



ASIO Newsletter, June 2008

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Outgoing President's Message – Dr. Madhu Soni

As the outgoing President of Association of Scientists of Indian Origin (ASIO), the simple truth is I really enjoyed my tenure as President of ASIO. At times, it has been a challenging role, but I believe as toxicologists, we are all used to being constantly challenged. I am personally very proud of our accomplishments as an organization and how far we have come. The first and foremost is the recognition of ASIO by Society of Toxicology (SOT) as a Special Interest Group (SIG). This was a group effort and with contributions by several key individuals, we created a self-sustained SIG with a diversified financial base that complements the goals and objectives of the SOT. We have accomplished a lot of work, including creating various subcommittees and organizing a well attended 2008 Annual meeting reception followed by dinner. Because of substantial financial support from members like Dr. Dharm Singh, ASIO is the first and only SIG that has initiated a permanent Student Award this year. Recently, Dr. Mehendale also made a significant contribution to ASIO and the Executive Committee is initiating another permanent student or post-doc fellow award for next year. ASIO has recently developed its web-site and this will enable the officers to more effectively serve to make ASIO a more attractive SIG to a larger number of our colleagues in the field both in the US and India. This I believe will change the way ASIO is being perceived right now i.e. we meet annually at SOT to highlight some accomplishments and then have dinner (although personally that has always been a very enjoyable time for me!) to a group of knowledgeable peers who can assist and network with fellow colleagues and students both in the US and in India in addition to discussion of scientific issues. Tackling several of the issues during the time of our “growing pains” would have been impossible without a willing and able Executive Committee. So I want to thank Gopala Krishna, Chellu Chetty, Prakash Nagarkatti, Sanjay Chanda, Gunda Reddy, Hari Mehendale, and others who worked tirelessly on behalf of ASIO. I think you will agree that we are really beginning to see the fruits of many years of efforts and I look forward to continued progress in the coming years.

President's Message – Dr. Gopala Krishna

It has been a great pleasure to continue to serve ASIO at an even more challenging level this year as the incoming President. Indeed, over the years, we have continually increased our visibility in the Society of Toxicology as well as serving as the focal point of information exchange and networking for toxicologists of Indian origin. The outgoing president, Dr. Madhu Soni, has clearly summarized the accomplishments during the past years, which form the stepping stone for a new **TEAM** to take our organization to the next level. To this end, we have established multiple committees with defined charges along with periodic updates and teleconferences. This year, a proposal submitted to SOT by Drs. Mahadevan and Soni on Bhopal chemical spill disaster has been accepted as a historical highlight session for the 2009 meeting in Baltimore. Our communications group has liaised with SOT communication team and newsletter, so, periodic communications from ASIO can be shared with the broader group. With the formation of dedicated ASIO-SOT webpage, most of the relevant information can be found with ease. This effort will continue to evolve and increase to a point when announcements, postings and links can all be found with ease in one place. We have formally listed the office bearers with their brief bio on the webpage for ease of communicating and staying in touch on a worldwide basis.

With strong support from the ASIO office bearers and members at large, I am looking forward to great years ahead, so, a true global reach can be achieved and a difference can be made to the younger generations of toxicologists. Indeed, preparations

for the next 2009 SOT meeting in BALTIMORE, MD, are on the way! I request all of you to be there to share the ASIO knowledgebase.

SOT Annual Meeting in Seattle – update on ASIO sponsored programs:

- In his welcome address, Dr. Madhu Soni recognized the elected ASIO Officers and provided a background on the establishment of ASIO as an SIG.
- Dr. Nagarkatti followed with an overview of our goals, activities, and by-laws.
- Dr. McClellan then elaborated on the establishment of endowment funds and ways in which SOT will match them.
- Dr. Chetty announced the Student Awards and gave each of them a plaque.
- An honorable mention was made of students and faculty receiving various SOT awards.
- Three senior members - Dr. Singh, Dr. Mehendale and Dr. Brar were recognized by Dr. Reddy for their support in the establishment of the endowment fund as well as the foundation laid for the sustained functioning of the SIG. Please see below the short biographies of the awardees.

The highlights of the ASIO reception were presentations by two invited speakers: The first speaker, Dr. P.B. Deshmukh (Jai Research Foundation, Vapi, India) spoke on Preclinical Research in India. The second speaker Dr. Srikanth Nadadur (NIEHS, Research Triangle Park, NC) enlightened us on career opportunities in toxicology in a US Government setting. The reception ended with final concluding remarks by Dr. Soni and exchange of leadership batons with the newly

elected president of ASIO, Dr. Krishna., followed by an Indian dinner at Chutney Grille, downtown Seattle.

