

The Day of Immunology 2007 Goes Global

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Two years have passed and the Day of Immunology (**DoI**) has taken place twice with great success [1-5]. In 2005, media coverage of the **DoI** was widespread among all societies, enhancing public awareness of immunology and reaching decision makers through hosting symposia and lectures as well as making numerous television appearances and press conferences. (To view a film produced for this event please see <http://www.dayofimmunology.org/links/>.) The **DoI** was an initiative of the the European Federation of Immunological Societies (**EFIS**), which operates under the auspices of the International Union of Immunological Societies (**IUIS**). **EFIS** is a federation of 28 societies of immunology in 31 European countries, fostering research, education and contact between its members. Tangible evidence of **EFIS**'s work towards enhancing greater communication between the public and member societies is in the officially launching of the **DoI** on 29 April, 2005, by **EFIS**. For further information on **EFIS**: www.efis.org and **DoI**: www.dayofimmunology.com.

Despite remarkable successes, such as vaccination, the role and importance of immunology in other scientific and medical disciplines is frequently underestimated. AIDS, Avian flu, and old and newly emerging infectious diseases rank highly among health concerns of all people. The **DoI** offers much to this increasing interest in immunology. The great success of all members' events and the high level of participation in the first **DoI**, made a second **DoI** worthwhile. Under the exciting theme of "Partnerships in Immunology and Education" (PIE), the **DoI** 2006 (April 29, 2006) encouraged **EFIS** members to reach out to elementary- and high-school level students with novel proposals for partnerships. The aim of **DoI** 2006 was to present younger students with an exciting view of immunology, thereby increasing their interest in the subject. Education has an enduring impact on young people, and we believe that the future of science depends on generating interest in students at an early age. Interest among students will improve awareness of health issues within families, and, in some cases, propel students into higher science education and science careers. To entice scientists to become involved in the PIE initiative, a series of prizes were awarded for the most unique concepts at the European Congress of Immunology (ECI) in Paris, September 6–9, 2006.

The enthusiastic response towards the **DoI** prize competition and interest generated made it clear that the **DoI** has been widely accepted within Europe. Numerous proposals were submitted for evaluation by the prize committee. They covered a wide range of projects from one-day activities during the actual **DoI** to regular visits and demonstrations in schools and university-based programs for teaching students. All of these were of high quality and represented contributions of several European nations. The jury evaluated proposals according to criteria such as positive educational impact, originality, practicability and description.

Reinhard Nestelbacher from Austria, proposed a Flying lab and successfully met prize requirements of the committee. As first-prize winner, he received a monetary award and travel to the ECI in Paris. Four major immunological journals contributed additional prizes by sponsoring a one-year free subscription, namely, *Nature Immunology*, *Immunity*, *European Journal of Immunology* and *Immunology Letters*. All winners were invited to join the ECI in Paris where all prizes were awarded during a special ceremony

Following the enthusiastic acceptance of the **DoI** in Europe, several **IUIS** members expressed their wish to join in a global immunological information exchange. The **IUIS** council officially decided in March 2006 to join the campaign. The first **Global DoI** was born and is scheduled to be celebrated in 2007 with the official date April 29, 2007. The mandate of the **IUIS** is to promote international cooperation in immunology within its subject areas as well as between member societies. The overall goal of advancing immunology is achieved by the participation of its 54 Member Societies. Thus, this makes the **IUIS** a most important and potentially effective instrument for increasing awareness of immunology and enhancing public health, with the activities of its Regional Federations in Europe, Latin America, Africa and Asia-Oceania, and its other members worldwide. For further information on **IUIS** see www.iuisonline.org. The **Global DoI** is an exciting development with enormous potential. Nevertheless, the challenge remains for organizers to bring a large number of culturally and linguistically unique immunological societies under one global umbrella.

Thanks to the digital age we are all united globally by the internet. In the **Global DoI** 2007, full use of the opportunities presented by this global linkage will be made. We do hope that this virtual association will facilitate real contact within as well as between societies, by making possible the announcement of meetings and events and providing a forum to discuss immunology and make lasting contacts for the future. National societies should consider the theme of their **Global DoI** 2007 and begin preparing a novel website that their members can be informed about. The World Wide Web will act as a platform upon which plans, activities and ideas will be shared. Resources including an informative movie will be provided on this platform for use by all. National societies will provide a web address that can be linked to the **Global DoI** 2007 platform.

We hope that all societies make the most of this special opportunity to participate in this unique global immunology forum: offering information, inviting exchange, announcing ideas and activities, and bringing immunology and health to all people worldwide. It is our sincere hope that the **Global DoI** 2007 will shape a global community of immunologists for the future (<http://www.dayofimmunology.org/initiative>).

References

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