorial Board led by Juan Carlos Ivancevich.
I want to thank Sandra and her team for their enthusiasm for this important initiative and their fantastic accomplishments so far. The Allergic Rhinitis Working Group website and projects are a significant part of WAO’s growing provision of web pages and projects focused on specific diseases. I encourage all of you to explore the new site at www.worldallergy.org/allergic_rhinitis.

WAC 2011 Abstract Review Meeting

The Scientific Program Committee recently completed the last phase of the abstract review process for the scientific program of the World Allergy Congress in Cancún December 4-8, 2011. It was exciting to have together arrived at this completion point. Thomas Casale, Vice Chair of the Scientific Program Committee and I, along with 2 WAO staff, were present for the 2.5 day-long meeting. This successful meeting would not have been possible without the advanced efforts of the review committee who did most of the work in the online abstract review system before the marathon meeting. We thank them again for their prompt and efficient completion of assignments.

Cezmi Akdis (Switzerland)          Maureen George (United States)
Mubeccel Akdis (Switzerland)       Roy Gerth van Wijk (Netherlands)
Ignacio J. Ansotegui (Spain)      Sandra González-Díaz (Mexico)
Jeanette Arnold (United States)   Tari Haahotel (Finland)
Claus Bachert (Belgium)           Stephen T. Holgate (United Kingdom)
Carlos E. Baena-Cagnani (Argentina) Elham Hosnny (Egypt)
Mark Ballow (United States)       Richard F. Lockey (United States)
Michael S. Blaiss (United States)  Jose Huerta Lopez (Mexico)
Sergio Bonini (Italy)             Juan Carlos Ivancevich (Argentina)
G. Walter Canonica (Italy)        Omer Kalayci (Turkey)
Thomas B. Casale (United States)  Michael A. Kaliner (United States)
Luis Caraballo (Colombia)         Connie Katelaris (Australia)
Gennaro D’Amato (Italy)           Phillip E. Korenblat (United States)
Sergio Del Giacco (Italy)         Marek L. Kowalski (Poland)
Pascal Demoly (France)             Dennis Ledford (United States)
Lawrence DuBuske (United States)  Bee‐Wah Lee (Singapore)
Motohiro Ebisawa (Japan)          Francesca Levi‐Schaffer (Israel)
Yehia El‐Gamal (Egypt)            Shyam Mohapatra (United States)
Alessandro Fiocchi (Italy)        Hee‐Bom Moon (Korea)
Amiran Gamkrelidze (Georgia)

During the marathon abstract review meeting 698 graded abstracts were reviewed and placed into poster and oral abstract sessions, and 138 travel grant applications were reviewed and winners selected. In addition to the abstract review work other important planning details were completed including the scientific program speaker list and presentation topics, logistics of session room placements, identification of audio visual needs and location of posters, and a review of the social event programs. And I ended
my visit with a chance to record a message to all of you about the beauty and warmth of Cancún and the promising scientific program. Click on the following link to launch the video: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f5KwtDcuW4w.

All of the most recent news about the World Allergy Congress in Cancún can be found at www.worldallergy.org/wac2011. If you have not registered yet, I encourage you to do it today. You won’t want to miss the opportunity to visit this beautiful place, take part in the innovative and stimulating scientific program, and network with your colleagues.

I look forward to seeing all of you in Cancún.

All the best,

Richard F. Lockey, MD
President, World Allergy Organization