

ASIO NEWSLETTER

November 2013

*Editors: Sachin Bhusari, Shirisha Chittiboyina, Prasad
Krishnan, Lakshmi Sivaraman, Mamta Behl*



30th Anniversary Edition

President's Message

Fellow ASIO members,

I am very excited to celebrate the 30th anniversary of ASIO's first meeting at SOT. ASIO was officially launched as a Special Interest Group (SIG) within SOT in 2006, but our 'get togethers' started in the early 1980s. We evolved from a 'meet-at-someone's hotel room' organization to an organization which is now one of the most active SOT- SIGs with 3 endowment funds and with over 200 members. We reminisce on the history of ASIO in this newsletter in the interviews with Dr. Dharm Singh and Dr. Chellu Chetty. We hope you will find the information educational and inspirational as I did. ASIO would not have been successful without volunteer's help since its inception. I take this opportunity to SALUTE the past, present, and future volunteers of the organization. We plan to continue the 30th anniversary celebrations at our annual reception held during SOT 2014 annual meeting. I request all of you to send any information or pictures you may have about ASIO activities from previous years so we may go down memory lane at our annual reception.

The preparations for 2014 ASIO Annual Reception are in the works. It will be held on 24 March, 2014 from 7-9 PM. We hope to see you there. Please share this event invitation with everyone. ASIO sponsors a number of awards for students, postdocs, early-career professionals, and senior toxicologists. I invite all our fellow Indian toxicologists to apply or nominate eligible candidates for these awards. Our mentoring programs, Lunch-N-Learn (LNL) and coffee hour sessions have received great feedback in the past years and these activities will be sponsored again at 2014 SOT annual meeting. You will find more information on these various ASIO activities in this newsletter.

I am proud to inform you that ASIO will be hosting a series of free and open-to-all webinars on cutting edge topics in toxicology. The first of these webinars titled "*Omic*s" *Applications in Translational Pharmacology and Toxicology*" will be hosted on Friday, Dec 13th, 12:00 - 1:00 p.m., USA EST. The webinar speaker is one of our own, Dr. Shashi Ramaiah. Please share the information as widely as possible. Our energetic and persistent webinar committee has secured funding from SOT for hosting the upcoming webinar. Join me in congratulating our webinar committee – Sainath (Chair), Shirisha, Sudheer, Mamta, and Priya. Feel free to submit your suggestions for topics and speakers for our future webinars.

Dr. Dharm Singh's generous offer to sponsor new ASIO members for first year is extended until 31 December, 2013. I urge current ASIO members to encourage non-members to take advantage of this offer and enjoy the benefits of the ASIO membership. Note that one can become an ASIO member paying a nominal fee of only \$15/year without having to become an SOT member. Also, the first SIG (such as ASIO) membership is free for students and post-doctoral members of SOT. Great news for toxicologists who reside in India – SOT full membership is available at a subsidized rate for only \$50 (regular price \$138), which includes free ASIO membership and other benefits. Please spread the word around and encourage all non-members to become ASIO and/or SOT members.

I thank the hard work of current ASIO BOD members and volunteers. I also thank the support of ASIO membership. Your support is what keeps this organization vibrant and energetic. We are going strong and I am optimistic we will continue to grow by adapting new ways and improving on previous ones. Feel free to send me your feedback on current activities and ideas for new ones. I strongly encourage members to volunteer for ASIO activities. The more, the merrier! I look forward to working with all of you for the growth of our organization. Enjoy the rest of the Newsletter.



Together, Everyone Achieves More (TEAM)
S. Satheesh Anand

ASIO OFFICERS 2013-2014

President:

S. Satheesh Anand
Satheesh.S.Anand@DuPont.usa.com

Vice President:

Sachin Devi
sdevi@lecom.edu

Vice-president elect:

Sudheer Beedanagari
beedanas@bms.com

Secretary/Treasurer:

Jatinder Singh
singh.jatinder@gene.com

Councilors

Past President:
Saryu Goel
saryu.goel@gmail.com

Mamta Behl
mamta.behl@gmail.com

Lakshmi Sivaraman
Lakshmi.Sivaraman@bms.com

Post-Doctoral Representative

Sainath Babu
biosainath@gmail.com

Student Representative

Shirisha Chittiboyina
schittib@indiana.edu

ASIO AWARDS 2014

2014 ASIO-SIG Awards- Dec 15th, 2013 deadline

As the SOT 2014 Annual meeting is fast approaching, so is the deadline for ASIO-SIG awards. We invite all of you to consider nominating yourself or any eligible colleague of yours for the following listed awards.

