



March 2009

AIRWAYS

Official Newsletter for AllerGen's Highly Qualified Personnel

NEWS

Trainee Symposium

- AllerGen's Fourth Annual Trainee Symposium 2009 is approaching! This year's conference, *Becoming Future Leaders: Challenges and Successes* is being held on **May 3-5**, at the Delta Montreal, Quebec.

The preliminary program is available on AllerGen's website www.allergen-nce.ca . You can register simply by sending an email to Melissa Shuker, AllerGen Strategic Initiatives Coordinator, at shuker@mcmaster.ca .

In addition, AllerGen is making available a half-day "Clinical Workshop for Non-clinicians" on **Wednesday May 6**, immediately following the Trainee Symposium. This workshop will focus on the diagnosis and treatment of asthma and allergy, including hands on demonstrations. If you are interested in participating, please send an email to shuker@mcmaster.ca to register. An agenda for the workshop will be posted shortly at www.allergen-nce.ca .

ASNPN Elections

- The AllerGen Students and New Professionals Network (ASPSN) is calling for nominations (either self or peer) for all the ASNPN executive positions. You can view detailed descriptions of the available positions at www.allergen-nce.ca , under "training and careers". The next election will take place on the last day of the Trainee Symposium in Montreal.

ASNPN Appointments

- We would like to officially welcome David Prefontaine, PhD student from McGill University, who has assumed the position of ASNPN Regional Director for Quebec/Atlantic until the next ASNPN election.

ALLERGEN'S FOURTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Congratulations to all the trainees who submitted a poster for the 2009 Trainee Poster Awards at AllerGen's Fourth Annual Research Conference in Ottawa on February 15-17, 2009.

The competition provided a valuable opportunity for students to share their research, to exchange ideas and to network with other trainees and researchers, clinicians, policy and decision makers, health care administrators and representatives from business, industry and government.

AllerGen received 25 high calibre abstract submissions. The posters were on display at the conference and viewed by the poster judges and conference attendees. Six trainees (two per AllerGen Research Programme area), who were judged to be the highest scoring candidates presented their abstracts to the conference in the form an oral presentation.

The judges then deliberated and the winners were announced at the Conference Gala Dinner the same night. The winners of this year's Trainee Poster Competition are:

Programme A: Gene-Environment Interactions

Winner: Michelle North, University of Toronto for her poster titled *Inhibition of Arginase 1 attenuates Methacholine Hyperresponsiveness in Murine Models of Allergic Airways Inflammation*

Runner-up: Zoulfia Allakhverdi, University of Montreal for her poster titled *Effector Function in CD34⁺ Hemopoietic Progenitor Cells in Allergic Inflammation*

Programme B: Diagnostics and Therapeutics

Winner: Tillie-Louise Hackett, University of British Columbia for her poster titled *Epithelial-Mesenchymal Transition occurs in undifferentiated basal Bronchial Epithelial Cells in Normal and Asthmatic subjects*

Runner-up: Wojciech Dawicki, Dalhousie University for his poster titled, *Role of Mast Cell Activation in the Influx of Dendritic Cell Subsets into the Lymph Node*

Programme C: Public Health, Ethics, Policy and Society

Winner: Nha Uyen Nguyen-Luu/ Lianne Soller, McGill University for their poster titled *School personnel knowledge regarding EpiPen[®] Administration in Québec*

Runner-up: Moshe Ben Shoshan, McGill University for his poster titled *The Prevalence of Sesame Allergy: A Cross-Canada Study*

Again, “Well done” to all the trainees who participated in this year’s AllerGen Trainee Research Poster Competition. The work that went into these posters demonstrated exceptional, innovative thinking to improve the quality of life for allergic/immune disease sufferers. Each trainee successfully presented research that aligned with AllerGen’s goals of discovering and developing new diagnostic tests, better medications and more effective public policies.

The competition would not have been at all possible without the time, effort and expertise of the adjudicators. Thanks must go to this year’s judges:

Combined judging team for Programme A and B posters:

- **Dr. Mark Larché** Professor, Medicine Clinical Immunology and Allergy McMaster University
- **Dr. Patricia A. Lorenz** Consultant, *Member of the AllerGen Research Management Committee*
- **Dr. Kelly McNaghy** Associate Professor Department of Medical Genetics
Biomedical Research Centre University of British Columbia
- **Dr. Danuta Radzioch** Professor Centre for the Study of Host Resistance Montreal General Hospital *Member of the AllerGen Advanced Education & Training Opportunities Advisory Committee,*
- **Dr. Andrew Sandford** Assistant Professor Department of Medicine The James Hogg iCAPTURE Centre for Cardiovascular and Pulmonary Research University of British Columbia.

Judges for Programme C:

- **Dr. Isabelle Cantin** Chemical Food Safety Policy Analyst Chemical Health Hazard Assessment Division Health Canada/Santé Canada.
- **Dr. Elinor Wilson** President and CEO Assisted Human Reproduction Canada
- **Dr. Guy Banville** Canadian International Development Agency

GENE-ENVIRONMENT WORKSHOP

Drs. Denise Daley, Tom Hudson, Jeff Brook and Peter Paré and Programme A Research Coordinator Treena MacDonald must be congratulated on a highly productive international Genes and the Environment research workshop. AllerGen's Programme A workshop, Gene and the Environment: *The Genesis of Asthma and Allergy workshop* was held in Vancouver on March 1-3, 2009 and attracted researchers and specialists from around the world.

This workshop enabled sharing of information about birth cohort research protocols and available data and samples that can be shared and compared. There was also the opportunity for methodological innovations to be shared to facilitate interaction between European and North American groups involved in large studies on asthma and allergy phenotypes. A workshop report will be available on the AllerGen website in the coming months.

Numerous collaborations and partnerships were initiated and innovative projects such as the AllerGen Genapha web resource were presented. The Genapha website allows for easy dissemination of research results to the research community and with the aid of graphical animations, the Genapha website engages the public in issues such as the genetics of asthma/allergy and pharmacogenetics.

The website provides an interactive forum for researchers to test genetic pathways with the data available from numerous AllerGen funded research project. The general public can utilize the site to learn from animated videos and educational tools to greater understand drug responses and the asthma model. Please visit <http://genapha.icapture.ubc.ca/> for more information.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Anaphylaxis Canada Conference, April 4, 2009, Edmonton, Alberta. AllerGen is offering **four free admissions** and **half travel support**. For more information please visit <http://www.anaphylaxis.ca/content/whatsnew/AlbertaConference.asp>
- Canadian Respiratory Conference, April 23 – 25, 2009, Toronto, http://www.lung.ca/crc/home-accueil_e.php
- World Asthma Day, May 5, 2009, <http://www.ginasthma.com/WADIndex.asp>

- American Thoracic Society International Conference, May 15-20, 2009, San Diego, California, <http://www.thoracic.org/ternational>
- McMaster Innovation Showcase, June 18-19, 2009, McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario <http://milo.mcmaster.ca/showcase>
- CSACI Annual Meeting, October 2009, Halifax which includes activities for trainees (National Residency Educational Program), <http://www.csaci.ca/index.php?page=2>

*You are receiving this e-mail because of your involvement as an AllerGen Trainee. We will be sending out short e-mail updates like this throughout the year. If you want to remove yourself from this mailing list, please send an e-mail to <ielati@mcmaster.ca> with the following command in the subject line of your email message: **Remove***