



Association of Scientists of Indian Origin

Editors: Saurabh Vispute, Smita Salian-Mehta, Vijay P. Kale, Vivek Dadhania, Aditya D. Joshi.

President's Message

Dear ASIO Members,

It has been a great opportunity to serve you. Hope all of you had a great productive and successful 2015 year so far! It's that time of year for Toxicologists to gear up their preparations towards the 2016 SOT Annual Meeting to be held from March 13-17, 2016, at New Orleans. The preparations for 2016 ASIO Annual Reception are on. It will be held on Monday 14th March 2016 from 7 to 9 PM. The deadline for the various ASIO awards is Dec. 15th, 2015. Please nominate yourself or your colleagues of Indian origin for the ASIO 2016 Awards. It is an opportunity to get you or your colleagues' hard work and scientific achievements recognized. It will be a joy for ASIO to see its members receive various awards.

I would like to take this opportunity to recognize all the ASIO volunteers who work hard to support various ASIO activities by being part of various sub-committees, including the newsletter, sponsorship, awards, reception and other sessions. I believe that the success of any organization depends on its membership at large. Therefore, to ensure ASIO's continued success I encourage all of you to become ASIO members or renew your membership while renewing your SOT annual membership or while registering for SOT 2016 Annual Meeting. One can become an ASIO member without having to become an SOT member (fill the application out at ASIO website). Please contact anyone on the current board of directors listed in this newsletter for more information and volunteering opportunities. Together let us contribute to the growth of our organization.

The ASIO team looks forward to seeing you all at the ASIO Annual Reception in New Orleans.

Sincerely,
Sudheer Reddy Beedanagari
President (2015-2016)

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[ASIO Activities at SOT 2016](#)

The ASIO executive committee is excited to welcome you to the various ASIO activities at the 2016 SOT meeting to be held in New Orleans, LA. In addition to the ASIO Annual Reception, we are thrilled to host ASIO Lunch N Learn and ASIO Coffee Hour with subject matter experts.

ASIO Annual Reception 2016

When: **Monday, March 14, 2016; 7:00 to 9:00PM**

We continue our tradition of hosting an ASIO Annual Reception at SOT 2016 in New Orleans, LA. The ASIO Annual Reception is a great opportunity for everyone to network with fellow toxicologists and share their knowledge and expertise with the toxicologists of Indian origin. ASIO invites you all to join us for a fun-filled evening. There are plenty of opportunities for you to become part of this excitement. If you are interested in becoming an ASIO volunteer for the annual reception event, please contact Sudheer Reddy Beedanagari (sudheerreddy.beedanagari@bms.com) / Mamta Behl (mamta.behl@nih.gov) for further details.

ASIO Lunch N Learn (LNL)

When: **Tuesday, March 15, 2016; 12:00 noon to 1:30PM**

ASIO Lunch N Learn is a career guidance initiative and its success is evidenced by the increasing number of students benefitting every year. Students/postdocs are encouraged to sign-up for the ASIO Lunch N Learn initiative at SOT 2016. A panel of eminent professionals from different areas of toxicology (Government, Industry, and Academia) will be invited to share their thoughts. The LNL program is a unique platform to discuss on diverse and varied topics and a great opportunity to connect with senior professionals in the area of toxicology research. To learn more, please feel free to email Sridhar Jaligama at sridhar.jaligama@gmail.com.

ASIO Coffee Hour

ASIO is pleased to announce "Coffee hour with an expert", an exciting event for motivated students/ postdocs to have targeted interactions with generous and experienced toxicologists. Don't miss out on an inviting opportunity to discuss and resolve your queries and make plans to achieve your career goals. We hope to continue to benefit from the vast experience of our experts who volunteer their time for the coffee hour. Please sign up for coffee hour as a MENTOR or MENTEE.

- Interested to be a mentor, please email, biosainath@gmail.com (Deadline: Dec. 31st, 2015)
- Interested to be a mentee, please email, sridhar.jaligama@gmail.com (Deadline: Jan. 15th, 2016)
- For additional details please contact our coffee hour coordinator **Sridhar Jaligama**.

ASIO Awards at SOT 2016

This year ASIO-SIG is sponsoring awards in 7 different categories namely,

- Dr. Harihara Mehendale Graduate Student best abstract award (1)
- Dr. Laxman Desai Graduate Student best abstract award (1)
- Dr. Dharm Singh Postdoctoral Fellow best abstract award (1)
- Toxikon, A Preclinical Toxicology Organization; and Dr. Dharm Singh Association of Scientists of Indian Origin (ASIO) International Travel Awards (2)
- Young Investigator Award (1)
- Senior Toxicologist Award (1)
- ASIO High School Student Award

Please submit your complete application to Dr. Udayan Apte (asioawards@gmail.com) on or before Dec. 15th, 2015. For complete description of the awards, eligibility criteria and additional information please visit our website: <http://www.toxicology.org/groups/sig/asio/Awards.asp>

ASIO SOT 2015 Awardees speak...