Dr. Laxman Desai & Dr. Harihara Mehendale Graduate Student Best Abstract Awards (Four Awards)

*NOTE: Students need to submit **only one** application to be considered for both Dr. Laxman Desai & Dr. Harihara Mehendale Graduate Student Best Abstract Awards.*

Dr. Dharm Singh Postdoctoral Fellow Best Abstract Award (Two Awards)

ASIO-SIG International Travel Award (One Award)

ASIO-SIG Young Investigator Award (One Award)

ASIO-SIG Senior Toxicologist Award (One Award)

To apply for above listed ASIO-SIG awards, please submit your complete application to **Mamta Behl**, by e-mailing to asioawards@gmail.com, **on or before Dec 15th, 2013**. For complete award descriptions, eligibility criteria and additional information please visit our website: <http://www.toxicology.org/isot/sig/asio/Awards.asp>

Although being a member of ASIO is not a requirement to apply for ASIO 2014 awards, we strongly encourage all the award applicants to become members of ASIO to support and strengthen ASIO organization. For more information on how to become ASIO members, please visit <http://www.toxicology.org/isot/sig/asio/membership.asp>

Sincerely, ASIO-SIG Awards Committee.

30th Anniversary Special
Interview with
Dr. Dharm Singh



1. As one of the founding fathers of ASIO, please shed some light on the inception of ASIO?

I was attending several conferences like American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) and I saw many Indians at these conferences. However, we didn't have any place or association to meet with fellow Indians. There were people like Dr. Mehendale, Dr. Desai who felt the same and we came together and decided that we will gather Indian attendees at SOT and meet with them as a group. Dr. Chellu Chetty was a tremendous help with these efforts.

2. Could you please share with us the early days of ASIO?

In the earlier days, SOT was a very small meeting with about 1000 people attending it. We used to hold the ASIO meeting in some hotel room. We bought some chips and drinks. We requested any Indian attendee we came across in SOT to come for meeting. In those days we didn't have Indian restaurants near the convention place. So we used to hire a bus and take the people who came for ASIO's meeting to an Indian restaurant and bring them back. I recollect the help offered by one Dr. Vasant Malset in arranging the transportation of the ASIO participants to and from the Indian restaurant.

3. What are your thoughts and experiences of ASIO under new leadership?

I still continue to support ASIO under the new leadership. Earlier, I have helped many Indian students to attend the SOT meeting. Recently, I have sponsored the membership fee of any new member of ASIO. This year I have sponsored about 60 new members.

4. How do you feel about the ASIO of today?

I am very happy about the growth of ASIO.

5. What message would you like to convey to new members of ASIO and the future leaders of ASIO?

Do your best. Always help each other, never pull down others.

30th Anniversary Special
Interview with
Dr. Chellu Chetty



1. As one of the earliest members of ASIO, please shed some light on the inception of ASIO?

ASIO-SOT is an offshoot of the parent organization, Association of Scientists of Indian Origin in America, Inc. (ASIOA) which was incorporated in 1981 in which I am also a life member. In January 1982, I had joined the University Medical Center, Jackson MS as a visiting scientist and had the privilege of working with senior toxicologists, Drs. Desaiiah and Mehendale who were also very active in ASIOA. I used to help them in mailing newsletters etc. to the ASIOA members and participated in the informal conversations to establish ASIO-SOT. In 1983, I travelled with them to attend the 22nd Annual Meeting of Society of Toxicology in Las Vegas. One evening both Drs. Desaiiah and Mehendale invited some of their long time Indian colleagues including Dr. Dharm Singh for an informal get-together in their hotel room. I still remember carrying some coke bottles and chips for this informal snack meeting at which an idea was floated and a seed was planted for ASIO-SOT.

