

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT



The current ALLSA executive has been in office for almost 18 months and has been working tirelessly behind the scenes to execute the Society's core activities: education, research and advocacy.

### EDUCATION

The ALLSA journal *Current Allergy & Clinical Immunology* remains one of the flagship activities of the soci-

ety and continues to generate a critical income stream for ALLSA – credit needs to go again to the editors (Professors Weinberg and Zar), the Production Editor (Anne Hahn), ALLSA's Executive Secretary (Ruwayda Adams), the guest editors and all the authors for their excellent contributions. I also wish to express the society's appreciation to the pharmaceutical industry for their ongoing support of the journal.

The *Third Allergy Update* was held in Johannesburg (21-22 May 2005) – the first time in Gauteng! It was well attended and a number of key allergy topics were discussed. My sincere thanks to Andrew Halkas and Ruwayda Adams for handling the logistics, and to the speakers and delegates for their participation.

The *Diploma in Allergology* examination is into its third year. To date 13 diplomates have graduated. Ahmed Manjra (who wrote the examination in 2003) is the first recipient of the Eugene Weinberg gold medal for the Diploma in Allergology. Interest in the Diploma remains high locally and internationally. At a recent Board Meeting of The World Allergy Organisation (WAO), in San Antonio, USA, President-elect Dr Mike Kaliner lauded ALLSA for its role in establishing the Diploma in Allergology examination. He urged WAO to assist and encourage other countries (where allergology is still not recognised as a discipline) to establish similar programmes as a strategy for promoting 'good allergy practice'.

On behalf of the WAO, it is my great privilege and pleasure to invite you to attend the *19th World Allergy Congress* (formerly 'International Congress of Allergology and Clinical Immunology [ICACI]) to be held on 26 June - 1 July 2005 in Munich, Bavaria, Germany. This congress which is a combined effort of the WAO, the European Academy of Allergology and Clinical Immunology (EAACI) and the German Society of Allergy and Clinical Immunology (DGAI) will be a truly global event. They have chosen the motto '*Allergy in a Changing World*' to reflect the dynamics with which allergic diseases have increased worldwide and reached countries where some decades ago these diseases were rather rare. The motto also focuses on the role of environmental influences contributing to the still increasing prevalence of allergic diseases. Along with the extensive scientific agenda, a carefully planned social programme for both delegates and accompanying persons will give you plenty of opportunities to savour the flair of the 850-year-old city of Munich surrounded by beautiful lakes, mountains and many cultural treasures from the distant past to the present. The organising committee is looking forward to welcoming you to Munich and promise to do their best in combining 'German precision' with 'Bavarian *Gemütlichkeit*'.

The *2005 ALLSA Congress* will be held in Durban, 26-28 August. The theme of the congress is '*Advances in Asthma and Food Allergy*'. The meeting is co-sponsored by the American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology. An exciting scientific and social programme has been planned. International speakers include: Prof Paul O'Byrne (Canada), Prof Sami Bahna (USA), Dr Emil Bardana Jr (USA), Dr Bob Lanier (USA) and Prof Fernando Martinez (USA). I look forward to seeing many ALLSA members at the ALLSA congress 2005 – so please register soon.

ALLSA, the National Asthma Education Programme (NAEP) and the SA Thoracic Society jointly organised a campaign this year to publicise the *8th World Asthma Day* (3 May 2005). This year's theme was '*The Unmet Needs of Asthma*'. A significant proportion of the estimated 300 million people with asthma receive inadequate treatment resulting in unnecessary burden on individuals, families and economies. These include: limited physical activity, sleepless nights, missed days at work/school, emergency visits, hospitalisation and deaths. Most problems regarding 'unmet needs' are similar and are applicable to most regions worldwide. Because the problem is widespread and serious, the Global Initiative In Asthma (GINA) has called for increased efforts to recognise and address 'unmet needs' in asthma care and thereby reduce the burden of the disease. Activities to promote World Asthma Day in South Africa included media briefings, radio and television interviews, press releases and lectures to primary health care workers. The campaign was again very successful and much credit should go to Dr Mike Levin, Dr Shirani Naidoo, Prof Heather Zar, Dr Robin Green, Dr Luke Krige, Dr Humphrey Lewis, Dr Caron Jack and many other colleagues who participated in the various activities. Thanks to Cipla-Medpro and MSD as well for their support in publicising World Asthma Day.

