



INTERNATIONAL ECZEMA COUNCIL

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Letter from the IEC President



This is our longest newsletter yet because there is so much that the Council is accomplishing and undertaking right now. This newsletter and the IEC website contain more details on anything I mention here.

I was pleased to see so many of you in person at our symposium and meetings while we were in San Diego for the American Academy of Dermatology Annual Meeting.

It was during our symposium on AAD's Global Education Day that I started my 3-year term as your new president, taking over from outgoing President Robert Bissonnette, MD FRCPC MSc.

I'm pleased to be serving as your leader and am grateful to Robert for how ably he guided our Council through both the pandemic and a period of incredible growth. We've been working together to ensure a smooth transition, and Robert remains actively on the Board as immediate past president.

As part of this transition, Director Dr. Lawrence Eichenfield, MD, now becomes our president-elect, and IEC Cofounder Emma Guttman, MD PhD, steps down from the role of immediate past president, also remaining actively on the Board as a director.

An Introduction

For those of you who don't know me, I'm a professor of dermatology at Trinity College Dublin and a dermatologist at both Children's Health Ireland at Crumlin and St. James's Hospital in Dublin.

I have been part of the IEC since its founding, starting as a director on our Board. I have enjoyed seeing the organization grow from the vision of its founders into a global organization with influence in the atopic dermatitis community.

I hope to continue the great work of Amy, Emma and Robert, to build on their fantastic foundations to create a truly global community of experts (including allergists!) who will work together to help shape new understandings of atopic dermatitis and its causes, treatments, and prevention strategies—all to improve the lives of AD patients and their families.

Continued Collaboration

Our Council has experienced great growth, and we continue to accomplish so much and introduce new programs to further our mission. Read on to learn more about some of them.

I look forward to getting to know more of you at our live meetings and symposia; the full schedule is below. We have an excellent team leading the IEC and a new strategic plan in place to help guide our decisions. Please do get involved, lend you energy and your expertise in any way you feel you can best contribute and please look out for new potential councilors or associates around the world; our aim is for our community to be as inclusive as possible.

I am open to hearing your ideas about how the IEC can achieve our vision of transforming the lives of people with atopic dermatitis.

I look forward to our continued collaboration and growth.

IEC Unveils Strategic Plan to Guide Growth and Progress

The IEC recently announced its [new strategic plan](#) and the development of a new mission, vision, anthem, and set of values. Four strategic domains will guide our leaderships' decisions in the coming years. Each domain has specific goals and objectives, as well.

The IEC's strategic plan is ambitious but achievable. The IEC has a strong track record of success and is well-positioned to make a significant impact on the lives of people with atopic dermatitis.

[View the IEC Strategic Plan](#)

IEC Chooses 2 Physicians for 2024 US Clinical Fellowship Program

The IEC is pleased to announce that the next two Fellows have been selected for the 2024 [IEC US Clinical Fellowship Program](#). They are:

- **Vijaytha Muralidharan, MBChB MRCP**, of the United Kingdom
- **Mariana Guzmán, MD**, of Chile

This clinical fellowship program provides these early-career physicians with an unparalleled opportunity to gain valuable experience in the diagnosis, treatment, and management of atopic dermatitis—including conventional and recently approved topical and systemic treatments.

Drs. Muralidharan and Guzmán will be mentored by **Amy Paller, MD MS**, at Northwestern University Feinberg Schools of Medicine, Chicago, IL, US. Dr. Paller is an IEC Director, past president, and cofounder and leading expert in the field of atopic dermatitis.

Dr. Muralidharan

A resident of Scotland, Dr. Muralidharan balances research and clinical work. She is a registrar at Sandwell and West Birmingham National Health Service Trust and recently completed a 2-year fellowship as a clinical researcher of AI and dermatology at Stanford University.

It was her service on a third continent that kindled her interest in atopic dermatitis. “My passion for working in the sphere of atopic dermatitis (AD) was honed through the Kenyan charity program for which I volunteered medical services in the summer of 2018. Here, during rural community clinics, I treated children with severe lichenified eczema impeding their sight and, by extension, their educational attainment, which showcased to me first-hand the physical, psychological, and social impacts of the condition, particularly on children and young people,” she said. This experience inspired her to collaborate with the World Health Organization (WHO), where she is a representative of dermatological research to international stakeholders.

