



# INTERNATIONAL ECZEMA COUNCIL

---

## IN THIS ISSUE

### [Letter from the IEC President](#)

[Optimize Your Scope of Practice with Inaugural IEC Course at AAAAI](#)

[Second Round of Fellows and Mentors Applaud IEC Program](#)

[Meet the Councilor: Katrina Abuabara, MD MSCE](#)

[First Global Report on AD Summarizes Prevalence, Impact on Patients](#)

[The IEC Has Full Slate of Symposia in Conjunction with 2023 Meetings](#)

[IEC and NEA Put the #FocusOnEczema for Eczema Awareness Month](#)

[Watch the IEC's Free On-Demand Webcasts Featuring Leading Experts](#)

---

## Letter from the IEC President



I've enjoyed reconnecting with colleagues like you in person again as countries reopened their borders to visitors in the aftermath of the pandemic. As much as I've enjoyed the return to traveling, I was pleased that the International Society of Atopic Dermatitis (ISAD) meeting brought many of you to my city—Montréal, Quebec, Canada—in October.

Like any meeting on AD, the IEC's Councilors and Associates were well represented on the ISAD list of speakers, moderators, and presenters. I was invited to represent the IEC at a special lunch event at the ISAD premeeting.

"Priorities in Eczema: What Do We Really Need Now?" brought together multiple stakeholders to discuss what the international community—clinicians, researchers, physician organizations and patient organizations, and patients—can do to align and collaborate around research priorities. The meeting was sponsored by ISAD, Global Parents for Eczema Research and its project The Global Initiative to Improve Eczema Care, and GlobalSkin.

Setting the stage for our discussion was a viewing of the 10-minute documentary [Skin: Our Barrier to the World](#), produced by GlobalSkin. If you haven't watched this short film yet, it aligns well with the IEC's mission. In the documentary, six patients with atopic dermatitis talk about their experiences with the disease in the United States, New Zealand, Colombia, Slovenia, Kenya, and Hong Kong.

Prior to the lunch meeting, we had been asked to answer questions about our organizations' research priorities. Several physician and patient organizations representative as well as members of the derm community were in the same room for an informal lunch and one representative from each organization presented the organization, its priorities and its willingness to work other organizations. It was an informal exchange.

The conclusion I came to was that patient organizations and physician organizations often have similar goals and all want to collaborate.

It's already an exciting time to be working in the atopic dermatitis space. There is so much important research being done, initiatives underway, and treatment advances happening all around us—and the IEC is right in the middle of the action.

The IEC has [seven symposia slated for 2023](#) at many of the world's major dermatological educational events. These engagements emphasize our international, diversified identity. Our 2023 symposia will see us present cutting-edge science on four continents, in six countries: Austria, Brazil, Germany, Japan, Singapore, and the United States.

2023 will also include a few "firsts" for the IEC:

- For the first time, we'll present [a symposium at the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology \(AAAAI\) Annual Meeting](#) (read more on this below) in San Antonio, TX, USA.
- Though we presented as part of Reunión Anual de Dermatólogos Latinoamericanos (RADLA; Annual Meeting of Latin American Dermatologist) last year, 2023 will be our first year [presenting live in South America](#) for this event; last year's RADLA meeting was entirely virtual.
- [The IEC will present in Toyko, Japan](#), for the first meeting of the International Societies for Investigative Dermatology (ISID). (Though this is the inaugural ISID meeting, the organization itself is not new. This meeting replaces the International Investigative Dermatology (IID). The most recent IID meeting was in 2018, and the IEC was there to present Phenotype-Genotype Correlations and Personalized Medicine in Atopic Dermatitis.)

With a year of caution under our belts, the IEC is looking forward to a busy and big 2023. We'll be doing more—more symposia, more research, more partnerships—and creating the strategic plan that will define exactly what it is we're working toward and how we'll get there together. So much has happened since we last created a plan like this that I'm looking forward to seeing just how much progress we've made and how much closer we are to our vision of better lives for people living with AD.

