

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT



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

EDUCATION

ALLSA places great importance on allergy education and training. The Society feels strongly about promotion of allergy during the undergraduate years and at postgraduate level. Much progress has been made in this regard through various ALLSA initiatives including the journal *Current Allergy & Clinical Immunology*, CME lectures, workshops, updates, the Diploma in Allergology examination, congresses, and the website (www.allergysa.org). One of the highlights in 2004 was the hugely successful Kidz 'n All congress which was held jointly with the South African Paediatric Association in Cape Town. The scientific programme was excellent and the social activities spectacular. Our two international guest speakers Professors Susan Prescott and Ronald Dahl, as well as local experts, delivered state-of-the-art lectures in allergy and immunology. Next year's ALLSA congress to be held in Durban (26-28 August 2005) promises to be innovative and exciting – watch this space.

On a pleasant note, I am delighted to hear that ALLSA Regional Meetings in Gauteng have been revived, the latest meeting was held on 9 October 2004 (organised by André van Niekerk, ALLSA executive member Gauteng, co-sponsored by Novartis and Labspec, accredited for 6 CPD points and 20 Diploma in Allergology log book points). More good news – MSD have kindly offered to sponsor 3 ALLSA Regional Meetings in Gauteng in 2005. Well done, Gauteng! I wish to urge ALLSA members in other regions as well to mobilise and organise themselves wherever they may be to follow Gauteng's example. We have to be active (and pro-active) in order to retain the profile and interest in allergy which exists on the ground. The Society can only grow and develop if its constituency is representative and national in every sense of the word. A further positive development is establishment of links with the Botswana Medical Association - André van Niekerk has been invited to present a lecture 'The Allergic March' and to conduct a workshop at their annual meeting on 24 October 2004. This is a most welcome development and hopefully will enable our society to grow and make a pivotal contribution in the discipline of allergy in the subcontinent of Africa. ALLSA is also to co-sponsor a meeting at the National Institute of Occupational Health in Johannesburg. The Webster Memorial Day is held annually in honour of the late Worf Ian Webster on 24 November. Mohammed Jebbhay and Andreas Lopata will represent ALLSA at this meeting.

ALLSA has well-established international links, specifically with the World Allergy Organization (WAO) and the European Academy of Allergology and Clinical Immunology (EAACI). ALLSA has promoted WAO's Global Resources in Allergy (GLORIA) programmes - Allergic Rhinconjunctivitis (2001) and Immunotherapy

(2004). Our society has collaborated with EAACI and our members attend their annual meetings on a regular basis. ALLSA also fully supports EAACI's 'Early Allergy Diagnosis Campaign' (launched in 2003). See report below for more details about this important and exciting initiative by the Paediatric Assembly of EAACI.

RESEARCH

ALLSA remains committed to supporting and commissioning clinical and bench research in allergy which is locally relevant. Since ALLSA's inception (1988) over R900 000 has been awarded for some 45 research projects. The recipients of the ALLSA Research awards for 2004 are:

- *Ms Roslynn Baatjies*
Project: 'Occupational allergy and asthma among bakery workers in the Western Cape of South Africa'.
- *Ms Heidi Esther Marie Smuts*
Project: 'Prevalence and molecular epidemiology of human metapneumovirus in infants and young children with acute lower airways obstruction'.
- *Dr Michael Eliad Levin*
Project: 'Comparison of the administration of methacholine by hand-held nebulisers and by dosimeter to assess bronchial hyper-responsiveness in school children aged 15 to 17 years'.

The Research Committee is very active and investigating creative ways to attract junior researchers in our discipline.

ADVOCACY

Harris Steinman continues to represent ALLSA at the Food Legislation Advisory Group (FLAG) meetings. Andrew Halkas, ALLSA executive member and the Chair of the Advocacy/Policy Committee, is currently investigating the possibility of increasing the value of skin-prick testing 0220 from 1.9 (R10.90) units to 3.8 or 4 (R22.40). Motivation for a change in codes is a long and arduous process; we may see some benefit in 2006. This code, if modified, will have a major beneficial effect on daily allergy practice.

In conclusion, I wish to once again thank members of the industry for their unqualified support of our society – not only at Congress time, but throughout the years. I also wish to express my appreciation to the Executive Committee of the Society for their unselfish and enthusiastic contribution to the affairs of ALLSA. I am confident that they will continue to nurture the Society as we continue our efforts in this clinical discipline. I look forward to the next few years with eager anticipation and with much optimism. Finally, I wish all our members and friends well over the holiday season.

Cas Motala

Chairman