CHAIRMAN’S REPORT

As the year draws to a close, it is timely to highlight some of ALLSA’s achievements in 2005.

EDUCATION

The ALLSA journal Current Allergy & Clinical Immunology continues to grow in stature and receive acclaimation locally and internationally. It is distributed to almost 5 000 health professionals, including members of the Australian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy (courtesy of Steve Lee, a past member of the ALLSA excom). I wish to reiterate my appreciation to the Editors (Professors Eugene Weinberg and Heather Zar), the Production Editor (Anne Hahn), the guest editors, authors and Ruwayda Adams, ALLSA’s Executive Secretary, for their contributions this year, as well as to the pharmaceutical industry for their invaluable support.

The 2005 ALLSA Congress held in Durban was a huge success – the science was excellent, innovative items such as the year’s literature review and case studies proved very popular and the social programmes were great fun. The pre-congress workshop on ‘Occupational Allergies’ was also very good and well attended. ALLSA wishes to express its appreciation to the American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology, co-sponsor of the meeting, the speakers (international and local), the chairpersons, Marta Collins from the Congress Secretariat, Ruwayda Adams, ALLSA Executive Secretary, and Ahmed Manjra, the Convenor, for their contributions and hard work. We also wish to thank our sponsors for their support, in particular the major sponsors Novartis (sponsored Registration), Schering-Plough (sponsored the Gala Dinner and Hospitality Suite), MSD (sponsored Hospitality Suite and Professor Fernando Marinez), Astra Zeneca (sponsored Professor Paul O’Byrne and some local speakers). Celebrity sports stars such as Roland Schoeman (courtesy of GlaxoSmithKline) and Brent Russell (courtesy of Schering-Plough) added some razzmatazz to the event. Next year’s ALLSA Congress will be held at Sun City, Gauteng, from 7 to 9 September. The congress convenor will be Dr André van Niekerk – watch this space for more details.

RESEARCH

Allergy research remains a priority for ALLSA. There were several applications for the 2005 Research awards. For the first time, international reviewers were also utilised for evaluation of the research proposals – an important development for enhancing the credibility of the review process. A total of R125 000 was awarded for projects this year – the recipients were:

- Dr Andreas Lopata (R50 000)
- Ms D Mabe (R25 000)
- Dr Emmerentia van Schalkwyk (R25 000)
- Dr Tanusha Singh (R25 000)
- Ms D Mabe (R25 000)

Project: Detection of latex aeroallergens in dental schools

Project: Work-related asthma associated with endotoxin exposure in dental workers in South Africa.

Project: The prevalence, distribution and correlates of total and specific IgE in young adults in an urban area of the Western Cape

Project: Identification and characterisation of allergens from pilchard (Sardinops sagax), causing occupational allergy among seafood processors.

Project: ‘Guidelines for Management of Childhood Asthma’ – this is timely in the light of the current ‘Black Box’ warning by the FDA (USA) regarding the use of long-acting beta-agonists. A subcommittee under the chairmanship of Adrian Morris is finalising a ‘Position Statement on Skin Prick Testing’. ALLSA will also be putting together national guidelines for immunotherapy in the new year.

MEMBERSHIP SERVICES

ALLSA’s website (www.allergysa.org) continues to attract considerable interest (up to 250 000 hits per month). The ALLSA journal Current Allergy & Clinical Immunology is also accessible on the website. More recently, ALLSA has been disseminating an e-newsletter to members who have provided email addresses. The newsletter is concise, informative and has links to other allergy websites. ALLSA acknowledged Dr Harris Steinman (by way of a Distinguished Services Award) for his role in developing and maintaining the website for many years.

In conclusion, let me once again thank members of the industry for their unqualified support of our society. Not only at congress time, but throughout the years, the industry has been fully supportive of ALLSA’s activities. I look forward to continuing to work with the industry in a spirit of co-operation, mutual respect and goodwill.

Finally, on behalf of ALLSA, I wish all our members and readers well over the festive season and a productive 2006!

Prof. Cas Motala

Chairman