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WELCOME to the latest news from the Aspergillus Trust. All members who have registered with the trust will receive this newsletter direct to their registered email account. You can change your options at: www.aspergillustrust.org/updatedetails.asp if you no longer wish to receive newsletters direct to your inbox.

New York Academy of Sciences Symposium

Professor David Denning has made the opening address at a dedicated meeting of the New York Academy of Sciences who held a symposium on the topic Invasive Aspergillosis.

Other speakers were: Kieren A. Marr, Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center; Thomas J. Walsh, National Cancer Institute; Jean-Paul Latgé, Institut Pasteur, Paris; Gordon D. Brown, University of Cape Town, South Africa

Invasive Aspergillosis (IA) is the most common filamentous fungal infection observed in immunocompromised patients and is a leading cause of fungal mortality. These infections are particularly difficult to diagnose and treat, and remain a critical health concern for clinicians with high-risk patients. This Symposium brings together five of the leading clinical and research experts in the world to discuss state-of-the-art issues related to IA and prospects for reducing the health burden caused by this disease.

You can read abstracts from the speakers at: <http://www.nyas.org/events/eventDetail.asp?eventID=7583&date=12/14/2006%204:00:00%20PM> the talks will also be presented online as an e-briefing soon.

A new company **Myconostica Ltd** has been set up to do molecular diagnosis of fungal infections, mostly relevant to invasive aspergillosis

Myconostica Ltd is shortly to launch a series of molecular diagnostic tests, which provide speedy and accurate diagnosis of life-threatening respiratory fungal infections. Myconostica is a University of Manchester spin-out company specialising in molecular diagnostic tests for life-threatening respiratory fungal infection. Myconostica is located in South Manchester, with strong links to one of the University of Manchester's teaching hospitals, Wythenshawe Hospital and the Regional Mycology Laboratory, Manchester.

Founded by David Denning, Professor of Medicine and Medical Mycology, with assistance from Nick Montague and UMIP, it is moving into offices with excellent laboratory space shortly. Myconostica has plans to develop additional molecular tests, once its first product has been launched. See: <http://www.myconostica.co.uk/>

Professor Denning announces the return of Dr William Hope to Manchester

Dr William Hope, originally from Brisbane, is to join David Denning in Manchester as a clinical academic early in 2007. Dr Hope is fully trained in both Infectious Diseases and Microbiology and is waiting to hear about his recently submitted PhD thesis.

He spent 2 years in Manchester as a Clinical Fellow (funded by the Fungal Research Trust) before moving to NIH in Washington where he has worked in Tom Walsh's laboratory. In addition to a couple of important review articles on the Aspergillus syndromes (*Med Mycol* 2005;43 (Suppl 1):S207-38) and *Laboratory Diagnosis of Invasive Aspergillosis* (*Lancet Infect Dis* 2005;9:609-22), he has developed a powerful in vitro model of Aspergillus and its interaction with pulmonary cells.

He has also worked closely with Peter Warn and George Drusano on pharmacodynamics of antifungal drugs. He joins the Regional Mycology Laboratory, Manchester (Lead by Caroline Moore), Dr Paul Bowyer and Dr Ibrahim Hassan at Wythenshawe Hospital.

24th Fungal Genetics Conference

is taking place in March 20-25, 2007 at the Asilomar Conference Center, Pacific Grove, California. This conference is to be followed by:

The Fourth International Aspergillus Meeting

The 4th International Aspergillus Meeting will be held immediately preceding the 24th Fungal Genetics Conference.

6th International Symposium on Antimicrobial Agents and Resistance in Singapore (ISAAR).

Professor David Denning is to give a talk on Molecular Diagnosis of Fungal Infections in Singapore on March 7th 2007. Hosted by the Asian-Pacific Research Foundation for Infectious Diseases (ARFID)

ISAAR is the most well represented meeting in the Asia Pacific region for infectious Diseases and antimicrobial resistance. For further information see: http://www.isaar.org/sub04_general.asp

The efficacy and tolerability of Voriconazole in the treatment of Chronic Cavitary Pulmonary Aspergillosis (CCPA)

Voriconazole is the second oral drug for aspergillosis - the other is Itraconazole - these are important because they can be taken over a long period of time via self-administration. This study looks at how effective this drug was at treating CCPA (64% showed improvement over 3 months) and how easily the drug was tolerated when taken over a long period of time (27% had to discontinue taking the drug, of which more than half had to quit within 1 week).

