Leading Immunologists Convene in Boston

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Over a thousand scientists and clinicians will convene to present new advances in understanding and treating immune-mediated diseases at FOCIS 2008, the 8th annual meeting of the Federation of Clinical Immunology Societies (FOCIS), June 5-9 at the Boston Marriott Copley Place.

Conference participants will present new research findings for conditions in which the human immune system plays a significant role, such as Multiple Sclerosis, cancer, allergy and asthma, diabetes, inflammatory bowel disease, and AIDS. The topics and speakers will address underlying immune pathogenesis, novel therapies and shared insights on topics such as new mechanisms and therapeutic targets, innovations in genetic approaches and how inflammatory regulators communicate danger.

In contrast to traditional medical meetings which focus on particular medical specialties, the FOCIS approach is to highlight and probe the underlying common elements of diseases which can lead to better therapies. "As the immunology field rapidly advances in clinical trials and the introduction of new and specific immunotherapies the opportunity to share knowledge and speed progress has never been greater," says Dr. Jerry Nepom, MD, PhD, Director of the Benaroya Research Institute at Virginia Mason, Seattle, Wash. and president of FOCIS.

"Today, immunology represents a critical pathway to unlock answers to treat many of today's diseases. To that end, it is important to broaden the access to educational programs to further immunological knowledge for investigators, basic scientists and clinicians. The FOCIS annual meeting provides a forum for this timely exchange. This meeting brings special value by translating knowledge from basic science into multiple clinical disciplines to both understand and treat immune-based diseases," Nepom said.

Nepom says the translational approach to medicine is taking hold at medical schools and hospitals around the country. For instance, the National Institutes of Health, the US government's medical research body, launched its Roadmap for Medical Research to establish a call for scientists to move beyond the confines of their own discipline and explore new organizational models for team science.

"Translational medicine is the future, as we know it," Nepom said. "FOCIS has been the voice of translational immunology and we're very excited that this idea beginning to change the way we view medicine."

For more information about FOCIS 2008 and program scheduling, visit http://www.focisnet.org.

Federation of Clinical Immunology
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