*World Allergy Day 2005*, an initiative of the WAO – to which ALLSA is affiliated, is scheduled for *Friday, July 8 2005*. This year the focus is on the Prevention of Allergies and Allergic Asthma, a major WAO and World Health Organisation project. The main aims of World Allergy Day 2005 are to:

- Increase awareness of allergies
- Educate health professionals, patients and the public
- Review current knowledge about prevention of sensitisation in susceptible individuals
- Provide guidelines on prevention of allergic disease in individuals who are already sensitised to allergens.

Dr Andrew Halkas, ALLSA Excom Member, has been tasked with publicising World Allergy Day 2005 for the society. For further information, access World Allergy Day materials on the WAO website at: [www.worldallergy.org/wad2005](http://www.worldallergy.org/wad2005) or contact Andrew Halkas by email at: [halkas@yebo.co.za](mailto:halkas@yebo.co.za) – I urge many ALLSA members to be involved in this important endeavour.

### RESEARCH

Research in the field of allergology remains a priority for ALLSA. The Research Committee under the leadership of Prof Mohammed Jeebhay has produced a comprehensive report of the many projects that the society has supported over the past 15 years – over R1 million

has been awarded for almost 50 projects. These awards have been made possible through generous grants from UCB Pharma (SA) and Glaxo Smith Kline (GSK). The awards for 2005 have already been advertised (closing date for applications was 31 May 2005).

### ADVOCACY/POLICY

Andrew Halkas is the portfolio leader of this committee. He has represented the society on several issues including Prescribed Minimum Benefits (PBM) for patients and Practice Parameters. Most recently, Andrew successfully negotiated with the National Department of Health (NDOH) on the need for a PMB paediatric asthma algorithm (until then the NDOH were planning an algorithm for adult asthma only). Harris Steinman continues to represent ALLSA at meetings of the Food Legislation and Advisory Group (FLAG), an NGO which liaises closely with the NDOH. The current focus of FLAG is on food labelling issues and genetically modified foods.

### MEMBERSHIP SERVICES

For the past 6 months, ALLSA has been actively updating member details including e-mail addresses. This is to improve communication with its members and reduce mailing costs.

Paid-up ALLSA members already receive a complimentary copy of *Allergy & Clinical Immunology International*,

official journal of the WAO. Recently, WAO and the journal's publishers Hogrefe & Huber kindly offered a complimentary subscription to a select number of members of WAO member societies in developing countries. The online journal will improve functionality of the journal, provide access to both current and back issues and be a useful and interesting resource. Feedback about the journal is encouraged via the journal's website at : [www.acii.net](http://www.acii.net). WAO now also disseminates a monthly newsletter *WAO News and Notes* electronically to ALLSA members who have provided e-mail addresses. The WAO newsletter is concise, informative and contains reviews of medical journals and books. It also includes a spotlight section for WAO member societies and details current/future WAO activities.

ALLSA's website ([www.allergysa.org](http://www.allergysa.org)) continues to attract a great deal of interest worldwide (up to 200 000 hits per month). ALLSA has engaged the services of Daniel Braude since February 2005 to update the website on an ongoing basis. Selected articles from ALLSA's journal *Current Allergy & Clinical Immunology*, can also be accessed from the website.

**Prof. Cas Motala**  
Chairman

## NEWS



# WORLD ALLERGY DAY



The World Allergy Organisation (WAO) is the leading global resource and advocate in the field of allergy, advancing excellence in clinical care, education, research and training through a worldwide alliance of allergy and clinical immunology societies including ALLSA.

Allergic diseases affect 22% of the world's population.

The worldwide annual cost of allergic rhinitis alone, including drugs, consultations and time off work is in excess of US\$20 billion per year and the cost of allergy drugs alone, worldwide, is estimated to be US\$8 billion.

Allergic diseases affect millions of children around the world, and are increasing in severity.

Accurate diagnosis can lead to correct treatment and improved quality of life for sufferers.

Those who suffer from allergies can see much improvement in their quality of life through effective educational programs that teach about the proper care of allergies.

Allergen avoidance in infants at high risk of allergy (those whose parents or siblings have allergic disease) may be of benefit, e.g. avoidance of dust mites and pets during the first year of life.

Avoidance of parental smoking and exposure to environmental tobacco smoke during early childhood can prevent the aggravation of allergies and asthma.

Occupational exposure to allergens is avoidable.

All citizens within the community should become more aware of allergies and their management and treatment.

For further information regarding World Allergy Day activities in your area consult the ALLSA website, [www.allergysa.org](http://www.allergysa.org).