

## MEDIA ADVISORY

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**For Immediate Release**

### **PRESS Release**

#### **- Eczema patients undertreated -**

The prevalence of allergic diseases has increased dramatically over the last decades, without reaching a plateau. Currently, prevalence estimates range from 20 to 30% for allergic rhinoconjunctivitis (hay fever) 5 to 10 % for atopic eczema (around 20 % in childhood) and 15 % for allergic contact dermatitis. Allergy manifests itself in various organs, most commonly in the skin and mucus membranes, i.e. the barriers between the individual organism and the environment. The economic burden of allergic diseases in Europe is tremendous and is estimated to range between 50 and 600 billion Euros per year - just as estimated work loss. Eczema goes along with intense pruritus and impairment in the quality of life.

At the conference with EU officials educational programs for "eczema schools" with proven efficacy were presented, which, however, do not reach the patients can use. The impairment of quality of life - by itch, disfigurement and disturbed skin functions - in eczema is considerable. With a prevalence of 10 to 20 % affected individuals in the population, eczema represents a major socioeconomic problem in Europe. Professor Johannes Ring (Munich) called it a "scandal" that many eczema patients have to pay for their emollient treatment themselves; it is as if "diabetics had to pay the insulin themselves as basic therapy"! The European Academy of Dermatology and Venereology (EADV) will point out these problem to the public in an "Eczema Campaign 2008".

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### **About EADV**

Founded in 1987, EADV is a non-profit association whose vision is to be the premier European Dermato-Venereology Society with important aims of

- leading to improved quality patient care,
- continuing medical education (CME) for all Dermato-Venereologists within Europe and advocacy on behalf of the specialty and patients.

The concept of membership has been widened to include all areas of Europe and elsewhere, and to develop alliances and affiliations with other organisations. The current elected officers come from Greece, Germany, Iceland, Italy and Malta, while previous honorary officers were from the UK, Greece and Belgium. The EADV has undertaken the task of promoting CME through organizing major congresses throughout Europe, initially on a biannual basis starting in Florence in September 1989, and since 1995 as an annual event. Cities which have hosted EADV congresses include Athens, Copenhagen, Brussels, Lisbon, Dublin, Nice, Amsterdam, Geneva, Munich, Prague, Barcelona, Florence, London, Rhodes and Vienna. Future congresses are planned for Paris (2008), Berlin (2009) and Gothenburg (2010).

### **About GA<sup>2</sup>LEN**

GA<sup>2</sup>LEN, the Global Allergy and Asthma European Network, is a "Network of Excellence" funded by the European Union 6th Framework programme for research. It consists of 26 research centres, as well as the European Academy of Allergy and Clinical Immunology (EAACI) and the European Federation of Allergy Patients Associations (EFA). GA<sup>2</sup>LEN multidisciplinary research teams address all aspects of allergic diseases with an aim to improve the understanding of common risk factors and mechanisms and to harmonize European research in allergy and asthma. In the field of skin allergy, GA<sup>2</sup>LEN recently developed guidelines, in collaboration with the EAACI, on food allergy and eczema, urticaria and diagnostic tools for allergy.

For more information, please visit [www.ga2len.net](http://www.ga2len.net)