

**World Allergy Week 2019 will focus on food allergy as a global problem**

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**Milwaukee, WI. April 5, 2019.** World Allergy Organization (WAO) will host World Allergy Week from April 7-13, 2019, to raise awareness of food allergy as a common global problem with differing concerns around the world. There is no active treatment yet, and avoidance of food allergens is the only strategy along with rescue therapy in case of emergency. Proper diagnosis and food allergen avoidance are essential for disease management, safety and improved quality of life.

Food allergy is an immune-mediated adverse reaction to food that can affect all body organs including the skin, gastrointestinal tract, and respiratory system and can lead to anaphylaxis. Typically, the symptoms begin within two minutes to two hours after exposure. It has been estimated that at least 240 million people (3%) around the world may suffer from food allergy, and there is a growing concern globally.\*

The quality of life of children and families is impacted by fear of accidental exposures and serious or fatal reactions to foods. Individuals with food allergy may experience challenges with dietary restrictions and uncomfortable social situations including bullying at school.

“Safety is paramount when it comes to food allergy,” said Ignacio J. Ansotegui, MD, PhD, of Hospital Quirón Bizkaia, in Bilbao, Spain, and the WAO President. “This is true in the day-to-day lives of people who have food allergies, and it also is true in the clinic. Allergists have the knowledge and training to diagnose, advise and treat individuals with food allergies. Food allergy research is focused on improving quality of life through better diagnostic and testing tools and finding safe, effective treatment options.”

While the problem of food allergy is a global one, conditions and concerns related to food allergy can differ, including the offending foods which vary among regions depending on the local food items. “There are many places in the world where epinephrine, or adrenalin, autoinjectors are not available for anaphylaxis emergencies,” said Elham Hossny, MD, PhD, of Children’s Hospital of Ain Shams University, in Cairo, Egypt, and Chair of the WAO Communications Committee. “In some places, there can be misconceptions around diagnosis and treatment because of a lack of updated knowledge and training, or due to a limited number of allergists in some localities. Safety and quality of life are impacted by these gaps.”

Allergy experts will discuss this topic during a complimentary webinar, hosted by WAO:

***Food Allergy – A Global Problem that Does Not Stop***

Date: 12 April 2019

Time: 6:00 AM PDT | 8:00 AM EDT | 2:00 PM CET | 2:00 PM EET | 9:00 PM JST

Duration: 2 hours

Details about the WAO webinar and registration can be found at:

<https://www.pathlms.com/wao/courses/11321/webinars/5340>

For more information about World Allergy Week 2019, visit:

<http://www.worldallergyweek.org>.

To find an allergy/immunology member society of the World Allergy Organization in your country or region, visit:

<http://www.worldallergy.org/about-wao/member-societies>.

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\*Fiocchi A, Sampson HA, Bahna SL, Lack G. "Food Allergy", Section 2.6 in WAO White Book on Allergy: Update 2013, edited by R Pawankar, GW Canonica, ST Holgate, RF Lockey, and MS Blaiss, World Allergy Organization, 2014.

<https://www.worldallergy.org/wao-white-book-on-allergy>

### **About the World Allergy Organization**

The World Allergy Organization (WAO) is an international alliance of 99 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. ([www.worldallergy.org](http://www.worldallergy.org))

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