



INTERNATIONAL ECZEMA COUNCIL

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Letter from the IEC President



The past few years have been a none-too-gentle reminder that the world can change in the blink of an eye.

- A mysterious illness can be detected in one country with no indication that it will become a pandemic that runs rampant worldwide.
- A conflict between two countries can displace millions, sending refugees around the globe.
- The death of a monarch after 70 years of rule can unite incite mourning on every continent while also rekindling international debate about colonialism.

The International Eczema Council (IEC) is a relatively young organization. Drs. Amy Paller and Emma Guttman founded the IEC in 2014. In the grand scheme of things, our 8 years of existence is the blink of an eye. But we've

already achieved so much, advancing our goals and underscoring why international efforts matter and how much we have in common, regardless of the country we hail from.

That was certainly on display at the recent [European Academy of Dermatology and Venereology \(EADV\) Congress](#) in Milan, Italy. With my fellow IEC Councilors and Associates, we presented the symposium [Customizing the Treatment of Atopic Dermatitis for Diverse Populations](#) for attendees immediately before EADV. Then, the intrepid Councilors and Associates came together to meet on IEC business—well, those of us who managed to secure taxis despite competing with hordes of football fans.

Symposia and meetings have long been among the standard ways we share breakthroughs and best practices with our fellow physicians and scientists. Top clinicians and researchers from around the world pool insights when the IEC meets. We quickly learn that the standard of care in one country may exacerbate atopic dermatitis in another geographic region due to differences in the climate. What we think of as a standardized method of visually assessing severity may only be effective with certain levels of pigment in the skin. What one country's physicians use as a reliable biomarker for atopic dermatitis isn't being used at all in other parts of the world. Even the therapies we have access to vary by country, creating different experiences for clinicians and patients.

Together, we expand our clinical and research horizons beyond what we can learn from studying patients in one area, one country, or even one continent. That's what is so important about bringing together atopic dermatitis experts from around the world. When we discuss developments and therapies, we gain new insights from other countries where practices are different, and we glimpse treatments that could be the future standard of care for our areas.

Finally, we're able to do that again. After 2 years of canceled or virtual events, we were meeting in person at a major European dermatological congress face to face. Together, we talked, listened, and learned. In person. In Italy.

And we did it all again 28 September at [Single Cell Technologies Applicable to Atopic Eczema](#) at the European Society for Dermatological Research (ESDR) annual meeting in Amsterdam.

Why? Because we have a shared cause. Regardless of the country we're from or the borders that seem to divide us, we work together to improve the lives of patients suffering from skin diseases. We come together for the greater good—and that's an international effort that's greater than tragedy and that overcomes the invisible lines drawn between us.

Robert Bissonnette, MD FRCPC MSc
IEC President

First Round of IEC Fellows Are Thankful for the Program, their Mentors

The first physicians to participate in the [IEC Fellowship Program](#) have positive things to say about their year-long learning experiences.

Pedro J. Gómez Arias, MD, of Spain and **Antonia Reimer-Taschenbrecker**, MD, of Germany were the inaugural fellows when the program was launched last year. Dr. Gómez Arias began his year-long, in-person research fellowship in September 2021, and Dr. Reimer-Taschenbrecker started her clinical fellowship in November with 1 month of training in person followed by an 11-month remote mentorship

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.

Due to the pandemic and the program being in its first year, only two Fellows were initially chosen. Abbvie provided a grant to fund the 2021 IEC Fellowship program. The IEC is pleased to have furthered the education of

these two promising doctors and looks forward to their future contributions to the field.

The IEC plans to grow the program in both size and location. Applications have been received for the 2022–2023 fellowships, and physician awardees selected are **Dr. Sheng-Pei Wang** of California who will be paired with Dr. Lawrence Eichenfield of Rady Children’s Hospital San Diego and University of California San Diego, and **Dr. Caroline Marie Thérèse Mann** of Germany who will be paired with Dr. Amy Paller of Northwestern University. You'll learn more about our new fellows in the next IEC e-news.

IEC Clinical Fellowship



Dr. Reimer-Taschenbrecker

Dr. Reimer-Taschenbrecker was paired with **Amy Paller**, MD, at Northwestern University's Feinberg School of Medicine in Chicago, IL, USA.

