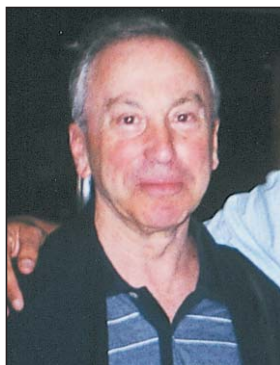


## EDITORIAL

### 'DARE TO CARE' CONGRESS – A UNIQUE EVENT



It is a privilege to present this edition of *Current Allergy & Clinical Immunology* produced to coincide with this year's combined congress. This journal edition and the congress are unique as this is the first time that the Allergy Society of South Africa, the South African Thoracic Society and the Critical Care Society of Southern Africa have come together to hold a combined congress. The name of this year's congress is 'Dare to Care' which is the theme the three societies have chosen as a common denominator for the many topics and common areas to be discussed. The coming together of the three societies has allowed for a most diverse and extensive programme, with more than 70 sessions to choose from, many distinguished local and international faculty and more than 120 original research presentations. The sessions cover a wide range of topics and include formal talks, lunch time discussions, case presentations, oral and poster original research presentations and industry-sponsored symposia.

This edition of the journal contains the abstracts of all the original research presentations as well as a number of cutting edge review papers that will be presented during sessions at the congress. Prof. Cas Motala reviews the contribution of food hypersensitivity to atopic dermatitis including a very useful approach to diagnosis and management. Dr Mohamed Jeebhay and colleagues in a very interesting local study address the importance of indoor and outdoor mite exposure in the development of work-related allergic symptoms in workers employed on grape farms; they report the outdoor spider mite to be the most important mite responsible for occupational asthma symptoms in this population. Prof. Lars Jacobsen, one of the invited

overseas faculty, discusses preventive aspects of specific immunotherapy as a treatment for allergic diseases including asthma and allergic rhinitis. Dr George du Toit provides a comprehensive update on chronic urticaria with excellent photographs to show the manifestations of this poorly understood condition. Dr André van Niekerk and Prof. Suzanne Delpont, in a clinically relevant and timely review, discuss corticosteroid therapy for acute asthma; the evidence for the efficacy of oral compared with inhaled corticosteroids for acute asthma attacks is reviewed. These articles reflect part of what the congress will offer and are an indication of the varied and stimulating congress programme that awaits delegates.

Organising a conference such as this requires careful planning and the balancing of the different interests of the members of the three societies. Although the societies have distinct differences, we believe this congress also reflects many shared interests and values, allowing for a broader and more stimulating experience. The opportunity to hold a joint congress created exciting possibilities for the scope of the scientific programme, a unique chance to incorporate presentations from many overseas and local faculty into the sessions and the chance to interact with colleagues from different disciplines. The programme should offer much to those attending. It was a pleasure to work with the congress organising committee and the ALLSA scientific committee. Sally Elliott and her team have done a superb job in organising this congress and we are extremely grateful to them. The current economic climate has made organising a congress of this scale increasingly difficult and we are grateful for the considerable support from the pharmaceutical and other companies, many of whom have a long tradition of support of the journal and of ALLSA.

Finally, we welcome you to Cape Town and to the new International Convention Centre. We hope that each delegate and reader of the journal will benefit from the articles and abstracts contained in this edition. Wishing you a wonderful stay in this special city and a very stimulating and enjoyable time at this conference!

**Heather J Zar**, *Congress Co-chair and Editor*

**Eugene G Weinberg**, *Editor*