Conclusion: this is a good alternative therapy for CCPA, but watch out for adverse events particularly occurring within 1 week (Adverse events included erythematous rash, headaches, hepatotoxicity, photosensitive rash, retinal flashes and neurological symptoms).

You can read the full report on our website: www.aspergillustrust.org and click on 'Guides and Information'

AGM and General Meeting

A General Meeting of the Aspergillus Trust took place on Saturday, 7 October 2006, at the Education and Research Centre, Wythenshawe Hospital, Southmoor Rd, Manchester. **June Henriksen - Aspergillus Trust Secretary** wrote the following day:

We had a really worthwhile session at our meeting(s) yesterday. Many thanks to all who attended for the special effort they made - it wasn't easy for Jim, particularly, who didn't get home till 1 am! It was good to meet David and Graham once again, as much time seems to pass between encounters. Both seemed to be in fine fettle. It was great to have one of David's patients there, Jeannie O'Neill, on Voriconazole for ABPA; also the Hunt family: Jeff, Kate and daughter Francesca (Nessie for short). Jeff has CF, ABPA, diabetes 1 and 11, Addison's disease, severe osteoporosis amongst other things, so being well enough to make the trip with his family from Worcester was something of a feat. Added to that, he and Kate made an intelligent and worthwhile contribution, as did Jeannie.

Next Meetings

The next General Meeting will take place in Spring 2007 - Date and Venue will be advised in due course.

Our Annual General Meeting for 2007 will be held in London at St George's Hospital, Tooting.

September/October - date will be announced in due course.

Further details are available at: info@aspergillustrust.org
The minutes of the last meeting are now available to view or download via the 'About the Trust' area of our website at: www.aspergillustrust.org

New Chairman appointed at AGM

Dr Graham Atherton has kindly agreed to take over from Professor Paul Corris as chairman for the coming year. Our sincere thanks go to Professor Corris for his help and encouragement during his period as chair.

Aspergillus Quiz

Want to know more about Aspergillus?

Think that you already know most things? ...think again!

Here is your chance to test your knowledge of Aspergillus by taking part in the Aspergillus Quiz designed by Dr Graham Atherton go to: www.aspergillustrust.org - click on **News and Events** and **The Aspergillus Quiz** to access the test. Good luck ...let us know how you get on!

Annual Competition for Medical Students

The fifth Aspergillus Trust medical student competition is well under way and the posters have been well received by the medical schools with some requests for additional posters as well. Full details available on our website: http://www.aspergillustrust.org/files/at_a4_poster_06-07.pdf **Deadline for entries is 31st March 2007**

Fundraising News

We were again disappointed at the final hurdle in applying for a grant for the trust.

Peter Henriksen, trustee and our advisor on finance and management wrote on 26th October:

I had been hoping to report some excellent funding news this week. I came across the following private foundation (www.ellerman.org.uk) and have been in correspondence with them for funds for the Trust. I was very excited about this because we fitted their criteria exactly - for those interested take a quick look at their site especially the section dealing with health.

I was not hopeful that we would get any support for an epidemiological study (because once again their rules classified such work as 'research' that they would not support). But the list of grants made showed clearly that they supported core, and special project, funding for periods of three years or more in some cases, and especially for patient facing self-help and information charities.

But ...we were turned down because we were too small! They said that their policy was to give minimum grants not less than £10,000 pa (Whoopee!) but that this grant had to be at least equal to one tenth of a charity's other annual income, i.e. such income must be at least £100k pa. So despite fulfilling all their other criteria in spades they were not willing to shift or even put our proposal to their trustees.

Our thanks to Peter - top marks for trying!

Cytokine profiling of pulmonary aspergillosis

This is an attempt to find out one reason why some people suffer from ABPA and CCPA. Both groups of people do not appear to have anything wrong with their immune systems when looked at overall, but the thought here is that there might be some subtle problem with the immune system of these people that allows the infection to persist whereas it would be completely eradicated in most people.

5 genes were chosen after looking for likely candidates in the published literature - IL-10, IL-15 and TGF, TNF, IFN. Normally the rule is that genes change very little between people, with what changes that do occur being rare. The immune system is different, as it has to vary widely to respond to the widely varying threats from infections. All of the genes in this study vary widely. Each person was screened for the 'variety' of each gene they possessed. The result was that people with aspergillus infections were found to have a high frequency of IL-15 and low frequency of TNF - a substance required for protective responses - compared with people who do not suffer from aspergillus infections.

CCPA patients have low IL-10 and TGF - both substances responsible for controlling the inflammatory response.