After 4 weeks onsite to learn hands-on clinical techniques for diagnosis, treatment, and management of AD, Dr. Reimer-Taschenbrecker took part in 11 months of remote learning and mentorship.

Paller is an IEC director, past president, and cofounder who has a busy AD-focused pediatric dermatology practice at Lurie Children’s Hospital, the Pediatric Dermatology Clinical Trials Unit, and Northwestern’s Skin Biology and Diseases Resource-Based Center.

“It’s been a pleasure to work with Dr. Reimer who brought her experiences as a pediatric dermatologist in Germany during her clinical research rotation sponsored by the IEC,” Dr. Paller said. “We were able to compare notes on our algorithm for intervention and take a look together at how socioeconomic factors affect outcome for our patients, research we continue to pursue.”



Dr. Paller

Dr. Reimer-Taschenbrecker was equally positive.

“Being immersed in Dr. Paller’s clinics was a wonderful experience for me! It was important for me to see AD in a broader variety of skin types, and to see how skillfully Dr. Paller cares for her patients. I gained more insights into the use of systemic treatments for AD even for very young patients both in clinics and in the busy clinical research unit,” she said.

Dr. Reimer-Taschenbrecker is board-certified in pediatrics, dermatology, and allergy and works in the Department of Dermatology and the Epidermolysis Bullosa Center Freiburg at the University Medical Centre, Freiburg. Clinical work, obviously, isn’t new to her, but seeing the differences in care in another country provided insights. “The fellowship also showed me some differences in treatment approaches between my home country and the US,” she said. “Examples include the use of bleach baths, which are more commonly in the USA, and the better acceptance of topical steroids by American parents.”

The American healthcare system provided its own education, too. “I also learned a lot about the US healthcare system and the financial burden that a chronic disease such as AD can mean for a family, e.g., with regard to basic measures such as daily moisturizing—skin care is much cheaper in my home country and is widely covered by insurance for children with AD up to the age of 12 years,” she explained. “My research project which resulted from the IEC clinical fellowship looks at the impact of socioeconomic factors on AD severity and patient-oriented outcome measures in the Midwest US.”

IEC Research Fellowship



Dr. Gómez Arias was mentored by **Emma Guttman**, MD PhD, in “an extraordinary experience” 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.

Guttman is both immediate past president and cofounder of the IEC and considers Dr. Gómez Arias “an outstanding fellow—an extraordinary team player who helped many members of the lab in their experiments.”

He was onsite for a full year, “working on several key projects related to atopic dermatitis, including identifying novel markers that are shared across atopic diseases,” Dr. Guttman said. “He learned cutting-edge techniques in the lab such as RT-PCR and RNA sequencing and also extractions of proteins from skin and single cell analysis.”



Dr. Guttman

His ties to his home country provided benefits for Dr. Guttman’s lab as well. “He fostered collaborations between EU investigators in Spain and our lab on atopic dermatitis.”

Judging by Dr. Gómez Arias’ thoughts, those new connections are likely to continue to benefit the field. “Working in a collaborative environment with exceptional colleagues has truly been a privilege,” he said, “and I look forward to continuing to collaborate with the Laboratory of Inflammatory Skin Diseases at Mount Sinai.”

Dr. Gómez Arias received his medical degree in 2016 from the Universidad de Córdoba in Córdoba, Spain, and completed his residency in dermatology in 2021 at the Hospital Universitario Reina Sofía in Córdoba. He is conducting research in immune-mediated inflammatory skin diseases for his PhD at the Universidad de Córdoba and Maimonides Institute for Biomedical Research of Córdoba (IMIBIC).

“Being able to work alongside Dr. Guttman and her team has helped me strengthen my investigative skills and grow further as both a physician and clinical researcher,” Dr. Gómez Arias said. “I have gained proficiency in several essential laboratory procedures and how to stratify which technique to use based on the disease state and quality of skin samples. I look forward to continuing to use and teach these skills when returning to Reina Sofía University Hospital, Córdoba.”

Another new skill that Dr. Gómez Arias used in Dr. Guttman’s lab is tape-stripping, “a minimally invasive technique that samples skin and provides an overview of the inflammatory profile of patients with autoimmune skin conditions such as atopic dermatitis. It is an exciting and practical alternative to skin biopsies.”

He also furthered his knowledge of and experience with data analysis, “creating figure sets to convey novel findings in molecular and biological science.”