2008 ASIOA Student Award Recipients

Asaithambi Arunkumar, is currently pursuing his doctoral studies in Toxicology (Advisor: Dr. Anumantha Kanthasamy), at Iowa State University. His research focuses on characterizing the functional role of novel protein kinase isoforms during oxidative damage in Parkinson's disease

Atrayee Banerjee, received her PhD in Toxicology (Advisor: Dr. Shashi K Ramaiah) from Texas A&M University. Her graduate research work encompasses understanding the role of an important matricellular protein - Osteopontin in causing higher susceptibility of females to alcoholic liver disease. Atrayee is also the recipient of the SOT Novartis Graduate Fellowship 2007-2008 and she is currently doing her post-doctoral fellowship at Missouri University.

Awards/Honors received by members

ASIO would like to congratulate the following members for their outstanding achievements

Dr. Anumantha Kanthasamy, Professor at Iowa State University has been recently awarded the title of "Clarence Hartley Covault Distinguished Professor" in Veterinary Medicine. Dr. Kanthasamy is an internationally renowned neuroscientist. His research focuses on understanding the cellular and molecular mechanisms of Parkinson's disease and other neurodegenerative disorders, and the development of novel therapeutic agents to treat such disorders. Dr. Kanthasamy holds the W.E. Lloyd Chair in Neurotoxicology and is director of

the Iowa Center for Advanced Neurotoxicology.

Dr. Siddharta Ray, Professor of toxicology at the Arnold and Marie Schwartz College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences, Long Island University received University's biennial "Lifetime Achievement in Scholarship Award" [also known as Abraham Krasnoff Memorial Award] for outstanding scholarly achievement. He is also a recipient of University Excellence in Teaching Award in 2005.

Dr. Shashi Ramaiah, Associate Professor, Texas A&M University received the Colgate Palmolive Grant for Alternative Research

Prasad Krishnan, graduate student at LSU Health Science center, LA was selected as the finalist for the "Jason A. Cardelli Award for Excellence in Cancer Research at Feist Weiller Cancer Center", Shreveport, Louisiana in April, 2008.

ASIO recognized the following senior members for their outstanding contributions to the growth of our organization:

Dr. Dharm Singh received his DVM in 1959 from Bihar Veterinary College, Patna, India. Further on, he obtained his MS in Veterinary Medicine and Ph.D. in Endocrinology in 1967 from the University of Missouri, Columbia, MO. In 1967 he joined the University of California, Berkley, CA as Assistant Research Endocrinologist. Later he moved to Michigan on a dual appointment to work as a Senior Scientist at the Michigan Cancer Foundation and as Assistant Professor of Oncology at Wayne State University School of Medicine, Detroit, MI. Since 1977 he has been working as Senior Toxicologist at

the US EPA, Washington D.C.

Dr. Balbir Brar received his D.V.M. from Punjab University Chandigarh .He obtained his Ph.D. in Toxicology Pathology from Rutgers N.J. State University in 1966 and subsequently finished his finance training from Harvard Business School, Boston. He has worked in major pharmaceutical companies as Sr. scientist/ Director and Vice President Drug Safety at Lederle laboratories (Wyeth), Smith Klein and Allergan Pharmaceutical, respectively. He played a major role in the development of a number of very successful drugs currently marketed world wide. Currently Dr. Brar works as a consultant, Chief Scientific officer, and Sr. V.P. R&D for Biotechnology companies.

Dr. Harihara Mehendale received his Ph.D in 1969 from North Carolina State University. After a brief stint with NIEHS, he joined the University of Mississippi Medical center, MS where he served as professor and director of the toxicology training program. He moved to University of Louisiana at Monroe in 1992 and is currently working there as professor and Kitty Degree Endowed chair in toxicology. He is a recipient of numerous national and international awards. He has mentored nearly 50 graduate and post doctoral students and published more than 250 peer reviewed articles in toxicology.

Update on ASIO Endowment Funds

ASIO-SOT has instituted two endowment funds of \$25,000 each with generous contributions from Dr. Dr. Dharm V. Singh, Dr. Harihara Mehendale and matching contribution from SOT. We are proud to inform you that ASIO is the front runner among the

SIGs in instituting the endowment funds. The proceedings from this endowment will be used for giving travel award to graduate students/post docs to attend the SOT meeting every year. If you would like to contribute to these ASIO-SOT Endowment funds, please see details below. Your contribution is tax deductible and will also be matched by the SOT. Check payable to:

'Society of Toxicology Fund' for ASIO-SIG

Mail To: Society of Toxicology Fund
1821 Michael Faraday Drive, Suite 300
Reston, VA 20190

ASIO Sponsored event proposed for the 2009 SOT Annual Meeting in Baltimore, March 15-19

A proposal titled "A Quarter of a Century (1984-2009) Since the Bhopal Disaster: Lessons Learned (Chaired by Dr. Brinda Mahadevan, Schering-Plough Research Institute and Dr. Madhu Soni, Soni & Associates Inc.), sponsored by ASIO has been accepted for a historical highlight session at the SOT 2009 meeting in Baltimore. So stay tuned for details!



Did you like this issue of the ASIO newsletter? We would like to hear back from you. Please email any one of us in the committee and provide your feedback. Your suggestions and comments are highly appreciated.

Please visit our website:

<http://www.toxicology.org/isot/sig/ASIO/index.asp>