

Allergy, Asthma and Immunology Highlights at ATS 2013

A broad range of allergy, asthma, and immunology topics will be addressed at the American Thoracic Society 2013 International Conference, May 17-22, in Philadelphia. Topics covered will include a pro-con debate on controversies in the evaluation and management of CTD-ILD, the role of obesity and adipokines in lung diseases, the role of immune modulation in the pathogenesis of IPF, and the genetics of childhood asthma. Many of these sessions will be of interest to both clinicians and researchers.

Controversies in Connective Tissue Disorders-Interstitial Lung Disease: A Pro-Con Debate

There are a number of controversies surrounding the evaluation, classification, and management of connective tissue disorders and interstitial lung disease (CTD-ILD). This symposium will address several of the most frequently encountered dilemmas that are of central importance to the assessment and care of patients with CTD-ILD. "There is still a lot we do not know about connective tissue disorders and interstitial lung disease," according to Aryeh Fischer, MD, of National Jewish Health, who is co-chairing the session. "This session, which is conducted by international experts in the field, will address some of the challenges clinicians face in treating these diseases, including patient assessment using circulating autoantibodies, the role of surgical lung biopsy, and the treatment of patients with symptoms that mimic IPF."

Autophagy: Friend or Foe in Lung Disease?

This symposium will review the role of autophagy in human lung diseases and will help attendees understand the regulation of autophagy, better understand the current functional role of autophagy in lung disease and examine whether autophagy targets can serve as either diagnostic and/or therapeutic targets in lung disease. This session will be of benefit to translational, basic, and clinical scientists focusing on acute lung diseases, such as sepsis and ARDS, and on chronic lung diseases, such as pulmonary hypertension and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

Obesity, Adipokines, and Lung Diseases

In this session, the latest findings on the role of obesity and adipokines in the development and modulation of lung diseases will be presented. Topics covered will include the scientific basis for obesity-induced lung diseases, and the role of mediators of obesity in human physiology. Both the scientific and clinical ramifications of obesity will be discussed. According to the session's organizers, this session will help attendees understand the effects of obesity on development of lung disease and appreciate the role of mediators of obesity on the development of lung inflammation and infection. It will be of interest to pulmonary and critical care physicians and fellows, members in training, nurses, and others who have an interest in the role of the obesity epidemic in the development and modulation of lung diseases.

Immune Dysregulation in Pulmonary Fibrosis

In this symposium, expert speakers will present findings that address the role that the immune system plays in the etiology and pathogenesis of pulmonary fibrosis in patients and models of lung fibrosis. At the conclusion of this session, according to session organizers, attendees will be better able to "understand the complex literature on the innate and adaptive immune response in lung fibrosis, evaluate the role of the immune response in stable and rapidly progressing fibrotic lung disease, and provide a scientific basis for re-evaluating use of immune suppressants in clinical practice." This session will be of interest to adult and pediatric pulmonary physicians, scientists, and nurses and other health care professionals interested in understanding the role of the immune system in pulmonary fibrosis.

Genetics of Childhood Asthma: Where Are We? Where Are We Going?

In this session, which is sponsored by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute of the NIH, speakers will discuss lessons and insights learned from the examination of genetics data in the Childhood Asthma Management Program (CAMP), a 15-year study of over 1000 children with asthma, and from multiple clinical management trials conducted by the Childhood Asthma Research and Education (CARE) Network. Each speaker will discuss the type of genetics study conducted, the results of this study, and the most promising next steps for the genetics research. Speakers will address the issue of making CAMP and CARE network data publically available and will encourage investigators to access the data for further studies. This session will benefit those with interests in the clinical management of childhood asthma, clinical research in asthma, and genetics research in asthma.

Therapeutic Strategies in IPF: Debates Between Bench and Bedside

This program, which will be of interest to clinicians, fellows, radiologists, and basic scientists, will address complementary topics with direct relevance to the design of trials in idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis (IPF). Topics covered will range from basic investigation to human disease diagnosis and management and will include the use of animal models in developing novel therapies, the role of surgical biopsy in older patients with parenchymal lung disease with a non-diagnostic CT, the best endpoints for Phase III trials, and whether the epithelial mesenchymal interface is an appropriate target for developing new therapies.

Mini Symposium - Oral Presentation: Resolution of Lung Injury and Inflammation

This mini-symposium will explore mechanisms underlying the resolution of lung injury and inflammation and will include presentations on the role of regulatory T-Cells in the resolution of lung infection, the role of resolvins in attenuating hyperoxia-induced acute lung injury, inhibiting cigarette smoke-induced emphysema and promoting resolution of inflammation in acute exacerbations of allergic asthma, and the role of MDSC-like cells in promoting the resolution of pneumonia.