



INTERNATIONAL ECZEMA COUNCIL

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Thank You, IEC Sponsors

Letter from the IEC President



Ten years ago, Drs. Amy Paller and Emma Guttman envisioned a group that would enable experts around the world to work together to improve patient care for people with atopic dermatitis. This group would promote research, education, and best practices across oceans and borders.

They worked on this plan together and founded the International Eczema Council. On June 12, 2015, the first IEC Councilors came together in Vancouver, B.C., Canada, to determine the Council's strategic planning goals, create working groups, discuss funding, determine Councilor eligibility requirements, and choose a logo.

The IEC's work had begun, and the next year, the Council was able to present its first two symposia. The first, in September 2016, was presented in Vienna, Austria, in partnership with the International Psoriasis Council, and the second, in November 2016, was presented at ISDS in New York, NY, USA.

In 2025, we will celebrate the IEC's 10th anniversary. We've come so far in just 10 years, and we thank Drs. Paller and Guttman—both of whom are still active in the Council—for their vision and efforts to bring their idea to fruition and help guide us to become the robust organization we are today.

IEC to Welcome PhDs

I'm pleased to announce that the IEC will now welcome PhDs to join the Council starting in the first quarter of 2025.

The IEC Board has approved this change, and requirements are being finalized so that the Council application forms for PhDs can be made available in early 2025. Follow the IEC on social media ([Facebook](#), [X](#), and [LinkedIn](#)) to learn when the PhD application is available.

This is the latest evolution in requirements for Council membership, and I appreciate this change. In fact, back in the 2015 strategic planning session I mentioned, we discussed expanding membership beyond dermatologists to help us disseminate information. We've opened the membership requirements incrementally as we recognized the value of the IEC's original dermatologists working directly with our allies in the treatment of atopic dermatitis.

For example, we didn't recruit allergists from the organization's outset, but we now urge allergists to join the IEC. Soon, we'll also be able to urge our PhD-holding colleagues—professionals who are often engaged in researching and/or teaching atopic dermatitis—to join us as well.

Allergists and PhD-holders were already our collaborators in the treatment of atopic dermatitis; officially welcoming them into the IEC recognizes their importance.

I look forward to announcing our first PhD Council members in 2025.

33 Countries and Counting

As you'll read later in this newsletter, our Council has grown with the approval of new members by the Board this month. With these new members on board, we now have members representing 33 countries on the Council.

Increasing the representation on our Council to include more regions and countries brings many benefits. Access to more viewpoints and experiences enriches our collective work, and having representation in more areas extends the Council's ability to promote research, education, and best practices internationally.

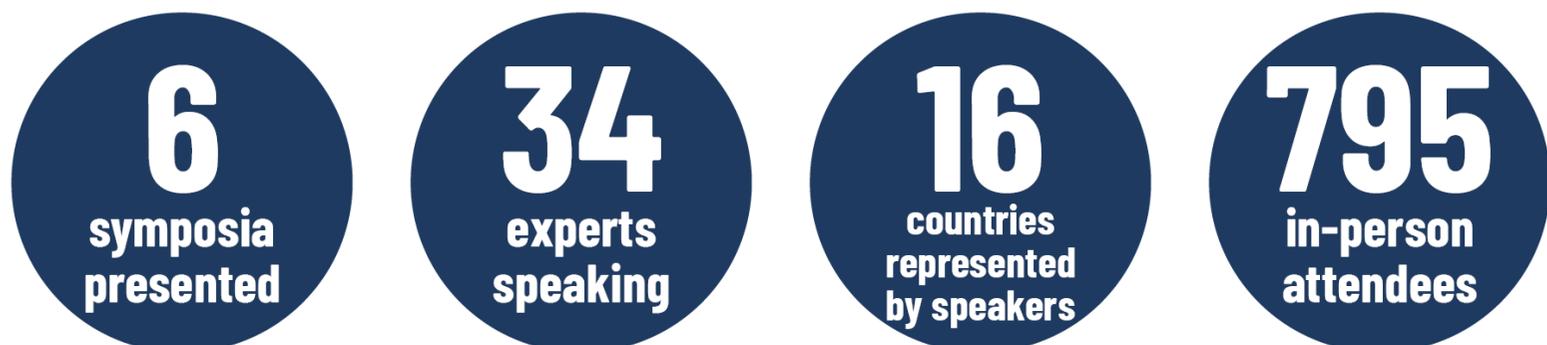
Our diversity is one of our strengths, and you can help us become even stronger. I encourage all Councilors and Associates to make an effort to identify potential new IEC members from underrepresented regions and countries. An infographic linked from our About page can show you exactly how many IEC members we have in each region and country to help you identify areas where we could use additional resources.