As the year draws to a close and you reflect back on 2022, I hope that you find yourself in a better place than you were in January. I thank you for all you've done for the IEC and our specialty this year and look forward to everything we'll accomplish in 2023. Bonne année to you and yours!

**Robert Bissonnette, MD FRCPC MSc**  
*IEC President*

---

## Optimize Your Scope of Practice with Inaugural IEC Course at AAAAI

The IEC is excited to invite you to a special inaugural course February 23 at the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology (AAAAI) Annual Meeting in San Antonio, Texas, USA. Our first foray at the AAAAI Annual Meeting will be [New Developments in Atopic Dermatitis and Implications for the Atopic March](#).

Research focused on atopic dermatitis (AD) has seen a marked increase in the past few years, and this course will present the most up-to-date information on diagnosis, pathogenesis, prevention, and treatment of AD. Recent advances in infections and pediatric AD will be covered. This course will enable clinicians to improve their diagnostic skills and their ability to select the optimal treatments for patients with AD. Content for this course underwent rigorous review and consideration before being accepted for AAAAI.

Ellen Sher, MD FAAAAI, section chief of allergy and immunology at Monmouth Medical Center and a clinical assistant professor of medicine at Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, will moderate the course. She will be joined by the following expert faculty members, each addressing a specific topic:

- **Jonathan Silverberg, MD PhD MPH, IEC Councilor**, Differential Diagnosis of Atopic Dermatitis
- **Emma Guttman-Yassky, MD PhD, IEC immediate past president and cofounder**, Immune Pathogenesis: Towards Personalized Medicine
- **Alan Irvine, MD DSc, IEC president elect**, The Leaky Barrier: Abnormalities in Keratinocyte Differentiation, Tight Junctions, and Lipids
- **Amy S. Paller, MD MSc, IEC past president and cofounder**, Clinical and Molecular Differences in Skin and Blood of Children Compared to Adults
- **Carolyn Jack, MDCM PhD FRCPC, IEC Associate**, Infections in Atopic Dermatitis and Implications for Therapy
- **Robert Bissonnette, MD FRCPC, IEC president**, Emerging Topical Therapies
- **Eric Simpson, MD MCR, IEC Councilor**, Emerging Systemic Therapies
- **Ioana Agache, MD PhD**, Prevention Strategies for Atopic Dermatitis and the Atopic March

The course will be held live 1-5 pm CST February 23 at the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center in San Antonio, TX, USA. An on-demand recording will be featured on the IEC website after the course concludes. View the full [course agenda and registration information](#).

[Learn More & Register](#)

---

## Second Round of Fellows and Mentors Applaud IEC Program

The IEC's fellowship program has begun its second year after a successful initial round in 2021-2022. Dr. Sheng-Pei Wang of the United States and Dr. Caroline Marie Thérèse Mann of Germany were selected as the IEC's second class of fellows from the physicians who applied for consideration in 2022-2023.

The program pairs qualified early-career physicians with experienced IEC Councilors for 1 year to help the new physicians develop a greater understanding of atopic dermatitis (AD), improve their ability to manage patients with AD, and acquire research skills. These efforts will foster a cohort of future leaders in AD to ultimately lower the disease burden.

Abbvie provided a grant to fund the 2021 IEC Fellowship program in which two fellows were chosen. The inaugural IEC fellows, Dr. Antonia Reimer-Taschenbrecker, of Germany, and Dr. Pedro J. Gómez Arias, of Spain, lauded their experiences. Respectively, they worked with Dr. Paller at Northwestern University and Emma Guttman at the Center for Excellence in Eczema, the Occupational Dermatitis Clinic, and the Laboratory of Inflammatory Skin Diseases at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York, NY, USA. The IEC is pleased to have furthered the education of these two promising doctors and looks forward to their future contributions to the field.

For this fellowship year, Dr. Wang has been paired with Dr. Lawrence Eichenfield of Rady Children's Hospital-San Diego and University of California, San Diego, and Dr. Mann with Dr. Amy Paller of Northwestern University.

### Clinical Fellowship



Dr. Wang received her dermatology clinical training in Taiwan before coming to the US to pursue basic science research and public health training. She completed her master's of public health at the University of California Berkeley in May.

