

Acquire Valuable New Skills at AllerGen's 2010 Trainee Symposium

AllerGen's Fifth Annual Trainee Symposium 2010 is taking place this weekend! This year's conference, *Training for Excellence in Science and Society*, is being held from June 6-8, 2010, at the Chestnut Conference Centre in downtown Toronto.

The preliminary program is available on AllerGen's website, www.allergen-nce.ca. For those who have not already registered, please email Melissa Shuker, AllerGen Program Coordinator, at shuker@mcmaster.ca.

In addition, AllerGen is making available a half-day "Clinical Workshop for Non-clinicians" on **Wednesday June 9**, immediately following the Trainee Symposium. This workshop will focus on the diagnosis and treatment of asthma and allergy, including hands on demonstrations.

Featured sessions include:

- Knowledge Translation: Dissemination of your message to those outside your field
- Research Ethics: Balancing the need for knowledge and the rights of research subjects
- Media: A powerful resource in the information age: How to leverage its reach
- Studentship Applications: Where to look and how to strive for success
- Career Paths: Opportunities outside of academia
- Interactive workshop by **Sheelagh Freeman**, International Voice, Speech and Presentations Skills Specialist on the topic of *Presenting with confidence, clarity and professionalism*

AllerGen Trainees Shine at AllerGen's 2010 Annual Research Conference

From February 7-9, 2010, 65 trainees (representing 35% of all AllerGen Students and New Professionals [ASNPN]) in attendance took the opportunity to learn from and network with national and international leaders in the field of allergy and related immune disease at AllerGen's 5th Annual Innovation from Cell to Society Conference in Quebec City.

A record number of 51 posters were presented at this year's Annual Research Conference. Forty were adjudicated: 7 in Programme A; 23 in Programme B; and 10 in Programme C. The remaining 11 posters displayed additional research findings.

The top two poster presenters in each Research Programme delivered oral presentations and responded to questions from the audience.

In Programme A, **Salman Ali**, a Master's student from the University of British Columbia, supervised by **Dr. Stuart Turvey**, Assistant Professor, Division of Immunology and Infectious Diseases, Faculty of Medicine, Pediatrics, won first place for his poster titled *Functional characterization of human variants of NFKBIA: a key regulator of immune responsiveness implicated in susceptibility to infectious and inflammatory disease*. **Michelle North**, a PhD student from the University of Toronto, supervised by Dr. Jeremy Scott, Assistant Professor, Research Scientist, Divisions of Occupational and Respiratory Medicine, Department of Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, won second place for her poster titled *Examining the role of arginase in air pollution-induced exacerbation of asthma*.

In Programme B, **Steven Maltby**, a PhD student from the University of British Columbia, supervised by Dr. Kelly McNagny, Professor, Department of Medical Genetics, won first place for his poster presentation titled *CD34 is Required for the Infiltration of Inflammatory Cells into the Mouse Colon during DSS-induced Colitis*.

Ramses Ilarraza, a Post-Doctoral Fellow, from the University of Alberta, supervised by Dr. Darryl Adamko, Associate Professor, Departments of Pediatrics and Medicine, won second place for his poster *Unique properties of RV in an in vitro model of asthma exacerbation*.

In Programme C, **Daniel Harrington**, a PhD student from McMaster University, supervised by Dr. Susan Elliott, Professor, School of Geography and Earth Sciences, won first place for his poster presentation titled *Who's afraid of the big bad peanut? Perceived societal risks of food allergy and anaphylaxis from the perspective of affected and unaffected Canadians*. **Salma Bahreinian**, a Master's student from the University of Alberta, supervised by Dr. Anita Kozyrskyj, Associate Professor, Department of Pediatrics, Faculty of Medicine, won second place for her poster titled *Does Chronic Stress Predict the Development of Asthma in Pre-adolescents?*

The poster competition and oral presentations gave trainees the opportunity to showcase their research and receive feedback from AllerGen researchers. Congratulations to the winners and to all those who participated in the 2010 poster competition!

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From left to right: **Ramses Ilarraza**, **Salman Ali**, **Steven Maltby**, **Michelle North**, **Daniel Harrington** and **Salma Bahreinian**.

Karolinska Institute Exchanges Pay Dividends for AllerGen Trainees

In 2007, AllerGen and the Centre for Allergy (CfA) of the Karolinska Institutet (KI) agreed to internationalize and further enrich the training environment for their respective trainees through joint AllerGen-Karolinska HQP Research Exchange Awards.

This international collaboration has enabled, on a matching funding basis, AllerGen HQPs to be associated with a KI CfA research project in Sweden, and KI CfA HQPs to be similarly associated with an AllerGen research project undertaken at a Canadian University.