Please pause to think through your contacts for dermatologists, allergists, and PhDs that would be a good fit for the IEC, especially those who are in countries or areas where we don't have strong representations. Share names and contact information with me or IEC staff. We'd love to invite more people to join us in our mission.

2024 Education Wrap-Up

Pausing to look back, I want to thank everyone who helped make our 2024 symposia program a success: symposia chairs, speakers, and attendees.

We presented six symposia in conjunction with major world dermatology and allergy meetings in five countries on three continents—and one was presented in partnership with the International Psoriasis Council. You can appreciate the work of our chairs and presenters by watching [on-demand symposia recordings](#).



2025 Symposia Program

2025 will see us presenting six symposia again, this time in four countries on three continents. It will be a fast-paced schedule with five symposia in the first 6 months of the year! I urge you to view the [IEC symposia schedule](#) and plan to attend as many IEC symposia as you're reasonably able to. The Council and our symposia chairs and presenters appreciate your support.

If you haven't yet done so, make sure you follow our social channels in 2025. We'll announce news directly on our [Facebook](#), [X](#), and [LinkedIn](#) accounts which will allow us to be more timely with our news and reduce our newsletters to three times each year. Be among the first to see important updates by tuning in to our social media channels!



INTERNATIONAL ECZEMA COUNCIL

Alan Irvine, MD DSc
IEC President

IEC Chooses Next Two Physicians for Fellowship Program

The IEC Board is pleased to announce the next two IEC Fellows! The competition for these spots was fierce, and this round of Fellowships received a record-setting number of applications.

These promising professionals were chosen by the IEC Fellowship Committee and the IEC Board of Directors for the new international fellowships. The international fellowships are the first IEC Fellowships that may take place in countries outside of North America.

IEC International Clinical Fellow

Our new IEC International Clinical Fellow is **Christabel Ovesuor, MBBS FMCP FWACP**, of Asaba, Nigeria. Dr. Ovesuor is a consultant dermatologist and venereologist with extensive experience diagnosing and treating a diverse range of dermatological conditions, including skin cancer, eczema, acne, psoriasis, and sexually transmitted infections.

Dr. Carsten Flohr, MA MSc PhD FRCP FrCPCH, will be Dr. Ovesuor's mentor for the fellowship. An IEC Councilor and IEC Board member, Dr. Flohr is professor and chair in Dermatology & Population Health Science at St John's Institute of Dermatology at King's College London in London, England, UK. He also is the director of the Global Atopic Dermatitis Atlas (GADA).

Like the IEC's other clinical fellowship, this fellowship will take Dr. Ovesuor to London for 4 weeks of on-site observation and mentoring, followed by 11 months of distance learning.

Dr. Ovesuor views this fellowship this as not just a professional opportunity for herself but a benefit for her country: "My participation in the IEC international clinical fellowship program is an investment in my expertise, the wellbeing of Nigerian patients with eczema, and the advancement of dermatology care in Nigeria." Dr. Flohr was Dr. Ovesuor's first choice as a mentor due to the alignment of their professional goals.

IEC International Research Fellow

Our new IEC International Research Fellow is **Carlos Eduardo Forero-Ángel, MD**, of Bogotá, Colombia. He is a dermatologist working at a referral center for the management of patients with moderate to severe atopic dermatitis, where a multidisciplinary team provides comprehensive care. His thesis was a systematic literature review evaluating serum and tissular levels of IL-33 in humans and animals with atopic dermatitis and psoriasis, and he delivered an award-winning presentation "The Spectrum of Atopic Dermatitis in Childhood: The Importance of Differential Diagnosis." to the National Dermatology Congress of Colombia in 2022. He also completed a diploma in atopic dermatitis titled "A Holistic View of the Disease" with the Fundación Universitaria de Ciencias de la Salud in 2022.

Katrina Abuabara, MD MA MSCE, will mentor Dr. Forero-Ángel. Based in San Francisco, CA, USA, Dr. Abuabara is associate professor of dermatology at the University of California San Francisco and associate adjunct professor of epidemiology at the University of California, Berkeley. She is an IEC Councilor and a director on the IEC Board.

This is one of two research fellowships the IEC offers. The research fellowship will bring Dr. Forero-Ángel to the United States for the 1 year of in-person research and mentoring.

Dr. Forero-Ángel sees a great need for additional eczema research and expertise in his country, citing the rise prevalence of atopic dermatitis in Colombia. "There are only approximately 1,200 dermatologists in Colombia, primarily concentrated in major cities. Many are shifting towards aesthetic medicine, which is more lucrative than clinical dermatology. This shift, coupled with Colombia's limited economic resources, underscores the need for efficient healthcare spending and equitable health outcomes," he explained. "By understanding the psychological, social, and environmental determinants of AD, Colombian dermatologists can enhance patient care, promote efficient use of healthcare resources, and contribute to a more equitable health system. This training is not just an investment in professional development but a crucial step towards addressing the growing burden of AD in Colombia."