2. Could you please share with us the early days of ASIO?

Since the ASIO-SOT was started as a non-structured organization with no funds we struggled to get around 20 Indian Toxicologists (less than 15% of Indian Toxicologist attending the Annual SOT meeting) to join us for a dinner meeting at an Indian Restaurant. Since I have friends and former students in many major cities, I volunteered to help Drs. Desaiiah and Mehendale in the arrangement of these dinner meetings mostly at Indian Restaurants. I used to take donations to pay for some of the meeting expenses and left the rest with them for mailing and other miscellaneous expenses. The growth of ASIO-SOT from 1983-2003 was slow and steady.

3. Could you please tell us about your association with ASIO under new leadership?

The first turning point was around 2003 when Dr. Desaiiah moved to Industry and Dr. Mehendale had set back with his health, they requested Madhu Soni (who worked as postdoctoral fellow with Dr. Mehendale) to take the charge. Madhu had requested Gopala Krishna, Sanjay Chanda and Pallavi Limye and me for help. We readily accepted the invitation and decided to go for a structured organization with an executive board and a membership fee. In December 2003, we sent the first Newsletter to all members. In March 2004 this has enabled us to plan some activities after a traditional dinner at Café Bombay (Baltimore, MD). Our approach to have a keynote speaker and recognition of some senior members (Drs. Krishan Reddy and Vodela Lalwani) and four doctoral students received encouragement and financial support especially from Dr. Dharm Singh to expand the activities in the following years.

The second turning point was in 2006 when of Dr. Prakash Naggarkatti who was on the SOT Special Interest Group (SIG) Task Force helped us in drafting the bylaws and in the integration of ASIO into SOT which has provided \$2,000 annual support.

Interview with Dr. Chellu Chetty continued

The third turning point was in 2007 when one fine morning I received a call from Dr. Dharm Singh who has doubled his donation pledge to \$10,000 and guided me to negotiate with the SOT for matching to establish an endowment fund. In less than a week, I was able to receive additional \$2,500 from other members to meet the SOT matching requirement of \$12,500. This was first ASIO-SOT SIG \$25,000 Endowment Fund which was named after Dr. Dharm Singh. This has really paved the way for second one, Dr. Mehendale Endowment Fund in 2008 and third one, Dr. Laxman Desai in 2009. Several of ASIO-SOT members have also contributed to these Endowment funds, which enable the organization, as a model SIG. Three Endowment Funds in three years was a major accomplishment.

4. How do you feel about the ASIO of today?

Due to conflict of SOT meeting dates with the NSF-ERN conference, which I was mandated to attend because of a major grant, I could not attend the SOT in the last three years. However, I have participated in some of the teleconferences and closely monitored the activities. Kudos to ASIO officers who have been diligently working to maintain the momentum that was created in the last decade and initiate some programs such as Mentoring Program. Mentoring is my specialty and I strongly believe this initiative would enhance the network and enable the young toxicologist to be successful in their endeavors.

5. What message would you like to convey to new members of ASIO and the future leaders of ASIO?

I strongly feel that it was a collective effort to achieve what we see today. We (ASIO Officers) never had even one misunderstanding during our long association with this organization. One thing I always liked and wanted was not to give scope for the politics, which would destroy all our efforts. I hope the legacy would continue and it will move to the next level. We the seniors are just a phone call away to help this tree (organization), which was planted 30 years ago to grow further. I am very glad to see that the tree has fruits for the next generation of Indian Toxicologists. Please continue to encourage and groom the younger generation to play a role in the ASIO-SOT. I plan to see you all at the 2014 meeting in Phoenix.

Movers and Shakers

Dr. Rao Uppu Appointed as the Director of Environmental Toxicology PhD Program and as ATS fellow!