"I was so excited to know that I can work with Dr. Lawrence Eichenfield through the IEC clinical fellowship!" she said. "I treasure this opportunity to deepen my understanding in the evaluation and management of atopic dermatitis and get more exposure to pediatric dermatology."

Dr. Eichenfield is chief of pediatric and adolescent dermatology at Rady Children's Hospital–San Diego and professor of dermatology and pediatrics and vice chair of the department of dermatology at the University of California San Diego School of Medicine. He is board certified in dermatology, pediatric dermatology, and pediatrics.

Dr. Wang's work with Dr. Eichenfield is underway. "The fundamental question that intrigues me is the interplay of biological, psychological, and environmental factors in chronic inflammatory dermatoses, especially how environmental factors shape the development and flares of atopic dermatitis (AD)," she explained. "Currently I am conducting a project that examines the association of environmental microbes and AD, and also a part of the IEC's efforts on reviewing the impact of climate change on AD. Deeper understanding of how environmental factors affect AD will translate into preventive measures that lower the global burden of AD—and I look forward to taking part in this journey."

This is Dr. Eichenfield's first year as a mentor to an IEC fellow, and he has praised both Dr. Wang and the IEC program. "It has been a tremendous experience to have Sheng-Pei Wang as an IEC fellow, working with us at UCSD and Rady Children's Hospital. Her intensive month of on-site work showed her knowledge and dedication to work on atopic dermatitis, and she became an asset in our clinical work with our Multidisciplinary Atopic Dermatitis Program

and our research collaborations. I look forward to our ongoing work together and am now a strong advocate of the IEC fellowship program!"

## Research Fellowship



Dr. Mann recently completed her residency in the Department of Dermatology at Johannes Gutenberg University of Mainz in Mainz, Germany Department of Dermatology. The deputy at the Clinical research center in Mainz, Dr. Mann works on clinical trials.

"The focus of my personal research is on sleep in dermatologic skin diseases," she said. "I want to pursue an academic career, and I am currently working on my PhD."

She is being mentored by Dr. Paller, who also worked with an IEC fellow in the program's first year. At Northwestern's Feinberg School of Medicine, Dr. Paller is chair of the Department of Dermatology, director of the Skin Biology and Diseases Resource-Based Center, the Walter J. Hamlin Professor of Dermatology, and professor of Dermatology and Pediatrics (Dermatology). She is co-founder and was the inaugural president of the IEC.

"I was thrilled when I first discovered that I was elected as one of the awardees. I immediately called my chief to tell him the great news, especially when I heard I was going to be mentored by Dr Paller," Dr. Mann said. "She is well known for her expertise in my university in Mainz and I felt very honored to be selected."

Dr. Paller was similarly pleased with the fellowship.

"It's been such a pleasure to work closely with Dr. Mann this month. We share an interest in sleep and itch, so we've been working together both to plan an upcoming research study as well as assessing our data from a major pediatric study for publication," Dr. Paller said. "I am sure we'll have a long-term collaboration thanks to the IEC."

---

## Meet the Councilor: Katrina Abuabara, MD MSCE

This issue's 'Meet the Councilor' features IEC Councilor Katrina Abuabara, MD MSCE.



A clinician and researcher, Dr. Abuabara is a dermatologist with the University of California San Francisco Health in San Francisco, CA, USA. The UCSF website notes, "Dr. Abuabara studies the impact of inflammatory skin disease on overall health and the role of the skin in the aging process. Her interdisciplinary scientific approach combines genomic, physiological, environmental, and psychosocial variables to understand patient outcomes over time. Her goal is to develop truly personalized interventions that address both the pathophysiological and sociocultural aspects of disease to improve the lives of patients."

She has brought her passion for atopic dermatitis research to the IEC, serving as cochair of the IEC Research Committee and lead author of the 2021 journal article [Priority Research Questions in Atopic Dermatitis: An International Eczema Council edelphi Consensus](#).

