



## October Newsletter

### ***Boo! Halloween is just around the corner. Are you ready?***

Check out our newest infographic about preparing for Halloween with allergies and asthma and share with others in your community. To view, click [here](#).

What are your "go-to" strategies for a safe and happy Halloween? Post your ideas on our FB page, "[SOAAR/Food Allergy Experience](#)". We look forward to hearing from you!

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### ***Research Spotlight***

#### **Prevalence, Severity and Distribution of Childhood Food Allergy (FA) in the U.S.**

It's been 6 years since SOAAR published the landmark study proving that 8% of U.S. children have a life-threatening food allergy. Since current U.S. chronic disease surveillance does not include FA, SOAAR developed a follow up study to determine if there has been any changes. Between October 2015 and September 2016, 53,575 U.S. households completed cross-sectional surveys on behalf of 41,341 children (<18 years). Results are preliminary and will be presented by Ruchi Gupta, MD, MPH and Christopher Warren, PhD (c), part-time SOAAR research coordinator, on October 30th at 2017 American College of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology conference held in Boston, MA.

The preliminary results from this study have already been highlighted in Chicago Magazine!

Click [here](#) to read the full article, "Food Allergies Aren't Just a Kid's Problem, Ruchi Gupta Says".



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## ***New Publications***

["Economic Factors Impacting Food Allergen Management: Perspectives from the Food Industry"](#) was published in the October 2017 issue of Journal of Food Protection. The article was co-authored by several people including the following SOAAR staff: Dr. Ruchi Gupta, Lauren Kao, and Dr. Bridget Smith.

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## ***Academic Presentations***

### **Completed**

On September 26th, Dr. Gupta presented "Early Diet and Environment's Impact on Microbiome and the Development of Allergies" at this year's Indian Network for Soil Contamination Research (INSCR) International Conference held at the University of Delhi, in Delhi, India. For more information, visit:

<https://inscr.in/Conference2017/>



## **Upcoming**

### *American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology (ACAAI) Conference*

- During the ACAAI conference, Dr. Gupta will moderate the Aimmune Corporate Forum: "From Diagnosis to Potential Future Oral Immunotherapeutic Options: Understanding the Burden and Risk of Avoidance in Peanut Allergy".
- On October 27th, Dr. Gupta will present, "School-based Asthma Interventions Program: Lessons Learned from the Student Asthma Research Team (START)" at the USAsthma Summit in Boston, MA. Her presentation will include a showing of the student-produced START PSAs.
- On October 28th, Dr. Gupta will present "How to Work with Primary Care Providers to Identify High-risk Children for Referral" during the Demystifying Early Introduction of Food to Prevent Food Allergy session at the ACAAI conference.
- On October 30th, Dr. Gupta and Christopher Warren, PhD (c), will present two oral abstracts:
  - The Prevalence of Nut and Seafood Allergies Among Adults in the United States
  - The Prevalence of Childhood Food Allergy in the United States: An Update

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## ***Welcome New SOAAR Staff!***

### **Ozge Nur Aktas, MD, Research Scholar**

Dr. Aktas graduated from Koc University School of Medicine, Istanbul in 2016 and joined SOAAR in September 2017. Her research interests are in pathophysiology, phenotypes/endotypes, prognosis and outcomes of pediatric food allergies. Previously, Dr. Aktas conducted research on food allergies and the microbiome at the University of Illinois at Chicago. As a research scholar, she supports the FORWARD and Natural History studies and assists with writing and editing research publications.





**Alexandria Bozen, Research Assistant**

Ms. Bozen received a Bachelor of Science in Healthcare Management with a minor in Biology and Pre-Med track from Saint Louis University in May 2017. Upon graduating, she joined SOAAR as an intern and has now become a full-time research assistant. In her position, she works on multiple projects including the iTRACC, FORWARD, and Natural History studies. Ms. Bozen is also developing a survey that will examine the economic cost of food allergy on a global scale and is collaborating with multiple countries to do so.

**Crystal Johnson, MA, Research Project Manager**

Ms. Johnson manages the FORWARD study and supports certain aspects of the Natural History of Food Allergy study. In addition, she assists with data management and analysis, donor and grant administration, and patient recruitment. Ms. Johnson is dedicated to investigating health disparities research for underserved populations including youth and young adults, racial and ethnic minorities, low income persons, and incarcerated populations. Prior to joining SOAAR in September 2017, she worked for various universities using her mixed methods research background, with expertise in qualitative research. She earned her Master of Arts in Forensic Psychology from the Chicago School of Psychology and her Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from Clark Atlanta University. Ms. Johnson is currently enrolled as a Master of Science student at Northwestern University, where she is studying Integrated Marketing and Communications.



## ***Partner Spotlight: MOCHA***

FARE'S 2017 Food Allergy Heroes Walk may have been canceled due to the rain, but SOAAR believes Denise Bunning still won for Best Costume!



Denise, the founder of MOCHA (Mothers of Children Having Allergies), is an incredible advocate for parents living with children who have life-threatening allergies. As a mother of two food allergic children, Denise established a parent support group to share experiences and lessons learned. By “providing information and opportunities, [MOCHA] aims to make living with allergies just a little bit easier!”

To learn more about MOCHA and all of the amazing resources they have to share, visit their website at [www.mochallergies.org](http://www.mochallergies.org)

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## ***Community Outreach***

### *Francis W. Parker High School*

On September 27th, SOAAR team members participated in a civic engagement fair at Francis W. Parker High School in Chicago, IL. The purpose of the fair was to help students learn about local community organizations and how they can get involved either as volunteers or participants. Approximately 350 high school students (15-18 years old) attended the fair; 30 students signed up with SOAAR to receive additional information.



### *Ullas Young Achievers CAN DO Workshop*

On September 24th, Dr. Gupta presented on the topic of sparking curiosity and staying inquisitive to more than 3,000 high school students during the 20th Annual Ullas Young Achievers CAN DO Workshop held in Chennai, India. The primary goal of the Ullas Young Achievers program is to "recognize academic excellence in students from economically challenged sections of our society and encourage the "can do" spirit toward chasing their dreams and aspirations".



Ullas is guided by the following principles:

- A young mind learns through observations and by expanding his/her view.
- A young mind is inspired by experiencing role models.
- A young mind gets energized and further encouraged by recognition in a larger group
- Maximum change in thought process occurs between ages 13 and 16. During this critical time, positive influences are amplified.
- You must visualize your dreams before they can become a reality. When you put your dreams in writing, your personal commitment to achieving that dream increases. This in turn increases the chance of making that dream a reality.
- If one's thoughts are supported and discussed with a mentor, friend and guide, momentum toward the goal is accelerated.

*"This was a truly inspirational experience", says Dr. Gupta. "I was able to positively impact these students' dreams and in turn, they energized me to keep working to improve the health and lives of children and their families."*

Click [here](#), for more SOAAR community outreach pictures.

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## *Infographics*

### **SOAAR Infographics**

Want to know the impact that Dr. Ruchi Gupta and her team have had on the allergy and asthma fields? [Check out our new research infographics to learn more.](#)

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## *Awards*

Congratulations to Sasha Mitts, a 2017 Summer SOAAR Intern; Carlos Armada; and Katrina Shah for winning one of four 2017 Design Management Institute "Design Value Awards" for their work on the Compass portion of the [Spotlight on Campus Allergies](#) project.



### Questions ?

Email [Brenda Silvia-Torma, M.Ed.](#), SOAAR Communications Coordinator





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