24 July 2012

Dear Friends and Colleagues

Warm Greetings from the World Allergy Organization!

As the Olympics approach, we are reminded of how important the good health of our athletes is. Several studies indicate that allergic diseases and asthma occur more frequently in elite athletes even more frequently than in the general population. While physical exercise is recommended worldwide for its positive physiological and psychological effects, and sedentary lifestyles have been shown to have negative health effects, strenuous exercise can trigger or exacerbate several hypersensitivity syndromes such as bronchospasm, rhinitis, urticaria/angioedema and even severe systemic reactions (exercise-induced asthma, rhinitis, urticaria, or anaphylaxis). Some types of sports, such as endurance, swimming or winter sports, have been related to an increased risk of developing allergic hypersensitivity syndromes. In respiratory allergy, the exacerbation of symptoms is likely to be related to the increased ventilation associated with exercise, particularly if this is performed in cold air or in an environment with a high concentration of allergens and pollutants. In fact, some sports result in exposure to specific allergens and pollutants, such as pollens in outdoor sports, mites and molds in indoor sports, chlorine in swimming pools, latex material, horse dander, etc.

Yet allergies are not an impediment to sports. Many top athletes with asthma and allergies have had successful careers winning medals several times over. In this context, appropriate knowledge about asthma and allergies for the athletes, their physicians and policy makers is essential. Furthermore, therapy during training and competition has to be optimized. The World Allergy Organization has published a chapter on Sports and Allergies (S. Bonini, et al, pp 70-74) in the WAO White Book on Allergy and has put forward recommendations for allergic athletes, physicians treating them and health policy makers. The White Book is available for download at worldallergy.org/definingthespecialty. Also information on Therapeutic Use Exemption (TUE) Policy for asthmatic athletes is essential. The World Anti-Doping Agency has published a list of the prohibited substances (www.wada-ama.org). Preventive measures are also essential to limit exposure to such environmental factors (air humidity and temperature, pollutants and allergens) that may trigger symptoms and affect performances during training and competition. The International Olympic Committee’s “IOC Consensus Statement on Asthma in Elite Athletes” of January 2008 reports that “The prevention and management of exercise induced bronchoconstriction (EIB) is a key issue in athletes.”

In recognition of the need to address this area of our specialty of allergy, WAO has a Special Committee on Sports and Allergy, lead by Dr. André Moreira, Chair (Portugal) and Dr. Matteo Bonini, Co-Chair (Italy), with the main focus on:
1. Physical activity in asthma and allergy
2. Exercise as a diagnosis and control assessment tool
3. Increasing awareness of athletes about asthma and allergies
4. Reinforcing collaborations with other scientific societies involved in sports allergy
5. Spreading and improving practical knowledge in sports allergy especially among young physicians
6. Development of protocols to evaluate the efficacy and safety of treatment of these conditions

Keep looking out for more information from the WAO Special Committee on Sports and Allergies in the coming months.
The Olympics is also a time to join together on a global platform and celebrate each of our unique strengths. WAO has had many opportunities to partner throughout the world with our Regional and National Member Societies. It is through these interactions that we can continue to best address the rising global burden of atopic diseases. To follow WAO’s interactions and collaborations, please continue to visit our Collaborations page on the WAO website.

WAO has had the opportunity to collaborate with the Japanese Society of Allergology (JSA) twice over the past year, forming the WAO-JSA Lecture Series. At the 61st Annual Meeting of the JSA on 10 November, 2011, Dr. Philip Lieberman lectured on “Advances in Our Understanding of Anaphylaxis.” You can watch Dr. Lieberman’s lecture online.

WAO is also a collaborating partner of the International Collaboration in Allergy, Asthma and Immunology (iCAALL) initiative with the AAAAI, ACAAI and EAACI. A major focus of this initiative is the production of a series of disease-focused International Consensus (ICON) documents. These documents offer general recommendations based on global challenges in caring for patients with allergic and immunologic diseases. The second document in this series was just published on “Pediatric Asthma.” You may view the abstract in Allergy online.

In support of the recent ICON on Pediatric Allergy, the Co-Chairs of the WAO Special Committee on Pediatric Asthma, Prof. Ulrich Wahn and Prof. Peter LeSouef, were interviewed by WAO Junior Member, Dr. Silvia Sánchez-García, on the topic of Pediatric Asthma. Please visit WAO TV to watch the brief interview.

Did you know that in addition to the several WAO Councils and the WAO Special Committees on Sports and Allergy and Pediatric Asthma, WAO has 11 other disease specific Special Committees? Additional WAO Special Committees include:
- Special Committee on Aeroallergens
- Special Committee on Allergy Diagnosis and Molecular Allergology
- Special Committee on Asthma
- Special Committee on Anaphylaxis
- Special Committee on Climate Change and Biodiversity
- Special Committee on Drug Allergy
- Special Committee on Evidence Based Medicine and Methodology
- Special Committee on Food Allergy and Nutrition
- Special Committee on Immunotherapy and Immunomodulators
- Special Committee on Occupational Allergy and Environment
- Special Committee on Pediatric Asthma
- Special Committee on Skin Allergies
- Special Committee on Sports and Allergy

These Special Committees are working hard to develop many of the projects and initiatives of WAO. Please stay tuned to future WAO newsletters to read updates from these Special Committees.

Working relentlessly to advance the mission of WAO and to promote the field of allergy, and leading / supporting our many active committees is the WAO Executive Committee and Board of Directors. I would like to take this opportunity to extend our heartiest congratulations to Prof. Stephen Holgate, Treasurer and WAO Executive Committee Member, who was recently awarded the prestigious William Frankland Award by the British Society of Allergy and Clinical immunology (BSACI) at their Annual Congress in Liverpool (pictured here on the left with William Frankland). The William Frankland Award honors those who have made an outstanding contribution in the field of allergy and clinical immunology in the United Kingdom. Hearty Congratulations Stephen!
WISC 2012 UPDATE

The Abstract Deadline for WISC 2012 has been extended to 10 August 2012
Click here to submit your abstracts online.

We invite you to submit an abstract to be considered for inclusion in the Scientific Program for the 2012 WAO International Scientific Conference (WISC 2012), 6-9 December 2012, Hyderabad, India. Accepted abstracts will be presented during thematic Poster Sessions on 7, 8 and 9 December 2012.

There will be best abstract awards, and all previously unpublished abstracts will be published in the World Allergy Organization Journal.

WISC 2012 Online Registration
Click here to register online.

WISC 2012 also accepts registration payments in Indian Rupees (INR)
Indian delegates will be given the choice to pay in USD or INR when completing the payment step in the online registration.

Accommodation Reservations Now Open
Click here to reserve your hotel.

WISC 2012 is pleased to provide delegates with a variety of accommodation choices at reduced rates. All hotels listed are within 10-15 minutes by bus from the venue of the Conference – the Hyderabad International Convention Center (HICC).

Keep track of all WAO activities at:
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