She earned her master's degree in sociology from Stanford University, her medical degree from Harvard Medical School, and her master of science degree in clinical epidemiology from the Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania, where she completed her dermatology residency and postdoctoral research fellowship in dermatoepidemiology.

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

Our research, along with the work of many others, has helped to broaden the conceptualization of AD from just a childhood skin disease to a systemic inflammatory condition that impacts individuals of all ages. Clinically, this is important for the diagnosis in adult patients with new onset disease and for the management of comorbidities in patients of all ages.

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

Through my involvement with the IEC, I've had the opportunity to collaborate with experienced clinicians and top researchers from around the globe. The diversity of perspectives helps to strengthen our research and clinical care, and I've found the experience of working with IEC collaborators to be fun, informative, and personally rewarding.



## What do you think will garner the most attention over the coming year in the AD field?

In addition to trial results from exciting new targeted treatments, I think that comorbidities and biomarkers/endophenotypes will continue to be hot areas in AD.

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

An especially difficult aspect of AD for patients is the unpredictable nature of disease flares. We need a better understanding of social and environmental factors that trigger disease for individual patients. This could help to explain some of the heterogeneity in treatment response and could be an important part of personalized treatments approaches in the future.

---

## First Global Report on AD Summarizes Prevalence, Impact on Patients

In October, the first **Global Atopic Dermatitis Atlas (GADA)** was released. The report, intended for annual publication, summarizes all known aspects of atopic dermatitis and provides an atlas where all data about the disease is available in one place, across all countries. The GADA project aims to conduct new fieldwork to fill current gaps on the global burden map.



Despite common perceptions that AD is a disease seen mainly in Western or “industrialized” countries, the report’s findings show its prevalence is worldwide. The report also presents the disparities regarding the burden of disease and care and the resulting unmet needs. This knowledge is essential to improve health care for patients and develop novel treatments and methods of disease prevention.

The GADA project aims to conduct new fieldwork to fill current gaps on the global burden map. The report states, “Recent treatment innovations have not solved existing inequalities, due to lack of access and affordability. These disparities need to be urgently addressed with universally accessible healthcare systems to provide personalized and targeted care for patients with atopic dermatitis who may depend on care across the lifespan.”

The report stresses the need for collaboration in addressing the barriers and unmet needs of patients. Considerations based on the report’s findings are outlined for stakeholders, including the World Health Organization, governments and policymakers, healthcare systems and healthcare professionals, and national and international patients’ organizations, as well as research considerations. As the report notes, “Governments and other stakeholders have a key role to play in addressing these pressing issues of access and affordability of current and future treatments.”

The GADA project is led by Carsten Flohr, MD PhD MSC. He is a professor and chair of dermatology and population health sciences at King’s College London; consultant dermatologist and professor at St John’s Institute of Dermatology, Guy’s and St Thomas’ NHS Foundation Trust, UK; and an IEC Councilor.

The report is an initiative of the International League of Dermatological Societies in collaboration with the International Society of Atopic Dermatitis, the International Eczema Council, the European Taskforce for Atopic Dermatitis, and the International Alliance of Dermatology Patient Organizations (GlobalSkin).

Learn more about the **[report and collaborators](#)** on IEC’s website.

---

## The IEC Has Full Slate of Symposia in Conjunction with 2023 Meetings

The year ahead promises to bring global perspectives and groundbreaking insights in the field of AD with the IEC presenting educational symposia on four continents in six countries.

The year's symposia kick off in February at the 2023 American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology (AAAAI) Annual Meeting in San Antonio, TX, USA. Join the IEC on February 23, 1–5 pm CST, for a special course, [New Developments in Atopic Dermatitis and Implications for the Atopic March](#). A modest registration fee applies. [Register now](#).