Dr. Guzmán

After completing her medical degree and residency, Dr. Guzmán earned a pediatric dermatology diploma at Colegio Iberoamericano de Dermatología (CILAD) and completed an expert diploma in autoinflammatory diseases from the University of Barcelona.

Her career goals “have consistently centered around becoming a specialized dermatologist with a strong emphasis on pediatric dermatology and inflammatory skin diseases. My motivation to apply for this fellowship is deeply rooted in the

critical need for specialized expertise in the field of pediatric dermatology and atopic dermatitis, both globally and particularly in my home country, Chile,” she said.

She is especially excited about working with Dr. Paller, whom Dr. Guzmán has seen speak multiple times.

Appreciation for Funding

The IEC extends thanks to **Pfizer** for the generous grant that funds Dr. Muralidharan’s fellowship. Dr. Guzmán’s fellowship is funded by the IEC.



IEC US Clinical Fellowship Program

New IEC International Fellowships Accepting Applications until June 1

The IEC is excited to announce **two new fellowship opportunities**! Potential future leaders of the field can apply for these fellowships through June 1. Each fellowship focuses on either **clinical work** or **research**, pairs a Fellow with one of 15 IEC Councilors in 8 countries on 4 continents, and provides stipends that vary based on the on-site requirements.

Please share these opportunities with early-career physicians who have an interest in atopic dermatitis.

IEC International Clinical Fellowship

Clinical Fellows observe their Mentor onsite for at least 4 weeks to observe clinical activities with patients. Then, the Fellow returns home to continue the mentoring relationship for the remaining year (11 months) through virtual meetings, email, teleconferences, and other opportunities.

IEC International Research Fellowship

Research Fellows have a 1-year on-site commitment at their mentor’s facility. Most of this fellowship will be spent on research with up to 20% of the time taken by clinical activities.

The Council will choose Fellows from an international group of applicants and provide stipends to alleviate financial barriers to participation and ensure candidates without independent means of support are able to participate. Physicians from underrepresented areas are invited to submit an additional statement of benefit, as detailed in the application requirements.

Clinical Fellowship Details

Research Fellowship Details



IEC Presents Symposium at AAD Global Education Day, Installs President

The IEC presented [Topicals in the Pipeline: New and Emerging Therapies](#) at 2 pm PT March 7 in San Diego, CA, USA, as part of the American Academy of Dermatology's Global Education Day. The program was a great success, with attendees offering very positive feedback.

In addition to the symposium chaired by **Councilor April Armstrong, MD MPH**, and **President-Elect Alan Irvine, MD DSc**, the IEC also hosted meetings in San Diego for Councilors and Associates and industry partners. Council members and industry partners learned about ongoing initiatives and took a deep dive into the new strategic plan.



Alan Irvine Becomes IEC President

During these meetings, **President Robert Bissonnette** completed his term of service as the IEC's top leader and **President-Elect Alan Irvine, MD DSc**, was officially installed as president of the Council. Both Dr. Bissonnette and Dr. Irvine addressed Council members and industry partners at the in-person meeting to ensure a transparent transition.

Dr. Irvine will lead the IEC for 3 years, with Dr. Bissonnette continuing his service on the IEC's Board as immediate past president. **Dr. Emma Guttman, MD MPH**, who had been immediate past president, remains active on the IEC Board as a director.

The IEC appreciates our volunteers and wishes to publicly:

- Thank Dr. Bissonnette for his excellent leadership—especially during the unprecedented changes prompted by the pandemic—and for his continued service to the IEC.
- Congratulate Dr. Irvine on his new role as we look forward to many years of his able guidance.

Amid this transition, the **IEC's Board of Directors** still comprises 13 individuals (12 physicians and one patient representative) from nine countries.



Is Your Corporate Logo Missing?

Become an IEC supporter to get your company the recognition it deserves!
Contact CEO Alan Stiles to find out how you can partner with our Council.



IEC to Make Debut at EAACI Congress on June 1 in València, Spain

For the first time, the IEC will present a symposium at the European Academy of Allergy and Clinical Immunology (EAACI) Congress. **The Safety of JAK Inhibitors in the Treatment of Inflammatory Skin Diseases** will be presented from 08:30 to 10:00 CEST June 1 at Feria Valencia in València, Spain.

