

ANNOUNCEMENT

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

WISC 2012



Complex and severe allergic disease impacts patient quality of life

World Allergy Organization to hold International Conference in Hyderabad, India, 6-9 December 2012 on "Severe Allergies, Severe Asthma: New Strategies for Treatment and Prevention"

MILWAUKEE – The World Allergy Organization (WAO) will present data on the marked global increase of allergic diseases, highlighting that allergies are becoming more severe and complex and that the heaviest burden is on children and young adults. Among these diseases are asthma, food allergies, allergic rhinitis, skin allergies, anaphylaxis, drug allergies, and occupational allergies. Moreover, allergy interacts with many other environmental factors, such as pollutants, infections, lifestyle and diet, that increase the impact on chronic non-communicable diseases. WAO will address the most current understanding of these diseases, their rising prevalence – especially in children – and the need for increased disease awareness, improved patient care, better healthcare delivery and a focus on preventative strategies.

For the very first time in India and the city of Hyderabad, the global organization will host the 2nd WAO International Scientific Conference (WISC 2012) from 6-9 December. The conference is designed to be a multidisciplinary forum for 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 1500-2000 delegates from 80 countries. More than 80 international experts will lecture on the cutting-edge science of allergic diseases, asthma and associated diseases 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.

As presented in the *WAO White Book on Allergy*, approximately 30 to 40 percent of the world's population suffers from allergic diseases, and the prevalence is escalating to epidemic proportions. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), an estimated 300 million individuals have asthma worldwide, a figure that could increase to 400 million by 2025 if trends continue. Allergic rhinitis, which is a risk factor for asthma, affects 400 million people annually, and food allergies affect about 200 to 250 million. An estimated 250,000 avoidable deaths from asthma occur each year.¹ Prof. Ruby Pawankar, WAO President, and Conference President of WISC 2012, said:

"WAO recommends (1) increased, availability and accessibility to allergy diagnosis and therapies (2) increased resources dedicated to advanced research toward preventive strategies to increase tolerance to allergens and slow disease progression and (3) global partnerships of multi-disciplinary teams involving clinicians, academia, patient representatives, and industry. The common goal is to reduce the burden of allergic diseases and develop cost-effective, innovative preventive strategies and a more integrated, holistic approach to treatment. These efforts can thereby prevent premature and unwanted deaths and improve quality of life."

As the prevalence of allergic disease rises in countries around the world regardless of their economic status, so do the socioeconomic costs both direct (interference with breathing during day or night,

emergency department visits, hospitalizations) and indirect (reduced quality of life, reduced work productivity and absenteeism). This conference is designed to address the growing concerns and needs.

¹Pawankar 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

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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