



## Science and Outcomes of Allergy and Asthma Research (SOAAR)

*August 2017 Newsletter*

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### SOAAR Presentations



#### **European Academy of Allergy and Clinical Immunology: Greetings from Helsinki, Finland!**

On June 20th, Dr. Gupta presented the following research at the 2017 European Academy of Allergy and Clinical Immunology conference:

- The Global Economic Impact of Childhood Food Allergy
- Understanding Predictors for Severe Allergies in Pediatric Food Allergy Natural History Registry.

"The EAACI meeting was an amazing experience as we were able to meet leaders in food allergy and asthma from around the world," says Dr. Gupta. "EAACI recently awarded us a grant to determine the global impact of food allergy, with a focus on economic impact. We discussed the grant with allergy leaders from ten countries during a breakfast meeting and our goal is to administer a survey in Fall 2017."

SOAAR plans to have the data analyzed by next summer, in time to share with everyone at the 2018 EAACI conference.

#### **Additional Resource**

[EAACI Press Release: On the Road to Prevention and Healthy Living – EAACI Welcomes the World of Allergy at its Annual Congress in Helsinki](#)



#### **Microbiome in Pregnancy and Infant Development Symposium**

On June 13, 2017, Dr. Gupta presented "Early Diet and Environment's Impact on Microbiome and the Development of Allergies" during the Microbiome in Pregnancy and Infant Development Symposium, held

at the Knapp Center for Biomedical Discovery at the University of Chicago. This inaugural symposium united Chicago-area researchers and clinicians interested in reproductive and maternal child healthcare. The one-day event featured a scientific poster session, opportunities to coordinate inter-institution data sharing, and talks by leaders in microbial research.

### **Association of Asthma Educators (AAE) conference: Unraveling Current Asthma Challenges**

On July 30, 2017, Dr. Gupta presented, "Addressing health literacy issues - A constant challenge" during the 2017 Association of Asthma Educators conference held in Milwaukee, WI. To access Dr. Gupta's Powerpoint slides, click [here](#).

For more information, visit: [Conference Overview](#).

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## **SOAAR Welcomes 2017 Summer Interns**



*(From left to right: Olivia Negris, Alexandria Bozen, Avneet Chadha, Sofia Debbiche, and Anita Holmes.)*

Each summer, Dr. Gupta and her team provides a group of college and graduate students with hands-on public health research internships where they gain experience in recruiting study participants, writing manuscripts, and interpreting data. This summer, SOAAR welcomes 9 interns, three of whom are returning for a second summer\*. We are pleased to introduce:

- **Alexandria Bozen** graduated in May 2017 from St. Louis University in St. Louis, MO, with a Bachelor of Science in Health Care Management and a minor in Biology (PreMed track). Her summer projects include helping to create a survey for the [Global R21](#) project as well as recruiting patients and extracting data for the Natural History study. This past week, Ms. Bozen worked in a lab and learned to extract DNA from bacteria in order to identify their strains.
- **Avneet Chadha** is a rising senior at the University of Michigan and is studying kinesiology. Mr. Chadha is supporting SOAAR's [iTRACC study](#) and recruiting participants for SOAAR's [Natural History](#) study.
- **Sofia Debbiche** is a rising junior at Northwestern University, where she is majoring in Chemical Engineering, minoring in Legal Studies and earning a certificate in Entrepreneurship. Ms. Debbiche is working on [YoBee](#) and iTRACC. YoBee is a study involving the use of a hair serum and cream to determine its' effectiveness in restoring the microbiome of atopic skin and dry scalp to more closely resemble healthy skin.
- **Anita Holmes** is a graduate student at Chicago State University, where she will graduate in December 2017 with a Master of Arts degree in Geography, GIS concentration. During her summer internship, Ms. Holmes is supporting the [food allergy prevalence in adults and children study](#).

- **Alexander (Sasha) Mitts\*** is a graduate student at Northwestern University's School of Engineering. He will earn his Master of Science degree in Engineering Design Innovation. Mr. Mitts is supporting the SOAAR team this summer by working on the YoBee project.
- **Olivia Negris** is a rising senior at the University of Michigan majoring in Biopsychology, Cognition and Neuroscience and minoring in Women's Studies. In addition to writing sections of the food allergy prevalence study publications, Ms. Negris is recruiting participants for SOAAR's Natural History Project.
- **Mary Siracusa\***, a rising 2nd year medical student at the University of Illinois, graduated from the University of Michigan with a Bachelor's degree in Neuroscience. During her summer internship, Ms. Siracusa is recruiting patients for SOAAR's Natural History study and supporting the [Anaphylaxis Registry](#) project.
- **David TaeEun Lee** is a rising junior, majoring in Chemical Engineering at Northwestern University. Mr. Lee will support the SOAAR team in researching the YoBee project.
- **Justin Zaslavsky\***, a rising junior at Tufts University, is studying Community Health with a minor in Philosophy. As a child, he was diagnosed with both asthma and life-threatening food allergies. During Summer 2017, Mr. Zaslavsky will examine [epinephrine auto-injector practices of food-allergic children and their parents](#).

## SOAAR Research Project

### Food allergy management Outcomes Related to White and African-American Racial Differences (FORWARD) Study

*\*recipient of NIH R01 grant funding*

With this grant funding, SOAAR will examine disparities in the ways that food allergy develops, affects, and is managed by African American and Caucasian children in the U.S. through the use of a prospective, longitudinal design. SOAAR will enroll and follow cohorts of African American and Caucasian children to determine differences in food allergy clinical and psychosocial outcomes, the ways and mechanisms through which their allergies manifest themselves, as well as their management practices. A total of 1,000 families will be recruited.