The session at the EAACI Congress emphasizes the overlap between atopic dermatitis and allergy. Allergists and dermatologists are likely to see both atopic diseases in their practice.

The IEC actively encourages allergists to join us in our mission to improve patient care by promoting research, education, and best practices in treatment for atopic dermatitis in people worldwide. Please consider **joining us as an Associate or Councilor**. Dermatologists are encouraged to share their IEC experiences with allergists to encourage them to join us.



Our first IEC symposium at EAACI is chaired by allergist **Ioana Agache, MD PhD**, of Romania, and **IEC President Alan Irvine, MD DSc**, of Ireland. Dr. Agache is an IEC councilor and contributing member of the Education Committee.

The EAACI meeting is the largest allergy congress worldwide, attracting more than 9,000 attendees annually. We are grateful to Councilor Ioana Agache for encouraging the IEC to present at EAACI this year!

Support the IEC, Learn, and Network by Attending Symposia in 2024



Infections and Immunization in Patients with Atopic Dermatitis

At the Reunión Anual de Dermatólogos Latinoamericanos (RADLA)
May 7, 2024 | 14:00-15:30 PET
Lima, Peru



What's New in Pathogenesis & Mechanisms?

At the Society for Investigative Dermatology (SID) annual meeting
May 15, 2024 | 8 am - Noon (12 pm)
Dallas, Texas, USA



Safety of JAK Inhibitors in the Treatment of Inflammatory Skin Diseases

At the European Academy of Allergy and Clinical Immunology (EAACI)

June 1, 2024 | 08:30-10:30 CEST

(EAACI is May 31-June 3)

Valencia, Spain



From Comparative Pathogenesis to Biomarker-Guided Treatments in Psoriasis and Eczema

Presented jointly with the International Psoriasis Council (IPC) at the European Society for Dermatological Research (ESDR)

Annual Meeting

September 4, 2024 | 13:00-17:00 WEST

Lisbon, Portugal



Chronic Hand Eczema

At the **European Academy of Dermatology and Venereology (EADV) Congress**
September 28, 2024 | 14:15-17:30 CEST *Amsterdam, Netherlands*

[View the Symposia Schedule](#)

Meet the Councilor: Shawn Kwatra, MD

This issue's 'Meet the Councilor' features **Shawn Kwatra, MD**.

Dr. Kwatra is the Joseph W. Burnett Endowed Professor and Chairman of Dermatology at the University of Maryland School of Medicine in Baltimore, MD, USA. His areas of clinical expertise include chronic pruritus, prurigo nodularis, atopic dermatitis, and dermatology for ethnic skin.

He is funded by the National Institutes of Health and multiple foundations. He has been an author or co-author on over 250 publications in peer-reviewed international journals and is the secretary-treasurer of the Skin of Color Society and a member of the National Eczema Society Scientific and Medical Advisory Council.

He previously served as the founding director of the Johns Hopkins Itch Center. Dr. Kwatra also presented "Pathophysiology and Potential Therapeutic Targets of Prurigo Nodularis" as part of the **IEC symposium Prurigo Nodularis** at the AAD Global Day of Education in 2023.



How does your personal or professional vision/mission align with the new IEC vision/mission?

Atopic dermatitis is a heterogeneous skin disease that takes many forms. There are forms of atopic dermatitis that are itch dominant with less skin involvement, and there are a variety of different clinical presentations among patients of different races and ethnicities. Recently, there has been a translational revolution in atopic dermatitis with many new recently approved or soon to be approved therapies. With all of this activity in atopic dermatitis, it is important to take a patient centered, inclusive approach which aligns with the vision of the IEC.

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

I am proud of our group's work on better understanding atopic dermatitis in diverse patient populations. My lab has been focusing on the molecular basis of atopic dermatitis in African American patients, with studies ranging from cutaneous transcriptomics to better defining clinical manifestations of disease in African American patients.

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

I value the community of interacting with leaders in atopic dermatitis. The IEC also has a range of valuable educational symposia that I have enjoyed attending.

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

The wave of new therapeutics that are soon to be approved will dramatically alter the landscape of the treatment of atopic dermatitis.

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

Shared decision making is very important when treating AD patients. With an ever-increasing number of treatment options, amplifying the patient's needs and concerns in selecting therapeutics will take on increasing importance.