MDRI IEC Canadian Research Fellowship



IEC Fellow **Arbie Sofia Merilleno, MD**, will complete her MDRI IEC Canadian Research Fellowship with **Aaron Drucker, MD**, at the end of this year. A grant from Sanofi Canada funded her fellowship.

"I am deeply grateful for the exceptional mentorship of Dr. Aaron M. Drucker," Merilleno told the IEC. "Throughout my fellowship, I absorbed a wealth of knowledge about the intricacies of atopic dermatitis management."

Dr. Drucker praised Dr. Merilleno's work during the fellowship. "She by far exceeded my expectations heading into the fellowship, and I will truly miss having her at Women's College Hospital. ... She was excellent in clinic, functioning above the level of our senior dermatology residents (which is a high bar!)."

As a result of the fellowship, Dr. Merilleno collaborated on the manuscript **Association of Countries' Atopic Dermatitis Burden and Sociodemographic Index with Topical Calcineurin Inhibitor Utilization**, which was published in the *Dermatitis* in July 2024, and her project **Association Between Atopic Dermatitis Burden and Sociodemographic Index with Dupilumab and Tralokinumab Utilization Across 50 Countries** was published in October by the International Journal of Dermatology.



US Clinical Fellowships

IEC Fellows **Vijaytha Muralidharan, MD MRCP (UK)** and **Mariana L. Guzmán, MD**, are continuing their US Clinical Fellowships with IEC cofounder **Dr. Amy Paller, MD**. Dr. Muralidharan's fellowship was funded through a grant from Pfizer, and the IEC funded Dr. Guzmán's fellowship.

[Learn More about IEC Fellowships and Fellows](#)

6 New Members Join the IEC & 2 Associates Become Councilors

The IEC continues to grow!

Six new Council members were approved during the Board of Directors meeting on December 11, and the Board also promoted 2 Associates to full Councilor status.

These additions and promotions bring our the [IEC membership](#) to 151—117 Councilors and 34 Associates—from 33 countries.



We are pleased to welcome the following new members to the Council.

New IEC Councilors

- **Abhishek De**, MBBS MD, India
- **Akimichi Morita**, MD PhD, Japan

New IEC Associates:

- **Amber Reck Atwater**, MD, USA
- **Benjamin Hidalgo Matlock**, MD, Costa Rica
- **Julia-Tatjana Maul**, MD, Switzerland
- **Trinidad Montero-Vílchez**, MD PhD, Spain

We also are pleased to announce that the following Associates have met [IEC criteria for Councilor status](#):

- **Raquel L. Orfali**, MD PhD Brazil
- **Elke Weisshaar**, MD PhD, Germany

These additions and promotions bring our membership to 151—117 Councilors and 34 Associates—from 33 countries.

[Join the IEC](#)



IEC Presented 6 Symposia in 2024; Join Us as We Do It Again in 2025

This was another big year for IEC with symposia at six major dermatology or allergy world meetings. The coming year will be just as big, with another six scheduled. Symposia titles have been announced for all six 2025 presentations, and dates have been finalized for the first four. See our Symposia schedule page for details.

In 2025, we will again present at AAAAI, AAD, SID, EAACI, and EADV. These meetings are well attended by our Council members, and we tend to draw larger, engaged audiences when we present there. We're adding symposia at AAAAI and WCPD in 2025 as well.

We presented at AAAAI in 2023, and our attendance there helped us demonstrate to the allergist community that allergy and dermatology specialists work together to manage atopic dermatitis. The Council welcomes allergists to its membership—and we encourage Councilors and Associates to share the [Council application](#) with allergist colleagues.

WCPD is presented every 4 years, and the IEC will present there again in 2025. Atopic dermatitis's prevalence in children—and the number of children treated by Council members—makes this meeting an excellent fit for the IEC.

Plan to support the IEC in 2025 by attending as many symposia as possible this year and completing our [speaker interest form](#) to potentially present at a symposium.