The Northwestern University coordinating site is on track to recruit at least 400 families by September 2017. A total of 600 new families with children ages 0-12 will be recruited from allergy clinics in four academic medical centers located in three cities (Chicago, IL; Cincinnati, OH; and Washington, DC). Outcomes will be measured at baseline and at every four months for two years. Participant's clinical medical record data, survey data, and biological sample will be obtained.

### FORWARD Team Members (by location)

[Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine/ Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago](#)

- [Ruchi Gupta, MD, MPH](#)—Principal Investigator
- [Satyender Goel, PhD](#)—Co-Investigator/Technical Lead
- [Jackie Pongracic, MD](#)—Co-Investigator (Lurie)
- [Anne Marie Singh, MD](#)—Co-Investigator (Lurie)

- [Bridget Smith, PhD](#)—Methodologist
- Jesse Blumenstock—Senior Data Analyst
- Jialing Jiang—Research Assistant
- Pamela Newmark—Project Coordinator

[Children's National Medical Center/ Children's Research Institute](#) (Washington, DC)

- [Hermant Sharma, MD](#)—Principle Investigator
- [Burcin Uygungil, MD, MPH](#)—Co-Investigator
- [Linda Herbert, PhD](#)—Co-Investigator
- Sonia Capriles—Research Nurse Coordinator

[Rush Medical Center](#) (Chicago, IL)

- [Mary Tobin, MD](#)—Principle Investigator
- [Mahboobeh Mahdavinia, MD, PhD](#)—Co-Investigator
- Susan Fox—Clinic Research Coordinator

[Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center](#) (Cincinnati, OH)

- [Amal Assa'ad, MD](#)—Principle Investigator
- Christina James—Clinical Fellow
- Jane Robinson—Clinical Research Coordinator II
- Mike Eby—Data Analyst

Focus Pointe Global (St. Louis, MO)

- [Kay Savio](#)—Vice President, Client Development and Clinical Research

**Additional Resources**

- [SOAAR's FORWARD Press Release](#)
- [Research Paper: Racial Differences in Food Allergy Phenotype and Health Care Utilization Among US Children \(November 2016\)](#)
- [Rush University Medical Center Article, "African-American, White, Latino Children Have Different Food Allergen Profiles"](#)

## In the News

["Can You Develop Food Allergies at Any Age?", New York Times, August 4, 2017](#)

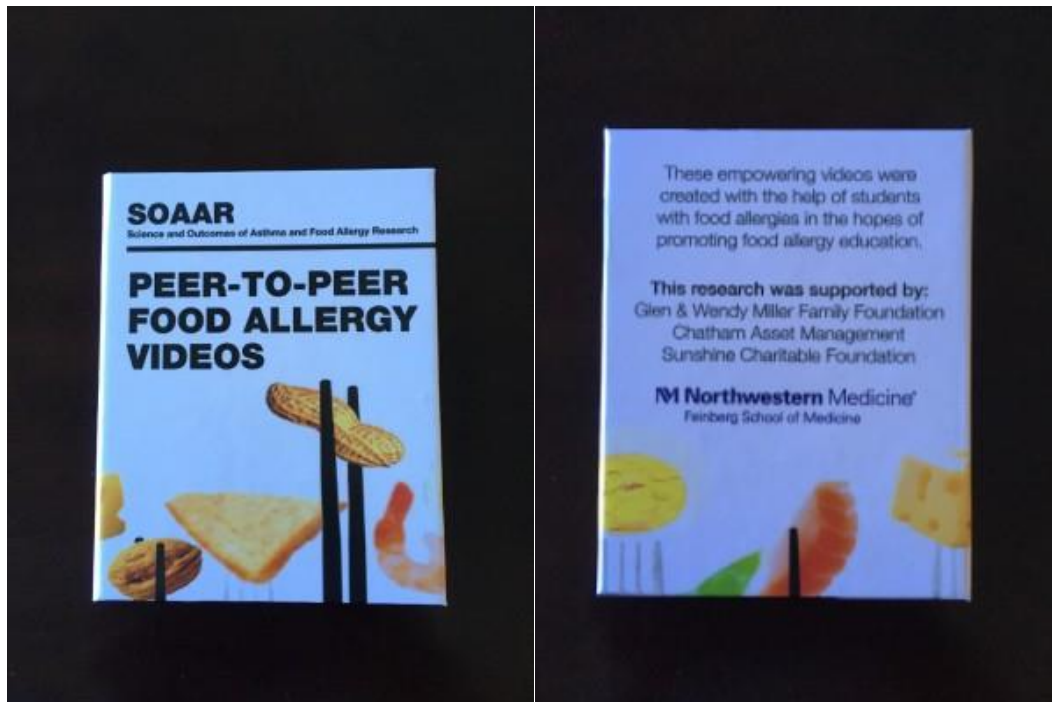
*"At allergy meetings around the world, you'd hear more and more about adult-onset food allergy", says Dr. Ruchi Gupta. "But this was all anecdotal. That's the reason we did the study, to get the numbers behind how frequently."*

## Did You Know?

Between May 5th and June 27th, SOAAR distributed **500 copies** of their Food Allergy Video USB drives! SOAAR distributed the first half to participants who attended the 2017 FARE Spring Luncheon in Chicago. Allergy & Asthma Network distributed the other 250 copies, on SOAAR's behalf, during the 2017 National Association of School Nurses conference held in San Diego, CA.

**Limited Supply Left!**

SOAAR has only 50 USB drives left in stock! To order your free copy, email [soaar@northwestern.edu](mailto:soaar@northwestern.edu).



## Questions?

Email [Brenda Silvia-Torma, MEd](mailto:Brenda.Silvia-Torma, MEd), SOAAR Communications Coordinator

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Come SOAAR with us!  
Support our research and help find answers.  
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