This opportunity was open to Masters, PhD, MD, postdoctoral students, summer students, undergraduates and allied health professionals.

Participant support was matched and sponsored jointly by agreement between AllerGen and Karolinska CfA research project supervisors. Each participant spent at least one month in the other jurisdiction, working on a similar or complementary AllerGen or Karolinska CfA projects with the counterpart investigator and her/his research team.

The HQP exchange awards have:

- Enhanced AllerGen researcher and trainee partnerships and strengthened international networking and collaborative research and training opportunities with one of the foremost international centres of excellence in allergy and immune disease research.

- Created new, unique opportunities for research training, knowledge sharing, knowledge exchange and partnered research that will contribute to the excellence of AllerGen's research programme and enhance the capacity of a new generation of Canadian research professionals.
- Provided AllerGen and KI HQPs with valuable short-term international research and training exposure in leading allergy research jurisdictions.
- Exposed HQPs to cutting-edge international discovery and development efforts contributing to reductions in the impact of allergic diseases.

My Karolinska Institute Experience: Jennifer Protudjer, University of Manitoba

Observe the opportunity - three simple words that provided me with an unforgettable experience. The chance to participate in the AllerGen - Karolinska Institute (KI) Centre for Allergy Research Exchange was a rare opportunity to network with researchers outside of Canada and to seek new collaborations. But, the warmth with which I was received, and the current and future opportunities made available to me were more than I could have hoped for.

Born and raised in Manitoba, I am familiar with winter's wrath. So, travelling to a city further north than Churchill, Manitoba during winter was not intimidating. After all, Stockholm is a city built upon 14 islands and has a mean temperature of -3°C in February. What I failed to realize is that I arrived in Stockholm during the coldest winter in over 30 years! The mercury fell to -29°C one morning, complete with a strong north wind. But the cold weather was quickly and constantly forgotten as a result of the warm hospitality of the people whom I was fortunate to meet. My supervisor, Dr. Catarina Almqvist Malmros, is an

easy-going, patient and brilliant lady, with whom I quickly developed a comfortable rapport. Her colleagues at the KI were equally welcoming, and I was able to make several key contacts with their allergy and nutrition researchers. This hospitality was also extended by every Swede that I met. When asking if they spoke English (along with an apology for not speaking their language), the steadfast response was "Of course!" At once, I felt welcomed and grateful.

This gratitude was also extended to the access that was granted to me to pursue my project. Prior to arriving at the KI, Dr. Almqvist and I had agreed on a database project based on data from the Swedish Twin Study of Child and Adolescent Development. I was provided with the raw data and an English version of the data dictionary. My project involved considering associations between asthma, puberty and weight status in 2,951 pairs of Swedish twins. This cohort of children continues to be tracked longitudinally and includes both parent- and child-reported data. During my stay in Sweden, I was able to complete the first draft of this manuscript.

Based on the work I completed during my stay, I have submitted an abstract to the International Congress on Obesity Conference, which will be held this July in Stockholm. This is one of the many events being held at the KI this year in celebration of its 200 year anniversary. This fall, an exchangee from the KI will be travelling to Winnipeg as part of this program. But, this will not be the end of the anticipated collaboration. Together with Dr. Almqvist, Dr. Becker, my PhD supervisor, and others involved in this exchange, I intend to continue this collaboration, which includes research and dissemination activities.

This exchange was successful in many ways. I met several great researchers in Sweden, I was able to work on a project related to my own doctoral work and I foresee numerous opportunities for future collaboration. I am grateful to Dr. Almqvist, Dr. Becker, the KI and AllerGen NCE for this opportunity. Tack så mycket! Thank you very much!

Jennifer Protudjer, PhD Candidate, MSc University of Manitoba, Manitoba Institute of Child Health

NCE Full Review

It is that time yet again in AllerGen's life cycle... As AllerGen approaches the end of its first seven years of NCE support, research leaders and administrative centre staff are ramping up towards the development and submission of an exhaustive proposal outlining the Network's progress to date and future strategic priorities in order to secure a second and final seven years of NCE support for the period 2012-2019.

In early July, research leaders will be meeting to map out future strategic

priorities for research. Research Programme workshops will be held as follows over the balance of the year:

- Programme A: Monthly teleconference May 27, 2010
- Programme B/CIC: November 9-10, 2010, Sheraton Gateway, Toronto
- Programme C: October 4, 2010, Sheraton Gateway, Toronto

The Board of Directors will hold a strategic planning retreat on November 13 to 15, 2010 to finalize and approve the strategic priority directions.

Final documentation is due early August 2011.