Conclusion: There do seem to be some grounds to suspect that a chronic, non-invasive aspergillus infection can occur in a person with quite specific defects in their inflammatory response - in the case of CCPA it seems to be lack of control of inflammation.

You can read the full report on our website: www.aspergillustrust.org click on 'Guides and Information'

Seen something in the news

Have you seen something in the news that might interest other members? Did you know that you can add topical news items to the AT online forum? If you have seen something interesting in the news, on a website perhaps, or read an article that may be of interest to other members then this is the place to let others know.

Simply click on www.aspergillustrust.org log in and click 'forums' then 'seen in the news' and 'new topic' and follow the easy steps to add your article.

You tell us

Please take a little time to let us know what you think of our website, our newsletter, how you got on with the aspergillus quiz, or any other issues that are important to you, our members - **please feel free to let us have your views** - news@aspergillustrust.org

Help us by simply registering

www.aspergillustrust.org/register.asp

Have you registered with the AT yet?

It's entirely free, it doesn't bite, and we promise your details will not be shared with any other parties.

Doing so helps us to compile data on how widespread the suffering and interest in aspergillus disease is and helps us to campaign and fight on your behalf. No information will be identified with you personally, it will only be used to provide general statistics. If you experience any problems in registering, simply email support@aspergillustrust.org and we'll be happy to help.

Ways to help

There are many ways that you can help the Aspergillus Trust in its work, these include:

- Becoming a Member ...join us and pledge your support.
- Contribute to our Voluntary Subscription scheme.
- Support other members by joining our online community forum
- Share your skills and ideas with us to further the aims and objectives of the AT.
- Volunteer to help us in organising our regional meetings and distributing information and help to other Aspergillus sufferers in your area.
- Invite family and friends to become AT supporters ...many companies for example have 'Dress Down Charity Days' - suggest that they consider nominating the AT as their Charity.
- Help with fundraising by taking part in or organising events and raising sponsorship for the trust.
- By making a donation.

On a final note

On behalf of everyone involved with the Aspergillus Trust a big **Thank You!** to all who have helped and contributed towards our work for this year.

...we wish all our members and supporters
'Compliments of the Season' and
'A Healthy, Happy and Peaceful 2007'

Jim Breen

Seasonal Recipe

Christmas Mincemeat: Submitted by Julia Breen

"A really scrumptious 'no added sugar' recipe for delicious mincemeat"

900g (2lb) Mixed Dried Fruit, 450g (1lb) Cooking Apples, peeled and grated, 2 teaspoons ground mixed spice, 575ml (1pint) Medium Sweet or Dry Cider, 50g (2ozs) hazelnuts (optional), 2 tablespoons Brandy.

Method

- 1) Simmer the dried fruits, apples and spice in the cider for about 20 minutes, or until the fruit is pulpy and most of the liquid has evaporated.
- 2) Stir in the hazelnuts and brandy.
- 3) Pack into cooled, sterilised jars and cover with a waxed disc and cellophane cover or store in a polythene tub. Keep in the refrigerator until required. It keeps for up to 4 Months.

This recipe is from a book called **'Best kept Secrets of the Women's Institute'** by Midge Thomas.
Simon & Schuster ISBN 0-74322-113-3

Want to Donate

You can donate simply easily and securely by clicking here: <https://secure.efundraising.org.uk/tailored/donation.asp?charity=72201> ...this is our secure online donation facility operated on behalf of the AT by the Charities Aid Foundation (CAF). You can choose to pay into the voluntary annual membership scheme, our marathon fundraising appeal or simply make a donation direct to the general fund of the AT.

This facility also enables you to pay by £ Sterling / \$ US Dollars / Euros ...you can also donate by post to:

Aspergillus Trust
PO Box 168
Hexham NE46 9AN
United Kingdom

...cheques should be made payable to the Aspergillus Trust and crossed **'A/C PAYEE'**

"We make a living by what we get, we make a life by what we give"

Sir Winston Churchill
British politician (1874 - 1965)

Got a news item?

We want you to contribute to future editions of the AT News ...we would welcome topical aspergillus related articles for inclusion in the newsletter. You may also submit short stories, your favourite recipes, poetry, jokes (keep them clean please) ...in fact anything you feel may be of interest to your fellow members.

If you have any news, articles, ideas, comments, or information you would like to contribute to future publications of the AT News please get in touch at:
news@aspergillustrust.org

Please Note:

Articles will be included entirely at the discretion of the board of Trustees