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WISC 2012



World Allergy Organization begins 2nd WAO International Scientific Conference (WISC 2012) in Hyderabad, India

HYDERABAD, INDIA – The World Allergy Organization (WAO) officially commences the 2nd WAO International Scientific Conference (WISC 2012) in Hyderabad, India on 6 December, held under the patronage of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India. WISC 2012 will present data on the marked global increase of allergic diseases, highlighting allergies that are becoming more severe and complex, resulting in a heavier burden on children and young adults. An international faculty of 90 key opinion leaders in the field of allergy will provide this data through a multidisciplinary forum for a wide range of health care professional attendees.

Allergic diseases and asthma, like other non-communicable diseases, are escalating to epidemic proportions worldwide and up to 30-40% of the world's population are now affected by some form of allergy. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates 300 million individuals have asthma worldwide, a figure that could increase to 400 million by 2025 if trends continue. [1] Prevalence of asthma in Asia alone has increased from 0.8 to 29.1%, and allergic rhinitis 5 to 45%.

The theme of WISC 2012, "*Severe Allergies, Severe Asthma: New Strategies for Treatment and Prevention,*" was developed to address the challenge of the worldwide increase in allergic diseases and asthma, particularly in low and middle income countries. This upsurge in the prevalence of allergies is observed as societies become more affluent and urbanized. An increase in environmental risk factors like outdoor and indoor pollution combined with reduced biodiversity also contributes to this rise in prevalence.

"Allergy, even as it relates to asthma, is often trivialized, and clinical services to help patients with such diseases are limited and lacking in cost-effective solutions," said Professor Ruby Pawankar, Conference President and President of the World Allergy Organization. "WISC 2012 strives to provide education and training for its healthcare professional attendees through recognition of allergic diseases as a global public health problem and providing information towards prevention and optimal treatment."

WISC 2012 will gather nearly 1,500 delegates from around the world. As the discipline of allergy spans various specialties, the scientific program will offer a wide range of courses and subjects: 24 postgraduate courses, 5 plenary sessions, 16 parallel symposia, 6 keynote lectures, 3 poster sessions as well as a half-day program on "Highlights in Immunotherapy," a General Practitioner Program, and a Patient and Public Forum, all delivered by a faculty of 90 internationally known experts. Two-hundred fifty-four abstracts were accepted from clinicians around the world, 29 of those received an "Outstanding Abstract Award," and travel grants have been awarded to 5 junior clinicians.

The Opening Ceremony of the WISC 2012 will take place on Thursday, 6 December from 18:00 to 19:30 in the HICC, Hall 3. Shri Ghulam Nabi Azad, Honorable Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare, will be the Chief Guest and inaugurate the conference, and Shri Kiran Kumar Reddy, Honorable Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, will preside over the function.

Members of the media receive complementary full-access registration to the Conference. For more information, visit www.worldallergy.org/wisc2012/press/index.php.

[1] Pawankar R, Canonica GW, Holgate ST, Lockey RF eds. *WAO White Book on Allergy* (Milwaukee: World Allergy Organization), 2011. http://www.worldallergy.org/definingthespecialty/white_book.php

About the World Allergy Organization

The *World Allergy Organization (WAO)* is an international alliance of 89 regional and national allergy, asthma and immunology societies. Through collaboration with its Member Societies, WAO provides a wide range of educational and outreach programs, symposia and lectureships to allergists/immunologists around the world and conducts initiatives related to clinical practice, service provision, and physical training in order to better understand and address the challenges facing allergists/immunologists worldwide. For more information, visit www.worldallergy.org.

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