This productive fellowship has resulted in shared education, beyond the immediate participants. “His work will result in key publications on atopic dermatitis,” Dr. Guttman said. “He has given several talks and presented posters in national meetings and will be presenting others in national and international meetings.”

Meet the Councilor: Sandipan Dhar, MBBS MD DNB FRCP (Edin.)

This issue’s ‘Meet the Councilor’ features IEC Councilor Sandipan Dhar, MBBS MD DNB FRCP (Edin.).



Dr. Dhar is a professor and the head of the Department of Pediatric Dermatology at the Institute of Child Health in Kolkata, India. He has been key in establishing pediatric dermatology as a subspecialty in India.

In March, he helped found the Society for Eczema Studies, the first organization of its kind in Southeast Asia, and serves as its president. In 2003, he wrote the first book on pediatric dermatology in skin of colour, which is on its fourth edition. He was president of the *Indian Society for Pediatric Dermatology* for nearly 10 years and editor-in-chief of the *Indian Journal of Paediatric Dermatology* for 9 years.

Dr. Dhar is also a member of the IEC Education Committee. In 2021, he spoke on skin infections in AD for the IEC symposium at the World Congress of Paediatric Dermatology virtual meeting, and earlier this month he presented “Filaggrin gene mutations & AD in children: A focus and observations from the first study of its kind in India” for the IEC symposium “Customizing the Treatment of Atopic Dermatitis for Diverse Populations” at the European Academy of Dermatology and Venereology (EADV) meeting.

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

My proudest accomplishment is to put the atopic dermatitis work and research of India on the global map.

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

The opportunity of interacting with lead researchers on AD across the globe, working with them and sharing a dais with them, and in the process learning various aspects of AD with wide geographic diversity—I consider myself lucky for getting such a unique opportunity through the IEC.

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

Determination of genotype-phenotype variants of AD and identification of various biomarkers of eczema activity/severity, which have high specificity and sensitivity. These will determine more targeted therapy of AD in the future.

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

To understand their disease properly—its course, treatment, comorbidities, dos and don'ts, and long-term disease outcome—and their quality-of-life issues.

Catch Up with the IEC through the e-News Archive

Explore the IEC's [e-News archive](#) for important updates you may have missed. The IEC sends out its newsletter four times a year to share news and content about our organization and upcoming symposia.

Issues are archived by month and year, and each issue is available as a downloadable PDF. You can find links to videos of IEC symposia, summaries of IEC publications on AD, IEC Councilor profiles, infographics to download, and much more. There is so much great information to discover and keep you up to date on what's developing at IEC and in the AD field. Check out this essential [resource](#).

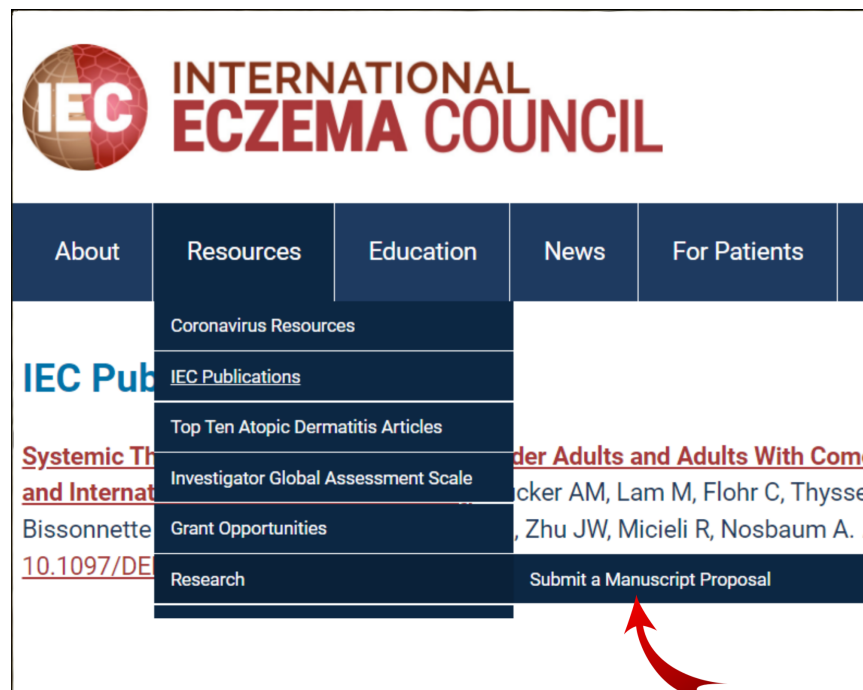
[Visit the e-News archive](#)

Do You Have an Idea for a Journal Article about Atopic Dermatitis?