Amrendra K. Ajay

Bonventre Laboratory of Kidney injury and repair, Renal Division, Harvard Medical School, Brigham and Women's Hospital, Boston, MA.

Briefly describe the research area for which you won the ASIO Dr. Dharm Singh Postdoctoral Fellow Best Abstract Award.

My research focuses on discovering therapeutic targets for acute and chronic kidney diseases. Proposed project for this award was to find out therapeutic targets for chronic kidney disease using next generation sequencing approach. Using mouse model of kidney fibrosis we found that secreted modular calcium binding protein 2 (SMOC2) is significantly increased following kidney fibrosis. We observed increased SMOC2 in patients with kidney fibrosis. Further, using cellular and transgenic mice models overexpressing SMOC2 we observed that SMOC2 is involved in progression of kidney fibrosis and its inhibition reduces fibroblasts proliferation, activation and migration, initiating protection from kidney fibrosis.



What does the ASIO award mean to you in terms of your career/ research?

The ASIO award is a significant achievement for my career. It provides recognition of my work and enthusiasm to do better research. It also gives me great recognition by the judges of ASIO awards committee. During the award ceremony, I met well-established toxicologists of Indian origin and came to know about their great work. We developed good collaborations for ongoing research. I am greatly benefitted by this prestigious award and it's a stepping stone for my scientific career.

Any advice to the future aspirants of this award?

I would like to share some experience for the future aspirants that there is no option other than hard and intelligent work. Be confident in your work, time is the key but focus is more important for research. Learn new techniques to apply novelty in your research. It is extremely crucial to restructure your hypothesis based on the data you get as you progress the project. Keep yourself motivated and success will follow you.

Sabbir Khan

Department of Pharmacology and Toxicology, National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research (NIPER), Mohali, Punjab, India.



Briefly describe the research area for which you won the ASIO International Travel Award.

Presently, I am working with Dr. Gopabandhu Jena as a PhD student and investigating the anti-diabetic and anti-fibrotic roles of selected histone deacetylase (HDAC) inhibitors in diabetes. The work for which I got ASIO award highlighted that HDAC inhibition by sodium butyrate reduces insulin resistance, fat deposition and protects beta-cell dysfunction in type-2 diabetic rat through its chromatin-dependent mechanisms. My PhD work provides several new insights onto the mechanisms and effects of HDAC inhibitors in diabetes. We demonstrated that HDAC inhibitors are beneficial in diabetes, and protect beta-cell dysfunction as well as reduces insulin resistance. Our experimental results highlighted the new therapeutic role of HDAC inhibitors for the prevention and treatment of diabetes and its complications.

What does the ASIO award mean to you in terms of your career/research?

It is a moment of honor for me to be recognized by the international scientific community. ASIO award is a milestone which creates the great confidence and boosts the budding young scientists (toxicologist). I am thankful to ASIO for recognizing my work and providing a great platform as well as support to share my research with eminent toxicologists and other peers around the globe.

Please highlight your experience receiving the ASIO award this year.

I believe that SOT meeting is a great opportunity to meet the genius scientists in the field of toxicology, epigenetics, drug discovery and related disciplines. Additionally, it provided an opportunity to participate in the interactive sessions and the luncheon organized by ASIO. This helped me to widen my scientific skills.

Any advice to the future aspirants of this award?

It is great honor by ASIO to Indian origin scientists and an opportunity to recognize the same at international platform. I hope ASIO continues to give this award. An increase in number of International travel awards may facilitate the participation of the deserving Indian origin students in the future SOT meetings.

Amruta Manke

West Virginia University, Department of Pharmaceutical & Pharmacological Sciences, Morgantown, WV (Joining the RTI International, NC, as a Post-Doctoral Scientist).



Briefly describe the research area for which you won the ASIO Dr. Laxman Desai Graduate Student Best Abstract Award.

Carbon nanotubes (CNT) are one of the most widely used nanomaterials in the industry. Recent studies have shown that pulmonary exposure to CNT results in rapid and progressive interstitial lung fibrosis in animals without causing persistent lung inflammation, which is normally associated with other known fibrogenic agents. This unusual fibrogenic effect of CNT raises important health issues, since their exposure could result in deadly and incurable lung fibrosis.

Specific aims of my research project involved, a) to develop a reliable and predictive *in vitro* model to study lung fibrosis b) to investigate the effects of physicochemical parameters (fiber length, surface charge/functionalization) of CNTs on oxidative stress response and toxicity of human lung cells. Out of this work, our lab members hope to identify key nanoparticle characteristics and a set of *in vitro* screening assays for evaluation of the potential fibrogenicity of CNTs *in vivo*. This new knowledge will aid in safer design and use of nanotechnology as well as in identifying molecular targets for early detection and treatment of fibrotic lung diseases caused by nanomaterials.