We are pleased to inform the appointment of Dr. Rao M. Uppu as the Director of Environmental Toxicology PhD Program at Southern University and A&M College, Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Dr. Uppu was also accepted as a prestigious fellow of the Academy of Toxicological Sciences (ATS)! Dr. Uppu, a longtime member of SOT and ASIO is well recognized for his work in the areas of ozone-mediated oxidations, oxidative and nitrosative stress, and cell signaling. He has published over 60 peer-reviewed articles (several of) which are well cited and some over 200 times. He has been working in these areas of oxidative biology/molecular toxicology for over 20 years and has trained numerous students of Indian, American and Chinese origin. He is currently mentoring 7 doctoral students in his laboratory at Southern University. In 2011, the Telugu Association of North Association "TANA" honored him with Excellence in Science Award for his contribution to the Indian Community.



30 years!! ASIO-Association of Scientists of Indian Origin has completed 30 successful since its inception. ASIO has embedded in its memorabilia founders, board of directors, numerous volunteers, award winners and sponsors who made this 30yr anniversary happens. Congratulations to all those who have been and are part of this success.



ASIO ACTIVITIES AT SOT 2014

ASIO reception

When: Monday, March 24, 2014; 7:00PM to 9:00PM

Where: TBD, Phoenix, AZ

ASIO has received tremendous positive feedback from its members in the past years about their reception and will be continuing this tradition in 2014. ASIO welcomes you to join fellow toxicologists for an evening filled with fun and networking with fellow Indian toxicologists at ASIO-SOT reception 2014 at Phoenix, AZ.

LUNCH N LEARN (LNL)

When: Tuesday, March 25, 2014 12:00PM TO 1:30PM

Where: TBD - Phoenix, AZ

Experts: TBD

We encourage you to come with a diverse and challenging set of questions for our highly qualified and carefully selected speakers from different areas of Toxicology. This would be a great opportunity to connect with professionals a few years ahead of you on the same exciting career path of a Toxicologist!

If you have suggestions or want to learn more about the LNL program, please feel free to drop an e-mail to Shirisha Chittiboyina at schittib@indiana.edu

COFFEE HOUR

Don't miss the coffee hour with an expert!

This event is designed for more targeted conversations between motivated students/postdocs and generous and experienced toxicologists. We assure you this would be one of the best opportunities you would get to illuminate the career path ahead of you!!!

So don't delay...*Go ahead and sign up for coffee hour as a mentor or mentee at SOT by signing up on the ASIO COFFEE HOUR MENTOR MENTEE sign in sheet. For additional details please contact our coffee hour coordinator Roshni Rao. Email: roshisalive@gmail.com*

ASIO Tox-Webinar

In recognition of dynamic technological advances in various arenas of toxicology testing in the 21st century, ASIO-SOT is hosting a series of Tox-webinars. The goal is to educate students, post-docs and fellow toxicologists with novel, cutting edge research technologies, and to foster interaction and collaboration between scientists within the community.

Hereby, we proudly announce the first of this webinar series

Webinar Topic: **“Omics” Applications in Drug Discovery and Development**
Speaker: **Dr. Shashi K Ramaiah, DVM, PhD, DACVP, DABT**
 Translational Biomarker Head, Drug Safety Research and Development,
 Pfizer-Biotherapeutics, Cambridge, MA
Date: Friday, Dec 13th
Time: 12:00 - 1:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, USA (EST)
 [International attendees please convert your local time accordingly]
Registration: First come-first serve [Link](#)

The webinar will address the application of “omics” approaches as biomarker tools in drug discovery and development. Understanding transcription (mRNA, miRNA), translation (and its modifications) and the metabolites are fundamental to interrogate the mechanistic pharmacology and toxicity of complex human disease. The insights lend itself to the development of biomarker signatures to understand the mechanism of action of a drug and its efficacy, patient enrichment and stratification in clinical trials. Hence, biomarker platforms and technologies have evolved to provide practical applications as well as less resource-intensive approaches.

ASIO Membership

ASIO, as an organization has always strived to increase its membership every year and in this effort it is thankful for the help of our existing members and volunteers. Dr. Dharm Singh’s generous offer of sponsoring new ASIO members for first year is extended till Dec 31st 2013. So, ASIO strongly encourages you to avail this opportunity.

