

Editorial

Themes in Allergy

**J. Bousquet, T. Bieber, W. Fokkens,
M. Humbert, M. Kowalski,
B. Niggemann, H-U. Simon**

Professor Jean Bousquet
Clinique des Maladies Respiratoires
Hôpital Arnaud de Villeneuve
Centre Hospitalier Universitaire
34295 Montpellier Cedex 5
France

Accepted for publication 18 November 2005

Allergic diseases are among the major diseases of the world and it is estimated that an estimated 500 million people suffer from allergic diseases. Chronic diseases including allergies are present in all countries and, in developing countries their prevalence is increasing faster than in developed countries (1, 2). They cause a huge burden to society as they may be severe (3). Even allergic diseases which are not considered to be severe, such as allergic rhinitis, impair the social and professional lives of the patients or their caregivers. Moreover, patients with allergic diseases have reduced learning capabilities and impaired school performance. Finally, the economic impact of allergic diseases is substantial.

Allergic diseases result from complex interactions between genes and the environment (4) and co-factors which vary between regions. There is a large diversity of allergic diseases which may involve all organs of the body. They affect all ages from infancy to elderly. Allergic diseases involve several well known mechanisms. Since the discovery that pollens can cause allergic diseases by Charles Blackley in the 1860's, the number of allergenic substances which have been identified has expanded enormously. Allergens originate from a wide range of animals, insects, plants, fungi or are small molecular weight chemicals. It is therefore impossible to envisage any allergic disease in a simple way and we should take into account their diversity which is reflected by the papers published in our Journal (5–19). Our Journal has tried to be at the forefront of reporting the European Research in Allergy and started a new series on the European Union Forum (20–23). We also attempted to publish the latest developments concerning the Education of Allergy in Europe (24).

However, it appeared to the Editorial Board of Allergy that that some papers should be grouped and published in the same issue as a "Theme" concerning the mechanisms, epidemiology, risk factors, prevention, diagnosis, control, or pharmacoeconomics of allergic diseases.

We are delighted to announce that the format of Allergy, the Official Organ of the European Academy of Allergy and Clinical Immunology, will take into account the diversity of allergic diseases by introducing in some issues a specific Theme. This will include one or two review papers with 3 to 5 original papers which have been submitted to the Journal.

The first Theme is devoted to the immune mechanisms of the IgE mediated allergic reaction. This theme was selected since it is the basis of any allergic disease. It is also a tribute to Prof Gunnar Johansson who has pioneered the field by discovering IgE and who was the very successful Editor-in-Chief of our Journal for more than 10 years (25–28). One of the papers the current Theme is co-authored by Gunnar Johansson. We are also delighted that the first paper has been written by Prof Sergio Romagnani. Sergio has been one of the most prolific and successful scientists of any medical field and has been leading allergy for the past 20 years. The other papers deal with T cells in asthma, IgE regulation, Toll-like receptors and immunomodulation. The papers of the present Theme come from 8 countries showing the widespread coverage of our journal, and it is of importance to mention that authors from Central European countries increasingly contribute to the field.

We hope that the readers of Allergy will be interested in this new format of our journal and we thank all of those who will contribute to make the Themes of Allergy a success.