IEC Councilors and Associates are encouraged to [submit manuscript ideas and proposals on topics regarding atopic dermatitis \(AD\)](#) for potential development into articles published in important journals.

Manuscripts promote AD research and education and increase understanding of AD—important IEC goals. The publishing process, from proposal to print, fosters collaboration between experts, which is also crucial to the IEC. The IEC has published [14 journal articles since 2016](#).

Whether you have a great idea that needs to be developed or you're ready to tackle a specific topic yourself, you can submit your proposal. Submitting a manuscript idea doesn't obligate you to write the article or recruit writers.



Submitted ideas will go through the IEC's manuscript proposal process, advancing through the IEC Research Committee and the Board of Directors. If the proposal is approved, a lead author will be needed to facilitate writer recruitment and manuscript development.

To promote diversity and global participation and leverage the IEC's unique ability to offer a global view of AD treatment, each IEC manuscript's will be written by:

- at least 1 author from North America
- at least 1 author from Europe
- at least 1 author from Africa, Asia, Australia, Central/South America, or the Middle East
- at least 1 IEC Associate

[Submit Manuscript Idea](#)

Spread the Word: IEC Bursary Program Offers Financial Assistance for Travel to Major Meetings to Physicians in Lower-Income Countries

The [IEC Congress Bursary Program](#) offers dermatologists and allergists from lower-income countries who the opportunity to apply for reimbursement of up to \$3,000 in travel expenses to attend in-person dermatology and allergy conferences. Individuals who have completed their residency training can apply for reimbursement to attend:

- American Academy of Dermatology (AAD) Annual Meeting, March 17-21, 2023, in New Orleans, LA, USA
- World Congress of Dermatology (WCD), July 3-8, 2023, in Singapore
- European Academy of Dermatology and Venereology (EADV), October 11-15, 2023, in Berlin, Germany

Application deadlines are approximately 4 months prior to the meeting dates. Priority is given to applicants who will present posters on atopic dermatitis at the conferences.

[Learn More or Apply for the Congress Bursary Program](#)

Meet the Councilor Archive Created

Learn about the diverse experiences of IEC Councilors and gain key insights on their work.

Visit the [Meet the Councilor archive](#) to get a glimpse into the personal perspectives of IEC Councilors who are solving complex dermatological challenges and helping to establish the future of the field.

Read our Q&As with IEC Councilors from around the world and listen to those with audio.

[Visit the Archive](#)

Meet the Councilor

The IEC is comprised of some of the leading experts in the field of Atopic Dermatitis, dedicated to increasing the understanding of atopic dermatitis and promoting its optimal management through research, education, and patient/family care.

On this page we invite you to **'Meet the Councilor'**. Get a personal glimpse into the mindsets of the IEC's leading experts and key opinion leaders in the field who are solving complex dermatological challenges and navigating evolving field opportunities in Atopic Dermatitis and beyond.



Our first installment features **Robert Bissonnette, MD, FRCPC, MSc**, who is the current IEC president. Dr. Bissonnette, from Montreal, QC, Canada, is the CEO and medical director of Innovaderm Research, a contract research organization specializing in the design, conduct, and analysis of clinical trials in dermatology.

Read the summary of our Q&A with Dr. Bissonnette, or listen to his 9-minute audio interview [here](#).



IEC 'Rising Stars' Present Live Symposium at ESDR in Amsterdam

This month, the IEC presented a live symposium at ESDR for the first time since 2017. The IEC offered its second international symposium of the month, **[Single Cell Technologies Applicable to Atopic Eczema](#)**, just before the **[51st Annual European Society for Dermatological Research \(ESDR\) Meeting](#)** in Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

The live symposium was presented on 28 September to a packed room. IEC Director and program co-chair Nick Reynolds, MD FRCP, described it as “one of the best IEC symposia I’ve had the privilege to attend. All speakers were great and it was particularly good to see our rising stars contributing at such a high level.”