In support of this exercise, all current and former AllerGen trainees and ASNPN members are invited to submit testimonials about the impact that their AllerGen experience has had on their career development (between .5 and 1.5 pages in length) are asked to submit testimonials directly to Melissa Shuker, Programme Coordinator at shuker@mcmaster.ca. We look forward to hearing from you!

Recent AllerGen Publications

January 2010

Sheth S, Waserman S, Kagan R, Alizadehfard R, Primeau MN, **Elliott SJ,** St. Pierre Y, Wickett R, **Joseph L,** Harada L, Dufresne C, Allen M, Allen M, Benrejeb Godefroy S, **Clarke AE:** The role of food labels on accidental exposures in food allergic individuals in Canada. *Annals of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology*, 104(1): 60-65.

Dreger LC, **Kozyrskyj AL,** HayGlass KT, **Becker AB,** MacNeil BJ: Lower cortisol levels in asthmatic children exposed to recurrent maternal distress from birth. *J Allergy Clin Immunol*, 125(1): 116-22.

Forsythe P, Sudo N, Dinan T, Taylor VH, **Bienestock J:** Mood and gut feelings. *Brain Behav Immun*, 24(1).

February 2010

Blanchet MR, Gold M, Maltby M, Bennett J, Lee DM and McNagny KM: Loss of CD34 leads to exacerbated autoimmune arthritis through increased vascular permeability. *Immunology*, 184(3): 1292-9.

Small C-L, Shaler CR, McCormick S, Jeyanathan M, Damjanovic D, Brown E, **Arck P,** Jordana M, Kaushic C, Ashkar A and Xing Z: Influenza Infection leads to increased susceptibility to subsequent bacterial superinfection by impairing NK cell responses in the lung. *Journal of Immunology*, 184(4): 2048-56.

March 2010

Ries N, LeGrandeur J, **Caulfield T:** Handling ethical, legal and social issues in birth cohort studies involving genetic research: responses from studies in six countries. *BMC Medical Ethics*, 11(4).

Karimi K, **Arck P:** Natural Killer Cells: keepers of pregnancy in the turnstile of the environment. *Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology*, 24(3): 339.

Ungar WJ, Cope SF*, Kozyrskyj A, Paterson JM.: Socioeconomic Factors and Home Allergen Exposure in Children With Asthma. *Journal of Pediatric Health Care*, 24(2): 108-115.

Pincus M, Keil T, Rucke M, Bruenahl C, Magdorf K, Klapp BF, Douglas AJ, Paus R, Wahn U, **Arck P:** Fetal origin of atopic dermatitis. *J Allergy Clin Immunology*, 125(1): 273-275.e1-4.

AllerGen's New Emerging Clinician-Scientist Research Fellowship

On April 9, 2010, AllerGen launched a national competition for an *Emerging Clinician-Scientist Research Fellowship* valued at \$250,000 over two years. The goal of the *AllerGen Emerging Clinician-Scientist Research Fellowship* is to enable Canadian Clinical Immunologists and Allergists to pursue allergy, asthma and/or anaphylaxis academic research training immediately following their Clinical Immunology and Allergy sub-specialty training in order to:

- Strengthen the academic capacity of Canadian Clinical Immunology and Allergy sub-specialists,
- Increase Canadian capacity for translational Clinical Immunology and Allergy research, and
- Facilitate enhanced patient care through excellence in basic and clinical Allergy and related immune disease research.

This fellowship is aligned with AllerGen's strategic objectives related to Canadian capacity building, which are to:

- Increase research capacity in the field of Clinical Immunology and Allergy,

- Foster and enhance academic innovation arising from basic and clinical research for medical students and postgraduate clinical trainees that pursue sub-specialties in allergy and clinical immunology, and
- Increase the number of medical students that pursue the Clinical Immunology and Allergy sub-specialty and undertake related basic and/or clinical research.

Eligible candidates are Canadian citizens or permanent residents who are clinicians that have completed Clinical Immunology and Allergy sub-specialty training within the past 18 months at an academic health sciences centre. Preference will be given to applicants whose host institution can confirm that the applicant has been identified for a junior faculty position following successful completion of the fellowship.

Full applications must be either hand-delivered or courier stamped no later than Friday, October 1, 2010 by 12:00 p.m. EST. Please visit http://www.allergen-nce.ca/Training_and_Careers/Funding_and_Training_Opportunities.html

AllerGen Travel Awards Report

The following students are recent travel award recipients that have attended or will be attending major national and international conferences thanks to the partnered support from this AllerGen program.