References

1. Law M, Morris JK, Wald N, Luczynska C, Burney P. Changes in atopy over a quarter of a century, based on cross sectional data at three time periods. *Bmj* 2005;**330**:1187–8.
2. Von Hertzen LC, Haahtela T. Asthma and atopy - the price of affluence? *Allergy* 2004;**59**:124–37.
3. Bousquet J, Bousquet PJ, Godard P, Daures JP. The public health implications of asthma. *Bull World Health Organ* 2005;**83**:548–54.
4. Cookson W, Moffatt M. Making sense of asthma genes. *N Engl J Med* 2004;**351**:1794–6.
5. ARIA in the pharmacy: management of allergic rhinitis symptoms in the pharmacy. *Allergic rhinitis and its impact on asthma*. *Allergy* 2004;**59**:373–87.
6. Bousquet J, Jacot W, Yssel H, Vignola AM, Humbert M. Epigenetic inheritance of fetal genes in allergic asthma. *Allergy* 2004;**59**:138–47.
7. Novak N, Allam JP, Betten H, Haberstock J, Bieber T. The role of antigen presenting cells at distinct anatomic sites: they accelerate and they slow down allergies. *Allergy* 2004;**59**:5–14.
8. Fokkens W, Lund V, Bachert C, Clement P, Hellings P, Holmstrom M et al. EAACI position paper on rhinosinusitis and nasal polyps executive summary. *Allergy* 2005;**60**:583–601.
9. Humbert M, Beasley R, Ayres J, Slavin R, Hebert J, Bousquet J et al. Benefits of omalizumab as add-on therapy in patients with severe persistent asthma who are inadequately controlled despite best available therapy (GINA 2002 step 4 treatment): INNOVATE. *Allergy* 2005;**60**:309–16.
10. Simon D, Braathen LR, Simon HU. Eosinophils and atopic dermatitis. *Allergy* 2004;**59**:561–70.
11. Straumann A, Simon HU. The physiological and pathophysiological roles of eosinophils in the gastrointestinal tract. *Allergy* 2004;**59**:15–25.
12. Kowalski ML, Ptasińska A, Jedrzejczak M, Bienkiewicz B, Cieslak M, Grzegorzczak J et al. Aspirin-triggered 15-HETE generation in peripheral blood leukocytes is a specific and sensitive Aspirin-Sensitive Patients Identification Test (ASPITest). *Allergy* 2005;**60**:1139–45.
13. Niggemann B. Role of oral food challenges in the diagnostic work-up of food allergy in atopic eczema dermatitis syndrome. *Allergy* 2004;**59**(Suppl. 78):32–4.
14. Bindsvlev-Jensen C, Ballmer-Weber BK, Bengtsson U, Blanco C, Ebner C, Hourihane J et al. Standardization of food challenges in patients with immediate reactions to foods—position paper from the European Academy of Allergology and Clinical Immunology. *Allergy* 2004;**59**:690–7.
15. Passalacqua G, Canonica GW. Sublingual or injection immunotherapy: the final answer? *Allergy* 2004;**59**:37–8.
16. Wickman M. When allergies complicate allergies. *Allergy* 2005;**60**(Suppl. 79):14–8.
17. Mills EN, Valovirta E, Madsen C, Taylor SL, Vieths S, Anklam E et al. Information provision for allergic consumers—where are we going with food allergen labelling? *Allergy* 2004;**59**:1262–8.
18. van den Akker-van Marle ME, Bruil J, Detmar SB. Evaluation of cost of disease: Assessing the burden to society of asthma in children in the European Union. *Allergy* 2005;**60**:140–9.
19. Wilson DR, Torres LI, Durham SR. Sublingual immunotherapy for allergic rhinitis. *Allergy* 2005;**60**:4–12.
20. Bousquet J, Ansotegui IJ, Ree Rv R, Burney PG, Zuberbier T, Cauwenberge Pv P. European Union meets the challenge of the growing importance of allergy and asthma in Europe. *Allergy* 2004;**59**:1–4.
21. van Ree R. The CREATE project: EU support for the improvement of allergen standardization in Europe. *Allergy* 2004;**59**:571–4.
22. Cauwenberge P, Watelet JB, Van Zele T, Bousquet J, Burney P, Zuberbier T. Spreading excellence in allergy and asthma: the GA2 LEN (Global Allergy and Asthma European Network) project. *Allergy* 2005;**60**:858–64.
23. Hoffmann-Sommergruber K. The SAFE project: 'plant food allergies: field to table strategies for reducing their incidence in Europe' an EC-funded study. *Allergy* 2005;**60**:436–42.
24. Malling HJ, Gayraud J, Papageorgiu-Saxoni P, Hornung B, Rosado-Pinto J, Del Giacco SG. Objectives of training and specialty training core curriculum in allergology and clinical immunology. *Allergy* 2004;**59**:579–88.
25. Johansson SG. Raised levels of a new immunoglobulin class (IgND) in asthma. *Lancet* 1967;**2**:951–3.
26. Johansson SG, Nopp A, Florvaag E, Lundahl J, Soderstrom T, Guttormsen AB et al. High prevalence of IgE antibodies among blood donors in Sweden and Norway. *Allergy* 2005;**60**:1312–5.
27. Johansson SG, Nopp A, Hage M, Olofsson N, Lundahl J, Wehlin L et al. Passive IgE-sensitization by blood transfusion. *Allergy* 2005;**60**:1192–9.
28. Gevaert P, Holtappels G, Johansson SG, Cuvelier C, Cauwenberge P, Bachert C. Organization of secondary lymphoid tissue and local IgE formation to *Staphylococcus aureus* enterotoxins in nasal polyp tissue. *Allergy* 2005;**60**:71–9.