Note that one can become an ASIO member (paying only \$15 yearly for membership) without having to become an SOT member. Also, the first SIG (such as ASIO) membership is free for students and post-docs members of SOT. Great news for toxicologists who reside in India – SOT full membership is available at a subsidized rate for only \$50 (regular price \$138), which includes free ASIO membership and other benefits. Please pass the word around and encourage all non-members to become ASIO and/or SOT members.

You can renew your ASIO annual membership online when you pay your annual SOT membership dues, simply by checking ASIO membership listed under SOT-SIG membership section. The membership is free for students and postdocs, and costs only nominal fee for associate and full SOT members. For more information on ASIO organization or how to become ASIO members please visit:

<http://www.toxicology.org/isot/sig/asio/membership.asp>

ASIO-SOT and AoT, India Collaboration!!

Association of Toxicology (AoT)
(www.aotox.org)

Association of Toxicology (AoT) is a professional organization of toxicologists representing academia, industry, non-profits and government organizations working in India to foster knowledge and research excellence in the field of toxicology. AoT was formed out of a need in the country (of course India) both in the CRO, but also in product development companies for training and improvement of talent and also increasing the talent pool of the growing demands in the country. Hence, the main aim of AoT is simply to come up with a variety of training programs which are good for the Industry and also for National Research Institutes (CSIR, ICMR etc.).

Major areas that we concentrate are as follows:

1. Education and training in Toxicology and GLP at affordable cost and some cases free for Minorities and Women.
2. Structured annual training plan in Toxicology and GLP at different regions.
3. Providing expert opinions on issues of national importance.
4. Developing Human Resources in Toxicology for the 21st Century.
5. Accrediting Centers of Excellence in Toxicology.
6. Creating a roster of experienced Toxicologists with diverse experiences, which can be used by National and International bodies for expert opinion.
7. Membership is open to anyone across the World.
8. AoT memberships are voluntary by the participant.
9. One time, Life membership for individuals.
10. One time, Corporate Life membership for industries and other organizations

In the last year (2012) we have conducted the first Study Director training in India by bringing in 8 special experienced staff from US which offered a three day training course which was attended by 145 members.

In the present year (2013), we have organized a three day training course on “Hands on Training Workshop on Preclinical Research” in Bangalore from 21 to 23rd November 2013 which has a total registration of 130 members.

In the next year (2014), we are offering the first ever Residential Training course on Biomedical device testing and development offered by Dr. Shayne Gad from US who is delivering a three day course from 17th to 19th February 2014. We will continue to develop specialized training course on diverse topics of interest to toxicologists in the country to improve the standard of toxicological excellence in India.

Article By

Dr.K.S.Rao, M.V.Sc, PhD.,DABT
Chief Scientific Officer
Rao Toxicology Foundation
Bengaluru, India



YouTox Video Challenge

SOT | Society of Toxicology

Submit a Video and Win a Prize!

Video answers the question,

“Why Did I Become a Toxicologist?”

- The video should be no longer than five minutes.
- Video will be judged on creativity and how effectively they describe what a toxicologist does. Videos should be original, convincing, memorable, and fun!
- Submissions due 12:00 noon on Wednesday, January 15, 2014. Contact Jessica Roberts at jessica.roberts@utah.edu to submit your entry.
- Cash prizes for 1st (\$300), 2nd (\$200), and 3rd (\$100) place.

Co-Sponsored by:
Communications Committee
Graduate Student
Leadership Committee

If you have questions contact:

Joy Cavagnaro
jcavagnaro@accessbio.com

Holly Hewitt
holly.hewitt@my.und.edu

■ **Diamond Sponsors**



Syngene

■ **Gold Sponsors**



Vanta Bioscience



■ Our sincere thanks to all our sponsors. We would also like to take this opportunity to thank our endowment sponsors for their continued support over the years.

Endowment Sponsors:

Dr. Laxman Desai- CEO of Toxikon

Dr. Harihara Mehendale

Dr. Dharm Singh

■ **Become a sponsor:** Contact ASIO team to learn more about how your sponsorship can help strengthen and contribute to the continued growth and success of ASIO.

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