

ANNOUNCEMENT

19 March 2014

Media Contact: Samantha Machart
smachart@worldallergy.org
+1 414 276 1791

World Allergy Week 2014 will highlight anaphylaxis and call for education, preparedness, and prevention

World Allergy Organization stresses importance of anaphylaxis action plans

Milwaukee – The World Allergy Organization (WAO) will host World Allergy Week from 7-13 April, 2014, together with its 95 national Member Societies, to address the topic of “Anaphylaxis – When Allergies Can Be Severe and Fatal,” and call for education, preparation, and resources in the treatment and prevention of anaphylaxis.

Anaphylaxis is a serious allergic reaction that has a sudden onset within minutes to hours after exposure to a food, drug, or insect sting, which are the most common triggers. It involves more than one body organ system. The symptoms, which differ from one episode to another, can include skin and mucous symptoms, breathing or respiratory problems, cardiovascular symptoms, abdominal problems, and other generalized symptoms. If not treated properly, anaphylaxis can lead to death.^{1,2}

According to Lanny Rosenwasser, President of the World Allergy Organization, anaphylaxis does not have to be fatal. “Knowing how to respond when anaphylaxis occurs is critical, as with any emergency response procedures. Everyone should be aware of the possible symptoms, how to position the person, and how to administer adrenaline. Any individuals with allergen hypersensitivity should consult regularly with their allergists about possible risk of anaphylaxis and develop actions plans for anaphylaxis episodes and have epinephrine auto-injectors (adrenaline) with them at all times. Those at risk of severe or fatal anaphylaxis because of asthma, coronary artery disease, or blood pressure problems, should discuss the possible triggers of anaphylaxis with their physicians as well as lifestyle approaches to reduce the risk of anaphylaxis.” WAO has compiled a list of links to anaphylaxis patient advocacy organizations as well as online resources for healthcare professionals at: www.worldallergyweek.org.

“To increase awareness of anaphylaxis during World Allergy Week 2014, many of the national WAO Member Societies will organize local events and programs around anaphylaxis that specifically affect their communities. Everyone with an interest in anaphylaxis can participate by contacting their national allergy societies and anaphylaxis advocacy groups,” said Professor Motohiro Ebisawa, Chair of the Communications Committee. WAO will continually post activities and resources on anaphylaxis through World Allergy Week at: www.worldallergyweek.org.

1. Simons FER, Ardusso LRF, Bilo MB, El-Gamal Y, Ledford DK et al. World Allergy Organization Guidelines for the Assessment and Management of Anaphylaxis. *World Allergy Organization Journal* 2011; 4:13-17. <http://www.waojournal.org/content/pdf/1939-4551-4-2-13.pdf>

2. Lockey RF, Kemp SF, Lieberman PL, and Sheikh A. “Anaphylaxis”, Section 2.5 in *WAO White Book on Allergy Update 2013*, Editors: R Pawankar, GW Canonica, ST Holgate, RF Lockey, M Blaiss. (World Allergy Organization, 2013), pp 48-53. http://www.worldallergy.org/definingthespecialty/white_book.php

About the World Allergy Organization

The World Allergy Organization (WAO) is an international alliance of 92 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 and clinical 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 allergy and immunology professionals worldwide. For more information, visit www.worldallergy.org.

###