

Editorial – A clarion call to pediatric allergists

The new image *Pediatric Allergy & Immunology* was unveiled during the annual meeting of the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology (AAAAI) in Washington. It was particularly appropriate that this should occur during the Presidency of Dr. Gary Rachelefsky who is also, of course, a member of the Editorial Board. The American Academy has now had two consecutive Presidents who are pediatricians. While this, of course, is primarily a recognition of each individual's contribution to allergy, I would like to think that it is also a recognition of the unique and important place held by pediatricians involved in allergy and clinical immunology.

Hitherto, the pediatric allergists of Europe have retained their separate identity within the European Society for Pediatric Allergy & Clinical Immunology (ESPACI). However, as we will hear from the President of ESPACI, the first moves have now been made to establish a pediatric section within the European Academy of Allergy & Clinical Immunology (EAACI). I do not think that pediatric allergists should feel any way threatened by this move. A similar arrangement has been in existence within the European Respiratory Society (ERS) for the last eight years. The pediatric section of the Society has been extremely successful and productive and has certainly gained in strength from its association with the adult equivalent body. I would hope and fully expect that this will be the case for ESPACI and, in the not too distant future, there will be a pediatrician as President of EAACI, as has already been the case within the ERS.

It is essential that pediatric allergists and clinical immunologists should have their voice within societies such as AAAAI and EAACI. Otherwise, the future of our discipline will be dictated by people with no insights into the important issues. All too frequently, organisations taking it upon themselves to make judgements on medical issues encompassing pediatrics fail to take account of pediatricians' opin-

ions. Quite frequently, there is but one token pediatrician invited to be involved. This has hitherto been the case for GINA (Global Initiative on Asthma), and the Programme and Organising Committees for the World Asthma Meeting, to name but two recent examples. If we wish to have an influence on future events, then we must stand up and be counted within the major representative organisations for allergy and immunology.

There is no doubt that we can proudly proclaim that our discipline is not only respectable but has an exceedingly high quality of scientific and clinical endeavour. This is very apparent from the extremely high quality of manuscripts now being submitted for publication to *Pediatric Allergy & Immunology*. A browse through any of the world's major journals will confirm the pre-eminence of many scientists in the field of pediatric immunology. Epidemiologists and clinicians studying the evolution of the atopic march have focused with ever more intensity on early life. This has led to a unique worldwide collaboration to generate some of the most exciting data on asthma and allergy (ISAAC – International Study for Asthma & Allergy in Childhood). The message seems even to have got through to the pharmaceutical industry with one company having entered the market with a new product for the treatment of asthma which uniquely will be available for use in children as well as adults from first registration.

Thus, this Editorial is a clarion call to all pediatric allergists and clinical immunologists to not only continue their excellent work in science and medicine but to also become involved medico-politically at all levels, nationally and internationally, to ensure that our patients' rights and requirements are represented to maximum advantage.

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