Eight presenters from four countries spoke to more than 100 attendees during the session. They covered

- Single-cell genomic technologies
- Fibroblasts’ contribution to the pathogenesis of AD
- The technology of spatial transcriptomics from a clinical standpoint
- Spatial transcriptomics applicable to AD
- New minimally invasive techniques for biomarker discovery

Learn more about the **[symposium and speakers](#)**. Bookmark the **[On-Demand Webcasts page](#)** to view the presentation when it becomes available.

IEC Presents on Customizing Treatment During Live Symposia at EADV

The IEC resumed presenting live symposia at major international dermatological meetings in a big way this month.

Many IEC symposia became virtual events when the pandemic made it impossible to conduct large meetings in person. This year, the IEC educational opportunities have been live at two U.S. meetings (AAD and SID) and virtual for the online RADLA meeting.

This month, the IEC presented live symposia at EADV for the first time since 2018—and just a few weeks before another live symposium at ESDR—following pandemic-related cancellations.

The first of the two symposia took place immediately before the 31st European Academy of Dermatology and Venereology (EADV) Congress in Milan, Italy. [Customizing the Treatment of Atopic Dermatitis for Diverse Populations](#) was presented 7 September.



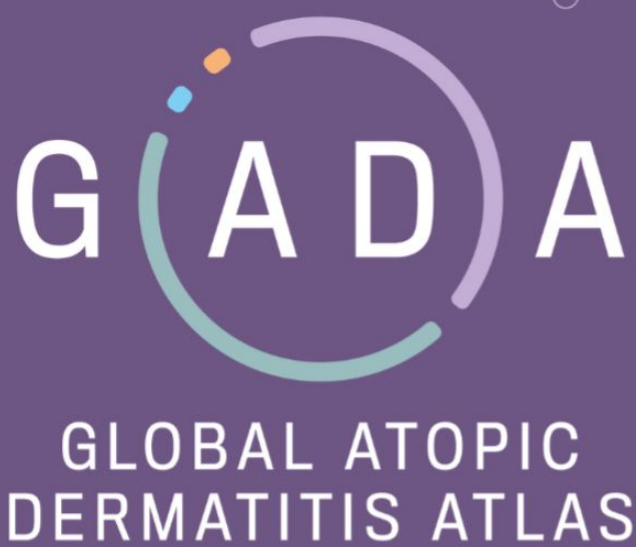
Faculty of the IEC symposium at EADV in 2022 were (from left) April Armstrong, Emma Guttman, Robert Bissonnette, Valeria Aoki, Nick Reynolds, and Sandipan Dhar.

Co-chaired by Nick Reynolds, MD FCRP, and IEC Co-founder and Immediate Past President Emma Guttman, MD PhD, the live symposia drew about 150 attendees to hear the presenters in person.

Five IEC experts from four continents addressed the heterogeneity of AD with new treatments, covering

- Personalized medicine in AD and adapting tape strips for use in pediatric populations
- Evaluation of patients with diverse ethnicities
- Filaggrin gene mutations and AD in children
- Dupilumab and JAK inhibitors in special populations

The presentation soon will be made available for [on-demand learning](#). Learn more about the [symposium and speakers](#).



Report on the Global Burden of Atopic Dermatitis to be Launched

In mid-October, the first Global Report on Atopic Dermatitis will be published, a collaboration between the International Eczema Council, the International Society for Atopic Dermatitis, the European Taskforce for Atopic Dermatitis, the International League of Dermatological Societies, and the International Alliance of Dermatology Patient Organizations (Global Skin). The report marks the start of the Global Atopic Dermatitis Atlas (GADA).

The Global Report on Atopic Dermatitis summarizes the disease burden, the impact on patients' and their families' lives, geographical gaps in prevalence data, and currently available treatments. It also takes stock of inequalities in access to therapeutics in lower resource settings and provides horizon scanning on novel treatment approaches.

GADA is led by Carsten Flohr, MD PhD MSC, Chair of Dermatology and Population Health Science at King's College London and Consultant Dermatologist and Professor at St John's Institute of Dermatology, Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust, UK.

Bookmark the [Global Atopic Dermatitis Atlas website](#) to find the report when it is released.



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 100 Councilors and Associates from 28 countries contribute their expertise to support the IEC's research, programs, events, and education.