

AllerGen, a member of the Networks of Centres of Excellence (NCE) program, has a mandate to radically improve the quality of life for allergic - immune disease sufferers by conducting research that will lead to new diagnostic tests, better medications and more effective public policies for Canadians. The NCE program is a joint initiative of the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council and Industry Canada.



AllerGen soars at first annual conference

AllerGen's First Annual Research Conference: *Innovation from Cell to Society* connected more than 120 delegates with an interest in allergic and immune disease research in Toronto, October 26 to 28, 2005.

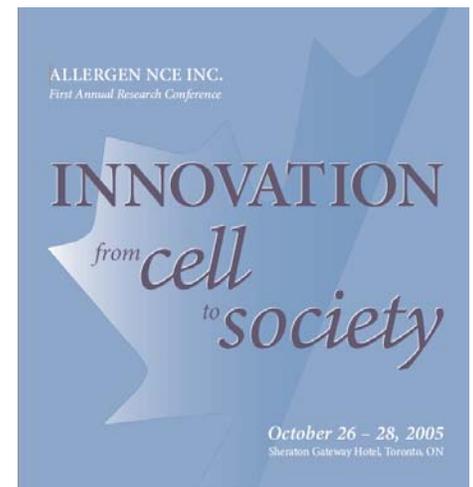
This two-day event marked the public unveiling of the Network's research program, while underscoring the worldwide need to mobilize science, industry and government against the allergic and immune disease epidemic.

"The conference attracted some of Canada's leading researchers and clinicians in the field, both from within and outside the Network, as well as representatives from key advocacy groups and industry,"

said Dr. Judah Denburg, AllerGen's Scientific Director. "By holding our annual meeting early in AllerGen's first year, we were able to build on the momentum we've generated since launching seven months ago and meet face-to-face with Network participants, trainees, research partners and individuals and organizations interested in participating in the Network."

Key highlights of *Innovation from Cell to Society* included:

✦ A keynote address on the urgent need for global research programs in allergy and asthma by Dr. Jean Bousquet, Professor of Respiratory Medicine at the University of Montpellier in Montpellier, France, and Director of the World Health



Organization's (WHO) Collaborating Center for Asthma and the WHO Global Alliance against Chronic Respiratory Diseases (GARD). *Continued on page 3*

AllerGen partners to create new fellowship for MD training, research in allergic disease

Three key players in the fight against the growing allergy epidemic in Canada have joined forces to increase the capacity of Canadian science to fight costly allergic and immune diseases.

AllerGen, Bayer Inc. and the Canadian Allergy, Asthma and Immunology Foundation (CAAIF) have created a two-year, \$110,000 **AllerGen/BAYER/CAAIF Immunodeficiency and Immunomodulation of Allergic Inflammation Clinician-Scientist Research Fellowship** to encourage an increasing number of clinicians to train as scientists in the field of allergy.

Canada is currently experiencing nation-wide shortages and major distribution disparities of certified allergists/immunologists, clinician-scientists and allergy-related health professionals.

"All three sponsor organizations have made a commitment to support the development of highly qualified Canadian personnel in allergic and immune disease research and innovation," said AllerGen Scientific Director and CEO, Dr. Judah Denburg. "The

creation of this fellowship is one step towards our common goal – to improve the quality of life for Canadians who suffer from these diseases by getting more clinician-scientists trained in this field."

One of AllerGen's key objectives is to double the number of clinical and research trainees produced in Canada each year, while increasing the country's capacity to train allergic-immune disease specialists by 25% per year.

"Partnerships are key to fulfilling these objectives," Dr. Denburg continued. "By leveraging our investments in strategic training initiatives and aligning our program with existing resources, we can have a significant, positive impact on the allergic disease problem in Canada."

Applications for the Fellowship are available for download at www.allergen-nce.ca

Innovation from Cell to Society 2005

As *Innovation from Cell to Society* demonstrated, Networks are all about people.

