World-Leading Asthma Experts Unite To Reduce European Mortality Rates

Friday 6 June, 2014

Asthma experts from across Europe are uniting this week (7-11 June) in Copenhagen at the European Academy of Allergy and Clinical Immunology (EAACI) Congress 2014 to tackle Europe's high asthma prevalence and death rates.

The current outlook for asthma is bleak. Around 30 million people in Europe have the condition, and 14 EU countries feature in the worst 20 countries globally for asthma prevalence rates. Between now and 2020, if no major breakthroughs in research and the management of asthma are made, about 120,000 people in Europe will die as a result of asthma attacks, and 4 million people will be hospitalised. Not only that but the social and economic cost of asthma to Europe is high – productivity lost to asthma is estimated at 9.8 billion Euros per year.

Experts are meeting as part of an EU-funded project called the European Asthma Research and Innovation Partnership (EARIP) which brings together asthma experts from across Europe to define what's needed to reduce asthma deaths and hospitalisations in all EU member states. This is likely to include the need to develop a test to diagnose asthma; to find ways of speeding up the discovery of new treatments and getting them to patients more quickly; to identify the best ways (using new and existing technologies) of helping patients prevent life-threatening asthma attacks; to identify the elements of cost-effective asthma care that can be embedded in all health care systems; and to describe a funding mechanism through which the European Commission can support the work needed to make these changes. The EARIP Partnership itself is stellar, comprising top academics from world class institutions across Europe, global pharmaceutical companies, EU patient advocacy groups and the two major European respiratory professional organisations. Additionally, more than 50 researchers, networks and organisations across Europe are affiliated to EARIP to help it deliver its goals.

Dr Samantha Walker, Project Co-ordinator of EARIP and Director of Research and Policy at Asthma UK, who is attending EAACI, says: “15,000 people in Europe will die because of asthma in the next 12 months alone – it is time that the EU stops and listens as this isn't going to change unless we act now. We are at a crucial point in time where we can reduce these numbers.

“EARIP is vital because it is the world's largest integrated approach to prioritising research, development and innovation needs in asthma. It is unique; no network like this exists anywhere else. By sharing best practice and facilitating learning across other countries we will have a comprehensive 'road-map' of asthma priorities across Europe that can be used to ensure investment in asthma so that we can reduce the impact it has on people and on society as a whole.”

There will be two workshops taking place at EAACI, where asthma experts will come together to 1) begin discussions about what a 'cure' for asthma might look like and 2) identify new systems, models and tools to understand and identify different types of asthma (otherwise known as phenotypes) with a view to developing more targeted treatments.

Dr Nikos Papadopoulos, President of the European Academy of Allergy and Clinical Immunology and one of EARIP's Partners and work-package leaders, adds: “EARIP has the potential to transform asthma outcomes in Europe. These two workshops are the first two of a series that will take place over the next 18 months and the first to come out of EARIP since we formed in 2013. We hope that EAACI members will get involved in EARIP's activities, and would urge interested individuals to contact EARIP through its website www.earip.eu.”

- Ends -

For interviews with Dr Samantha Walker please call the media office on 020 7786 4949 or email mediaoffice@asthma.org.uk. Please call 07951 721393 out of hours.

Notes to editors:

EARIP consists of 8 work streams:
1) The co-ordination of all activities to identify ways to:
- Reduce asthma deaths in Europe by 25% within 10 years and 50% within 20 years.

Related Sectors:

Health :: Medical & Pharmaceutical ::

Related Keywords:

Asthma UK ::

Scan Me:

- Reduce hospitalisations by 50% and
- Increase optimum self-management (through uptake of self-management plans) by 20%.
2) Biological objective
- Identify better ways to develop new biological targets and use existing ones more effectively
3) Biological objective
- Understand asthma phenotypes with a view to developing better treatments
4) Clinical & translational objective:
- Establish the criteria and processes that would allow development of better and more efficient health and healthcare systems across Europe to deliver better outcomes for people with asthma
5) Clinical and translational objective:
- Define and agree plans to improve diagnostic and patient self-management tools
6) Structural objective:
- Agree pan-European asthma research priorities to create an asthma Roadmap so that researchers know what to focus on (and the EU know what to fund) to improve outcomes
7) Structural objective:
- Establish what is needed to create a European Innovation Partnership (EIP) for the management of asthma to create a vehicle for increasing research funding for asthma
8) Structural objective:
- Create a proposal to establish a European network of clinical asthma research facilities to speed up innovation and availability of new treatments

EARIP Partners
- Asthma UK – Dr Samantha Walker
- Imperial College, UK - Prof. Sebastian Johnston
- Karolinska Institutet, Sweden - Prof. Sven-Erik Dahlen
- European Federation of Asthma and Allergy Associations (EFA) - Dr Susanna Palkonen
- Novartis – Dr Thomas Martin
- Fundacion Para La Formacion e investigacion Sanitarias de la Region de Murcia, Spain – Prof. Luis Garcia-Marcos
- European Lung Foundation - Dr Pippa Powell
- GlaxoSmithKline - Dr David Myles
- University of Lodz, Poland - Dr Maciej Kupczyk
- Swiss Institute of Asthma & Allergy Research - Prof. Cezmi Akdis
- National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece - Dr Nikos Papadopoulos
- University of Southampton, UK - Prof. Ratko Djukanovic

About EARIP
EARIP aims to reduce asthma deaths in Europe by 25% within ten years and by 50% within 20 years. The partnership, which is co-ordinated by Asthma UK, also aims to halve hospital admission rates, speed up the discovery of new treatments and improve self-management. EARIP takes a truly European co-ordinated and integrated approach to asthma research, development and innovation.

Running over three years its programmes range from basic cell science to improving healthcare systems. Supported by the European Commission, it brings together asthma experts from across Europe to define what's needed to reduce asthma deaths and hospitalisations in all EU member states.

About Asthma UK
Asthma UK is the UK's leading asthma charity for the 5.4 million people with asthma. Our goal is to prevent asthma attacks, especially those that result in death and emergency hospitalisation.

We're here to provide support for people with asthma when they need us the most and fund world-leading research to find better treatments and a cure. The Asthma UK Helpline offers independent advice about asthma for anyone worried about asthma or who would like to talk confidentially to a specialist asthma nurse. It is open weekdays from 9am to 5pm on 0800 121 62 44. For more information about asthma please visit www.asthma.org.uk

About The European Academy of Allergy and Clinical Immunology
The European Academy of Allergy and Clinical Immunology is a non-profit organisation active in the field of allergic and immunologic diseases such as asthma, rhinitis, eczema, occupational allergy, food and drug allergy and anaphylaxis. EAACI was founded in 1956 in Florence and has become the largest medical association in Europe in the field of allergy and clinical immunology.

It includes over 7,800 members from 121 countries, as well as 42 National Allergy Societies.

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