

AllerGen's 6th Annual Research Conference, February 6-8, 2011, Vancouver

Over the past six years, AllerGen has nurtured the development of a national and international network of allergy, asthma, anaphylaxis and related immune diseases experts. Its annual research conference has become a major platform for world class research presentations, knowledge transfer and networking for researchers, research trainees and new professionals, international experts and industry, government, health care and academic organizations across disciplines and sectors.

This year's conference, held at the Westin Bayshore Hotel in Vancouver, British Columbia, boasts a record number of 220 delegates. In addition to the three keynote presenters, Dr. Wesley Burks, Duke University Medical Centre; Dr. Geoff Maksym, Dalhousie University; and Dr. Marc Rothenberg, Cincinnati Children's Hospital, and invited presentations by two international collaborators, Dr. Sven-Erik Dahlén, Karolinska Institutet and Dr. Paul Foster, University of Newcastle, Australia, AllerGen's Investigators will present their research. Featured AllerGen research includes:

Panel Discussion led by Drs. Chris Carlsten and Michael Brauer, University of British Columbia, on **Air Pollution, Genetics and Asthma: From Epidemiology to Controlled Exposure**



C. Carlsten



M. Brauer

Panel Discussion led by Dr. Miriam Stewart, University of Alberta, on **Asthma/Allergy Support and Education for Aboriginal Communities**



M. Stewart



A. Ellis

Dr. Anne Ellis, Queen's University, sharing with us information on the Environmental Exposure Unit (EEU) and the new **Allergic Rhinitis Clinical Investigator Collaborative**

Panel Discussion led by Dr. Jeff Brook, Environment Canada, about **Novel and Exciting Tools for Environmental Exposure Assessment**



J. Brook



W. Ungar

Dr. Wendy Ungar, The Hospital for Sick Children, sharing the results of her study about **Optimizing Asthma Control in Children: Understanding the Impact of Economic Burden and Parent Preferences**

Panel Discussion led by Drs. Peter Paré and Andy Sanford, University of British Columbia on the **Ethical and Legal Aspects of Genetic Testing**



P. Paré



A. Sanford

Panel Discussion led by Dr. Diane Lougheed, Queen's University on **Work-Related Asthma: Measuring and Reducing the Burden**

Dr. Darryl Adamko, University of Alberta speaking about his innovative NMR-based diagnostic approaches to **Metabolomic Profiling of Asthma**



D. Lougheed



D. Adamko

2011 Student Poster Competition

This year's Annual Research Conference received a record number of 68 scientific posters, which will be on display throughout the event. Of these 68 posters, 61 posters prepared by AllerGen trainees and future allergic disease research and clinical leaders, are competing in AllerGen's adjudicated Annual Student Poster Competition. In addition, a selection of posters by AllerGen investigators and international collaborators are also available for viewing. Winners of AllerGen's 2011 Student Poster Competition will be announced on the evening of Monday February 7, 2011. Results will also be posted on the AllerGen website following the conference.



The AllerGen Students and New Professionals Network (ASNPN) Annual Networking Evening

Each year, the AllerGen Students and New Professionals Network (ASNPN) hosts a networking reception during the annual conference. This year's ASNPN event is being hosted at the Vancouver Aquarium, located adjacent to the conference venue in Stanley Park.

All registered conference delegates are invited to attend. This is a terrific opportunity to network with the next generation of future leaders in the field of allergic disease research and clinical care.

ASNPN President, Jennifer Protudjer, University of Manitoba, Vice-President, Lianne Soller, and the rest of the ASNPN Executive will be there to welcome you. It is a great chance to speak informally with AllerGen trainees and new professionals and to learn more about the innovative, multidisciplinary research that is taking place across Canada and in collaboration with international collaborators, supported by AllerGen and its partner organizations.

Global Alliance against Chronic Respiratory Diseases (GARD) General Meeting

The World Health Organization's 5th GARD General Meeting was held on June 1-2, 2010 in Toronto, Ontario. Nearly 100 delegates from around the world gathered to attend the conference. Representing AllerGen were Dr. Teresa To, Ontario Asthma Surveillance Information System (OASIS), The Hospital for Sick Children and Dr. Louis-Philippe Boulet, Université Laval, and AllerGen's Managing Director, Dr. Diana Royce. One of the areas of focus of this meeting was GARD collaboration and interaction with patients. AllerGen's contribution to the meeting was in the area of patient education, where the need to involve patients in the management of their respiratory diseases and the importance of patient education in ensuring the effective treatment of chronic respiratory disease were emphasized.



The WHO secretariat recently release the official GARD Toronto General Meeting report 2010 and it is available at: http://www.who.int/cardiovascular_diseases/gard_meeting_report_toronto_2010.pdf

The Flaman Foundation Awards \$10,000 to support extension of the AllerGen International Partnership Initiative in collaboration with El Salvador

Thanks to the NCE program's International Partnership Initiative (IPI), AllerGen, spearheaded by Dr. Dean Befus and a team of clinicians at University of Alberta and asthma educators from the Alberta Asthma Centre, successfully partnered with the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease (the Union), the National Lung Hospital (The Saldana) and the Ministry of Health, El Salvador to support the development of a state-of-the-art, national asthma program.

El Salvador is working towards overcoming many challenges after being ravaged by a 19 year civil war and a series of natural disasters. It is estimated that asthma impacts over 20% of the population of El Salvador, with women and children being the most directly affected by this chronic disease. The Ministry of Health reported a total of 1.5 million patients assisted for Asthma, Pneumonia, and COPD in 2008.