The Impact of Environmental, Food, and Contact Allergies on Atopic Dermatitis

February 27 at AAAAI/WAO
San Diego, CA, USA



Practical Applications of Multiomics in Atopic Dermatitis

May 7 at SID
San Diego, CA, USA

Converging Pathways: Atopic Dermatitis and Alopecia Areata

March 6 at AAD Global Education Day
Orlando, FL, USA



The Impact of Environmental, Food, and Contact Allergies on Atopic Dermatitis

Date TBD (June 13-16) at EAACI
Glasgow, Scotland, UK

Lessons Learned: Practical Strategies for Preventing, Treating, and Managing Atopic Dermatitis in Pediatric Populations

April 7 at WCPD
Buenos Aires, Argentina



Atopic Dermatitis & Cutaneous T-Cell Lymphoma (CTCL)

September 20 (tentative) at EADV
Paris, France

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Meet the Councilor: Sara Brown, MD PhD FRCPE



IEC Councilor **Sara Brown, MD PhD FRCPE**, holds the Grant Chair of Dermatology at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland, UK. Professor Brown is a clinician and researcher; her work focuses on understanding molecular genetic mechanisms in atopic skin disease.

She presented “Genetic and Ethnic Differences in Psoriasis and Atopic Dermatitis” as part of **[From Comparative Pathogenesis to Biomarker-guided Treatments in Psoriasis and Eczema](#)**, a symposium presented by the IEC and International Psoriasis Council on September 4 at the European Society for Dermatological Research (ESDR) Annual Meeting in Lisbon, Portugal.

How does your vision or mission align with the IEC’s?

My research work is directly motivated by questions and challenges presented by eczema patients and people affected by eczema. It’s such a complex, diverse, and unpredictable disease the challenges are huge, but genetic research offers real promise to address major questions and design more targeted treatments—that is my hope and ultimate goal.

What is your proudest accomplishment in the atopic dermatitis (AD) space?

My early research work contributed to understanding how and why filaggrin (coded by the gene FLG) contributes to eczema. Now this understanding is discussed in patient fora and online health-science pages so everyone can learn that having dry skin means you have a leaky skin barrier and using emollient treatment is therefore an important part of eczema treatment.

What do you value most about being involved with the IEC?

It’s very valuable to meet with clinicians, researchers, and patient advocates from all over the world, to share ideas and increase understanding from an international perspective, since different countries and cultures require different approaches. Working together in a global collaboration also brings a stronger voice for research and to support eczema care.

What do you see as the biggest need among AD patients?

The biggest need is treatment that more effectively gets to the root cause of eczema, by which I mean targeting the fundamental cellular mechanisms to address the drivers of disease, not only the inflammation.

Describe a professional experience you won’t forget because of how it impacted your specialty or the way you practice.

We are not always successful in controlling severe eczema, but when the treatment works well it is unforgettable. I am particularly moved by parents who bring their child back to clinic after their eczema has improved and say, “He/she is like a different child”— because the child can sleep and play and enjoy a more normal life. It is very rewarding, and I wish we could achieve that freedom for every patient.

What’s the most recent good thing you watched, listened to, or visited?

I love to watch my dog running on the beach and splashing in the (very cold) water! His approach to life is ‘of the moment’ which is the opposite of most of my professional life and work, where long term (often decades-long-term) aims predominate.

Get to know other Councilors and Associates by reading **[past Meet the Councilor features](#)**.

2024 Symposia Recordings Available in On-Demand Library

In line with the **IEC mission**, the Council expands the reach of the education by sharing on-demand recordings of our symposia at no cost to viewers.

Anyone with an internet connection can listen to and watch our experts share research and clinical insights—regardless of whether they're able to attend the global meetings at which we present our symposia.

These on-demand recordings support the IEC Strategic Plan Domain 4 goal: “Magnify IEC’s thought leadership position in physician education by expanding content and delivery channels.” Recordings from 5 symposia presented in 2024 have been added to the recordings:

- [Safety of JAK Inhibitors in the Treatment of Inflammatory Skin Diseases](#) (click presenters' titles)
- [What's New in Pathogenesis & Mechanisms? Drivers of Disease](#)
- [Infections and Immunization in Patients with Atopic Dermatitis](#)
- [From Comparative Pathogenesis to Biomarker-guided Treatments in Psoriasis and Eczema](#)
- [Chronic Hand Eczema](#)

[Watch On-Demand Symposia Recordings](#)

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X (formerly) Twitter

x.com/CouncilEczema
(@CouncilEczema)



LinkedIn

linkedin.com/company/international-eczema-council



YouTube

youtube.com/@internationaleczema-council4126

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About the IEC

The **International Eczema Council** (IEC) is a global nonprofit organization led by experts on atopic dermatitis (AD). The IEC is dedicated to increasing the understanding of AD and promoting its optimal management through research, education and patient/family care. The IEC comprises 151 Councilors and Associates from 33 countries who contribute their expertise to support the IEC's research, programs, events, and education. The Council's mission is furthered by the support of our **valued corporate partners**.

Connect with the IEC on social media