In March, an IEC symposium, [Prurigo Nodularis](#), will take place on Global Education Day immediately prior to the 2023 American Academy of Dermatology (AAD) Annual Meeting in New Orleans, LA, USA. Attendees will learn about prurigo nodularis (PN) and its related nomenclature, the pathophysiology and potential therapeutic targets of PN, and the diagnosis and management of PN, including oral therapies and emerging biologics. AAD's Global Education Day is an opportunity for organizations like ours to highlight the work of our members

In May, the International Societies for Investigative Dermatology (ISID) Meeting in Tokyo, Japan, will unite scientists from around the world and feature cutting-edge research in emerging areas of dermatology and skin biology. The IEC's educational symposium, [Pathophysiological Insights into AD and New Therapeutic Developments](#), will be offered at the ISID meeting at no cost to attendees.

Additional IEC symposia topic to look forward to in 2023 include:

- [Pathophysiology, Diagnosis and Treatment of Atopic Comorbidities in AD Patients](#) at Reunión Anual de Dermatólogos Latinoamericanos (RADLA; Annual Meeting of Latin American Dermatologists) in Curitiba, Brazil, May 26
- [Non-Atopic Challenges in Atopic Dermatitis Patients: Contact Allergies, Bone Fractures, Cardiovascular Risk, and Mental Health Issues](#) at the World Congress of Dermatology (WCD) in Singapore, July 3
- [Pruritus in Patients with Atopic Dermatitis](#) at the European Academy of Dermatology and Venereology (EADV) Congress in Berlin, Germany, October 11–14. (The symposium date will be announced.)
- [Basic Research Techniques in AD](#) at the Inflammatory Skin Disease Summit (ISDS) in Vienna, Austria, November 15.

Visit the [IEC's Symposia page](#) often for additions and updates.

[View All IEC Symposia](#)

---

## IEC and NEA Put the #FocusOnEczema for Eczema Awareness Month

In October, the IEC joined the National Eczema Association (NEA) in its #FocusOnEczema campaign to share the facts about atopic dermatitis during [Eczema Awareness Month](#).

Despite affecting about 10% of people, eczema is widely misunderstood and stigmatized, adding to the burden frequently felt by patients. [Globally, both prevalence and acceptance of eczema vary widely](#) by country, culture, and other factors.





#FocusOnEczema used facts, photos, and real patients' stories to foster greater understanding and compassion for people with eczema and reduce misinformation about the condition and its treatment. The campaign included a **photo shoot** with eight people with eczema to share their stories, show what they loved about themselves, and invited others to take a closer look to see eczema in all its forms and all the ways it impacts lives.

Stakeholders **boosted the facts on social media** with helpful infographics and the hashtags #FocusOnEczema, #EczemaAwarenessMonth, and #EAM2022.

Participants also shared resources about eczema that you can use year-round to continue spreading awareness. Keep these trustworthy resources at your fingertips when you need them and when you need to refer your patients to quality education:

- Review the **topics under the For Patients** tab on the IEC's website to direct your patients to the site to learn more about their condition.
- View **IEC resources for healthcare professionals** to advance your own practice and that of the clinicians and researchers you work with.
- Promote better communication with your patients by providing them with a link to **Atopic Dermatitis Is More Than a Rash: Letting Your Doctor Know What's Bothering You**. This innovative patient education activity was developed by Medscape Education in collaboration with the IEC. It reviews the impacts of atopic dermatitis and helps patients better understand how to explain their concerns to healthcare providers to improve the care and management of their eczema.

[Learn More about Eczema Awareness Month](#)

---

## Watch the IEC's Free On-Demand Webcasts Featuring Leading Experts

Take advantage of free symposia available on-demand to build your knowledge on atopic dermatitis. Each webcast is presented by leading physicians and researchers offering new insights and developments in AD.

Recent webcasts available on demand include:

- **Single Cell Technologies Applicable to Atopic Eczema**
- **Customizing the Treatment of Atopic Dermatitis for Diverse Populations**
- **Microbiome**
- **What's New in Atopic Dermatitis?**
- **Diagnosis and Management of Non-Atopic Forms of Dermatitis in Atopic Dermatitis Patients**

New webcasts are added throughout the year to the [IEC On-Demand Webcasts](#) page



#### **About the IEC**

The **International Eczema Council** (IEC) is a global nonprofit organization led by dermatology 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. More than 125 Councilors and Associates from 28 countries contribute their expertise to support the IEC's research, programs, events, and education.