Pictured from top left: **#1: Dr. Judah Denburg** welcomes delegates with an introduction to AllerGen during the opening ceremonies; **#2:** Networking expert **Dr. H. Brinton Milward**, Associate Dean and Director of the School of Public Administration and Policy at The University of Arizona's Eller College of Management, presents his insights on the value of networking during a gala dinner address; **#3:** (l to r) **Dr. Jeff Brook**, Air Quality Research Branch, Environment Canada and AllerGen RMC member, AllerGen Theme II Leader **Dr. Malcolm Sears** and RMC member **Dr. Allan Becker** discuss the days events; **#4:** **Dr. Simon Pimstone**, founder, Director, and President & Chief Executive Officer at Xenon Pharmaceuticals Inc. and AllerGen Board of Directors (BOD) member, discusses the business of research and the biotech/venture capital environment in Canada; **#5:** (l to r) **Dr. Aubrey Tingle**, AllerGen BOD member and Director, Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research, **Jacques Moisan**, Best Trainee Oral Presentation winner, McGill University, **Dr. Judah Denburg**, Scientific Director and CEO of AllerGen and **Dr. Kent HayGlass**, Professor and Head, Department of Immunology at the University of Manitoba and Chair, AllerGen Advanced Education and Training Opportunities Advisory Committee (AETOAC); **#6:** Second and third from left, Best Trainee Poster Competition winners **Johanna Roa** and **Farah Bandukwala** (co-winners), McMaster University; **#7:** An insightful panel discussion on Commercialization and Venture Capital – Preparation for Partnerships: Strategies for Success, Chaired by **Dr. Doug Barber** of the AllerGen BOD and Director, Gennum Corporation (not pictured), featuring (l to r) **Dr. Kevin Fehr**, Director, Basic

Research and Genetics, GlaxoSmithKline Inc. and member, AllerGen BOD, **Dr. Paolo Renzi**, Founder and CEO of Topigen Pharmaceuticals Inc., **Dr. David Shindler**, Director, Milestone Medica Corporation and member of AllerGen's Research Management Committee (RMC)

and **Dr. Brian Underdown**, President and CEO, University Medical Discoveries Inc. and member of AllerGen's RMC.



First annual conference... *Continued from page 1*

Dr. Bousquet highlighted the WHO's recently published global report on chronic diseases, which makes a case for increased and urgent action for worldwide efforts and collaborations for chronic disease prevention and control, including chronic respiratory diseases such as asthma.

He emphasized that AllerGen is in a unique position to lead efforts in Canada to develop an innovative research program, while leveraging international efforts in allergic-immune disease research by joining with global initiatives such as GARD, the WHO and the recently formed Global Allergy and Asthma European Network (GA²LEN);

- Scientific presentations from across AllerGen's five research foci that outlined the Network's multidisciplinary approach to tackling the allergy epidemic;
- Special invited presentations on the value of networks and networking and the business of research;
- A panel discussion on *Commercialization and Venture Capital – Preparation for Partnerships: Strategies for Success* provided expert insights on the challenges of translating research knowledge into viable commercial activity in Canada;
- AllerGen's first-ever poster competition, which was open to students/trainees from both inside and outside the Network. In all, 20 posters were presented, from which six trainees were selected to make an oral presentation to conference delegates. Prizes were awarded for best poster and best oral presentations.

"Overall, we were extremely pleased with the enthusiasm and support generated by AllerGen's first public conference," says AllerGen Managing Director Dr. Diana Royce. "The participation of the allergic-immune disease research community, our partners, sponsors and the public made the conference a worthwhile event for all delegates."

**Join us for AllerGen's Second Annual Research Conference:
*Innovation from Cell to Society*²
February 12 -14, 2007, Sheraton Hotel, Hamilton, ON**

Interested in sponsoring AllerGen's 2nd Annual Research Conference: *Innovation from Cell to Society*²? Contact Brad Hussey at husseyb@mcmaster.ca or (905) 525-9140 ext. 26641 for more information.