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

I had a recent interaction with a patient who had severe itch, and she told me she didn't know how much longer she could go on living this way. She broke down into tears because she had only been treated with topical therapy before and had never felt like an equal stakeholder in deciding her care. This experience solidified to me that I want to try to practice shared decision-making with patients.

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

I recently listened to a podcast by the famous neuroscientist Andrew Huberman on the science of gratitude and learned that you can actually rewire your brain to see the good in the world. So I have made it a habit with my wife to every night write down three things I am grateful for.

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

IEC Publishes Analysis of Climate Change's Effect on Atopic Dermatitis



The IEC is pleased to share that we have published in major journals in the first quarter of 2023. This latest article brings the count of the [Council's publications](#) to 18.

[Impact of Climate Change on Atopic Dermatitis: A Review by the International Eczema Council](#) was published January 24 as an open access article in the European Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology.

Authors are Sheng-Pei Wang (pictured), Nicholas Stefanovic, Raquel L. Orfali, Valeria Aoki, Sara J. Brown, Sandipan Dhar, Lawrence F. Eichenfield, Carsten Flohr, Alex Ha, Camilo Mora, Jenny E. Murase, Misha Rosenbach, Sahana M. Srinivas, Jacob P. Thyssen, Maria L. Wei, Alan D. Irvine, and Katrina Abuabara.

"We've known for some time that atopic dermatitis is especially sensitive to climatic factors including air pollution, however, there was less clarity around the impact of increasingly common climatic hazards linked to greenhouse gas emission such as warming, heat waves, drought, wildfires, floods, etc," Dr. Abuabara said.

Their work identified 18 studies that linked atopic dermatitis (AD) aggravation to 10 climatic hazards related to greenhouse gas emissions and compared the past, present, and future projected burden of climatic hazards to global AD prevalence data.

Dr. Wang, a recent IEC Fellow, said, "The impact of climatic hazards on atopic dermatitis ranged from direct effects like particulate matter-induced atopic dermatitis exacerbations from wildfires to the potential for indirect effects like drought-induced food insecurity and migration."

[Read the Article on Climate Change](#)

JOIN US IN LISBON!



IEC Partners with IPC to Present Symposium at ESDR in September

The IEC and the [International Psoriasis Council \(IPC\)](#) are working together to jointly present a complimentary symposium, [From Comparative Pathogenesis to Biomarker-Guided Treatments in Psoriasis and Eczema](#), at the European Society for Dermatological Research (ESDR) Annual Meeting in September in Lisbon, Portugal.

Experts from both organizations will present the latest on these important topics as they relate to inflammatory skin conditions from 13:00 to 17:00 CEST on September 4 at the Lisbon Congress Center. Information about the program and faculty will be added the [symposium page](#) as it becomes available.

The IEC last collaborated with the IPC in 2017, when we presented a joint session titled "Evolving Perspectives on Psoriasis and Atopic Dermatitis: Are They Two Diseases or One Spectrum?" as part of AAD's international day.

We hope you will attend [ESDR](#) and plan to join us for this collaboratively produced educational symposium.

Council Members to Be Surveyed on Interest in Presenting at Symposia

The IEC would like to put you at the podium of future symposia to share your expertise!

Presenting symposia at major global allergy and dermatology meetings is one of the most visible ways the IEC furthers its mission. The success of these events depends on the Council members who volunteer to share their expertise with our symposia attendees.

That's why the IEC will soon email a brief survey to Council members asking about potential interest in presenting at a future symposium and about their areas of interest. Indicating interest doesn't obligate you to anything, so we encourage you to fill out the survey honestly to benefit the Council and meeting attendees worldwide. Watch your inbox for an invitation to participate coming soon!

Boost our Message and Mission by Connecting on Social Media

The IEC expanded and improved its online presence with the launch of social media accounts! Click to find and connect with the IEC on four platforms:



Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/people/International-Eczema-Council/61554124067841/>



Twitter

<https://twitter.com/CouncilEczema> (@CouncilEczema)



LinkedIn

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/international-eczema-council>



YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/@internationaleczemacouncil4126>

Visit EczemaCouncil.org to View our Refreshed Website

Keeping with the times, our website at [EczemaCouncil.org](https://www.eczemacouncil.org) was refreshed over the past few months to be more relevant and visually appealing. We'll continue streamlining some navigation and content, based on users' needs, to provide a better experience.

Visit the IEC Website

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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 133 Councilors and Associates from 31 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