Following the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry, AllerGen's team, in collaboration with the Union, have adapted and translated asthma education programs developed in Canada for adoption and use in El Salvador.

In 2010, Shawna McGhan, RN, MN, CAE, Director, Health Innovations at the Alberta Asthma Centre, University of Alberta/Alberta Health Services, visited Latin American as part of the AllerGen IPI. Asthma education and care teams were brought together and provided asthma management training. Respiratory healthcare program planning and development were also undertaken. In turn, a nurse and physician from El Salvador visited the asthma programs in Edmonton, Calgary and Winnipeg to gain greater knowledge and experience in asthma education models and care.

In early 2011, the Flaman Foundation donated an additional \$10,000 to support continuation of this initiative. This funding will enable the project to move forward with The Saldana and a national asthma education program in conjunction with the Asthma Drug Facility established by the Union and Ministry of Health. Project outcomes include:

- Developing, testing, printing and distributing asthma educational resources;
- Developing and supporting training about asthma health education; and
- Establishing Asthma Education Coordination in El Salvador, an Asthma Specialty Care Centre and Community asthma clubs and school programs.

This is yet another example of how AllerGen NCE seed investments have united diverse organizations to leverage Canadian expertise through networking and partnerships, resulting in global impacts that improve lives and health.

The Alberta Asthma Centre and AllerGen challenge other companies to match the Flaman Foundation donation. Become a partner organization and help improve lives of asthmatics around the world!

AllerGen Research Success Stories



The first issue of AllerGen's Research Success Stories has been mailed to Network members and is available in soft copy on the AllerGen website. This is the first of an ongoing series of publications intended for a lay audience. Issue 1 highlights five cutting-edge research and development initiatives from across Canada. It is our hope that this publication offers disease sufferers and their families and friends practical information about new, leading-edge research about allergies, anaphylaxis, asthma and related immune diseases.

AllerGen Renewal 2012-2019

AllerGen is entering the last stretch of its first seven-years of NCE funding. Planning is well underway including strategic meetings and partner and stakeholder consultations where AllerGen will identify current and potential partner organizations' future research needs and gaps that it could address. All AllerGen participants will be asked to contribute testimonials and letters of support to ensure AllerGen is best positioned for renewal and a second and final seven years of NCE funding.

AllerGen Mourns the Recent Passing of Allergy Leaders

Dr. James Day, Professor Emeritus in the Division of Allergy & Immunology, Department of Medicine at Queen's University passed away on January 24, 2011. He was a groundbreaking clinical researcher and innovator in the field of allergic disease, and a mentor to many AllerGen researchers and trainees. Dr. Day is probably best known for creating, along with colleague Dr. Reginald Clark, the Environment Exposure Unit (EEU), a controlled allergen challenge model of allergic rhinitis that is still considered to be the "gold standard" in the field.

Respected allergist **Dr. Milton Gold** passed away on December 22, 2010. Dr. Gold served communities in the GTA (The Hospital for Sick Children) and Brampton / Mississauga areas for many years and was a medical advisor for Anaphylaxis Canada. Dr. Gold was the a principal author of the 1995 consensus statement and its 2005 update – *Anaphylaxis In Schools and Other Child Care Settings* – a landmark document which influenced the implementation of school anaphylaxis management policies and practices. This booklet reached all publicly funded schools in Canada by 2007. Dr. Gold was also involved in the writing of a resource on allergies and asthma for parents and caregivers – *The Complete Kid's Allergy and Asthma Guide: Allergy and Asthma Information for Children of All Ages*.

NCE Annual Meeting at Innovation 2010

In early December 2010, the Networks of Centres of Excellence partnered with ACCT Canada and the Federal Partners in Technology Transfer to host Canada's first joint



research & development partnership conference. *Innovation 2010* focused on the future of competitiveness and innovation in Canada's economy. Presentations emphasized collaboration, strategy, creativity and internationalization, and suggested strategies to stimulate real-world, practical ideas and solutions supporting the successful mobilization of new knowledge and delivery of new products and services.

AllerGen's representatives in attendance included Board representatives Dr. Doug Barber and Kevin Fehr, as well as Scientific Director & CEO, Dr. Judah Denburg, Managing Director & COO, Dr. Diana Royce, Mark Mitchell, Manager, Research and Partnerships and Marta Rudyk, Manager, Communications and Knowledge Mobilization.

During this event, five new Centres of Excellence for Commercialization and Research (CECR) were announced:

- *Creating a Commercialization Pipeline for New Medical Technologies: Centre for Commercialization of Regenerative Medicine (CCRM)*, Toronto, Ontario
- *Bringing Canada's Medical Imaging Experts Together: Centre for Imaging Technology Commercialization (CIImTeC)*, London, Ontario
- *Building Canada's Remote Monitoring Technologies Industry: Leading Operational Observations and Knowledge for the North (LOOKNorth)*, St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador
- *MiQro Innovation Collaborative Centre (MIC2)*, Bromont, Quebec
- *New Wireless Connections: Wavefront Wireless Commercialization Centre*, Vancouver, British Columbia

The CECR program supports centres that advance research and facilitate commercialization of technologies, products and services within the four priority areas identified in the federal Science and Technology (S&T) Strategy. The four areas are: Environment; Natural Resources and Energy; Health and Life Sciences; and Information and Communications Technologies.