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Social sciences workshop suggests new vistas for AllerGen research

The French sociologist of science Bruno Latour wrote that no real difference exists between the natural and the social sciences "...because there is no more science than there is society."

With that in mind, AllerGen held its first Social Science Visioning Workshop at Eaton Hall in King City, ON, on December 1st and 2nd, 2005 to consult with Canadian social science research leaders from a wide range of disciplines. Workshop participants identified ways that AllerGen could add synergistic social science research projects to its research programs, and identified strategies to best enable AllerGen to engage and retain social science researchers in the Network.

"Without invoking the social sciences you're only getting part of the health picture..."

These strategies will be used in the development of a targeted call for proposals for specific types of social science research projects that can be networked with existing AllerGen projects and partners.

"Without invoking the social sciences you're only getting part of the health picture," said Dr. Susan Elliott, Dean of Social Sciences at McMaster University and member of AllerGen's Research Management Committee. Social scientists will add valuable perspectives to AllerGen's research program that can contribute to overcoming cultural differences between disciplines and help explain how social and economic factors affect allergic/immune diseases.

"A strong social science thrust within AllerGen's research program is critical to realizing the Network's efforts to improve the lives of Canadians suffering from allergic and immune diseases," noted Dr. Diana Royce, Managing Director for AllerGen. "This meeting was only the first step in engaging these disciplines and integrating them within AllerGen's current and future research."

In the press...

Theme III researcher **Dr. Susan Waserman** was interviewed in the January, 2006 issue of *Canadian Living* magazine for an article on sesame allergy.

Chatelaine magazine's December, 2005 issue contains comments from AllerGen's Scientific Director, **Dr. Judah Denburg**, within a story on adult allergies.

North American media (*The Globe and Mail*, *People Magazine*, *The Toronto Star*, *CNN*, *MSNBC*, *The New York Times*) picked up on the story of an anaphylactic teenager in Quebec who died November 23rd after being kissed by her boyfriend, who had eaten a peanut butter snack.

Theme I Leader **Dr. Tom Hudson** of McGill University was featured in a *Globe and Mail* cover story on October 26th, 2005 about the completion of the Haplotype Map, the first catalogue of common genetic differences between four of the world's ethnic groups.

Network news...

✦ AllerGen is pleased to announce two new appointments to its Board of Directors. Dr. Eric Leith, Chair of the Canadian Society of Allergy and Clinical Immunology, was appointed to the Board for a 3-year term. Dr. Redwan Moqbel, AllerGen Theme III Alternate Leader and Professor and Director, Pulmonary Research Group at the University of Alberta, was elected to the Board by AllerGen researchers for a one-year term.

✦ In September, 2005, AllerGen Board of Directors member and world renowned Hepatitis B researcher Dr. Lorne Tyrrell won the \$100,000 EnCana Principal Award, one of Canada's biggest prizes, for his work on the first oral antiviral agent licensed to treat Hepatitis B.

✦ AllerGen Scientific Director and CEO Dr. Judah Denburg traveled to the Netherlands on November 15, 2005 as part of the Canadian contingent for

Canada Business Day. The event, organized by the Canadian Embassy in the Netherlands, was designed to raise awareness among the Dutch business community of Canada's potential as the "gateway to North America." Dr. Denburg's talk focused on leveraging public and private partnerships for success in the biotech sector.

✦ AllerGen was well represented at the 2005 Annual Meeting of the Networks of Centres of Excellence (NCE) Program, held December 5 to 7, 2005 in Quebec City, PQ. Board of Directors member Dr. Claude Roy, Scientific Director Dr. Judah Denburg, Managing Director Dr. Diana Royce and Communications Manager Brad Hussey spent three days networking with their peers from the other NCEs, sharing best practices and identifying future challenges and opportunities within the program.

AllerGen across Canada... and the world