Canadian Respiratory Conference (April 2010, Halifax, NS)

Annick Des Cormiers, MSc, Centre de recherche de l'Institut universitaire de cardiologie et de pneumologie de Québec, Supervisor, Dr. Louis-Philippe Boulet

Joanne Milot, Research Nurse, Centre de recherche de l'Institut universitaire de cardiologie et de pneumologie de Québec, Supervisor, Dr. Louis-Philippe Boulet

Philippe Prince, Research Assistant, Centre de recherche de l'Institut universitaire de cardiologie et de pneumologie de Québec, Supervisor, Dr. Louis-Philippe Boulet

ICRH Young Investigator Forum (May 2010, Vancouver, BC)

Ilan Asher, PDF, McMaster University, Supervisor, Dr. Judah Denburg

Anaphylaxis Canada Spring Conference (May 2010 - Toronto, ON)

Tahira Batool, PGY 2 Internal Medicine, Queen's University

Bonnie Chow, MA, McMaster University, Supervisor, Dr. Susan Elliott

Tracy Pitt, Fellow-in-Training, Winnipeg Children's Hospital, Supervisor, Dr. Allan Becker

Charis-Patricia Segeritz, MSc, University of British Columbia, Supervisor, Dr. Tobias Kollmann

American Thoracic Society International Conference (May 2010, New Orleans, LA)

Meghan Brown, MSc, University of Toronto, Supervisor, Dr. Padmaja Subbarao

Gurpreet Singhera, PhD, James Hogg iCapture Centre, Supervisor, Dr. Delbert Dorscheid

Canadian Pediatric Society Annual Conference (June 2010, Vancouver, BC)

Kristin Stawiarski, Undergraduate, McMaster University, Supervisor, Dr. Susan Waserman

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2010 AllerGen *Innovation from Cell to Society*⁵ Conference Scrapbook



Front row from left to right: **Rishma Chooniedass**, Research Coordinator, University of Manitoba; **Jing Luo**, Environment Research Assistant, University of Manitoba; **Pratibha Dwarkanath**, Research Fellow, St. John's Research Institute; **Anita Kozyrskyj**, Research Chair, University of Alberta; **Clare Ramsey**, Assistant Professor, University of Manitoba; **Tracy Pitt**, Pediatric Allergy Fellow, University of Manitoba; **Jennifer Protudjer**, President, AllerGen Students and New Professionals Network; **Brenda Gerwing**, Programme C Coordinator, AllerGen

Middle row: **K. Srinivasan**, Vice Dean, St John's Research Institute; **Henry Huang**, Research Assistant, University of Manitoba; **Mathieu Cooney**, Student Research Assistant, University of Manitoba

Back Row: **Douglas Houlbrook**, Research Nurse, University of Manitoba; **George D'Souza**, Associate Dean, St. John's Medical College; **Allan Becker**, Co-Leader Programme C, AllerGen; **Mark Loewen**, Post-doctor Fellow, University of Manitoba; **Sylvan John Rego**, Professor and Head of Pediatrics, St. John's Medical College Hospital



From left to right: **Pia Reece**, **Kristin Weisse**, **Kendra Barrick**, **Kathleen Fraser**, **Christian Bruenahl**, **Caitlin Jago**



From left to right: **Daniela Loeffler**, **Loubna Akhbir**, **Scott Brown**, **Sarah Kam**, **Jasemine Yang**

Food Allergy Awareness Month Established

Anaphylaxis Canada applauds a motion by the Canadian Parliament recognizing May as Food Allergy Awareness Month. The Government of Canada will be commemorating the occasion by promoting a number of initiatives intended to support the 1.3 million Canadians who live with food allergies. This is the first year that a month has been designated for food allergy awareness in Canada.

This will hereafter be a permanently recognized occasion in Canada, helping to raise national awareness of allergic disease.

AllerGen NCE Inc.

Scientific Director and CEO: **Dr. Judah A. Denburg**, MD, FRCP(C)
 Managing Director and COO: **Diana Royce**, EdD

All newsletter enquiries and comments should be sent to:
 Jordan Moore, Manager, Communications (905) 525-9140 ext. 26641



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Update on AllerGen's *Canadian Allergy and Immune Diseases Advanced Training Initiative (CAIDATI)* Awards

CAIDATI is intended to contribute to a significant increase in Canada's research capacity in allergy, asthma, anaphylaxis and related immune/inflammatory processes through joint funding of new studentships in partnership with other (*i.e.*, non-AllerGen-supported) programmes across Canada.

AllerGen launched its second CAIDATI call in December 2009. The deadline for studentship applications was March 1, 2010. AllerGen studentships will fund students to undertake research directly aligned with AllerGen's research mandate priority areas.

On March 1, 2010, a total of 26 applications were received:

PDF:	6
PhD:	7
MSc:	11
Summer MD:	1
Summer Undergraduate:	1

These applications will be adjudicated by the Advanced Education and Training Opportunities Advisory Committee (AETOAC) on June 20–21, 2010. The results of this competition will be made public early August 2010.