What does the ASIO travel award mean to you in terms of your career/ research?

I was thrilled and pleasantly surprised to receive the graduate student award from the Association of Scientists of Indian Origin (ASIO). This award helped me defray some of the travel costs for the Society of Toxicology (SOT) Annual Meeting in San Diego, in March 2015. Achieving the ASIO Travel Award made me avail of all the exciting opportunities that the SOT conference has to offer. The travel award effectively helped me in attending the featured sessions and talks by distinguished speakers.

Please highlight your experience receiving the ASIO award this year.

I signed up for Coffee Hour with an Expert and Chat with an Expert where I had an opportunity to informally meet distinguished toxicologists, network and re-establish relationships. The mentors I met this year tremendously helped me in connecting with such eminent professionals and colleagues of the research field, networking as well as provided me with invaluable career advice.

Any advice to future aspirants of this award?

ASIO travel award really helped me in gaining exposure across the SOT's scientific community. My only advice to future aspirants would be to get involved with ASIO activities conducted during the SOT meeting and apply for this award with a clear statement of purpose.

Prajakta Shimpi



Biomedical and Pharmaceutical Sciences, University of Rhode Island, Kingston, RI

Nikita Joshi



Pharmacology & Toxicology, Center for Integrative Toxicology, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI



CrossTox

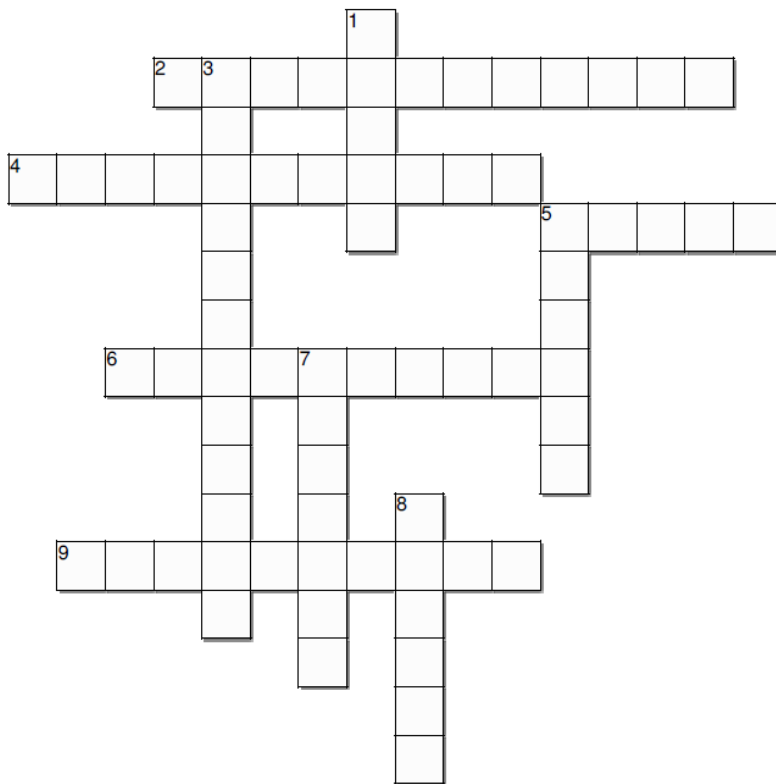


Across:

- 2. Where (city name) was the 50th anniversary annual meeting of the SOT held?
- 4. Name (first and last) of the 1st president of the SOT.
- 5. The word that appears in the inner circle of the corporate seal of the SOT.
- 6. With how much assets (USD) was the SOT launched in 1961?
- 9. What does the shield in the corporate seal of the SOT stand for?

Down:

- 1. Meaning of olive green of the wreath in the corporate seal of the SOT.
- 3. Where (city name) was the 1st annual meeting of the SOT held?
- 5. Meaning (English) of the word that appears in the inner circle of the corporate seal of the SOT.
- 7. What does the arrow in the corporate seal of the SOT stand for?
- 8. Meaning of white color of the ribband in the corporate seal of the SOT.



Answer: Salus, Safety, Toxicum, Thirtyfive, Protection, Wisdom, Vigor, Atianticity, Washingtonc, Haroldhodge

[ASIO 2015-2016 Committees](#)

Get Involved: Please share your time, talent and experience with ASIO and help community to grow. To learn more about the individual committees and their roles, please visit <http://www.toxicology.org/groups/sig/asio/committees.asp>

	Committee	Leadership Contact	Contact E-mail
1.	ASIO Reception	Mamta Behl	mamta.behl@nih.gov
2.	ASIO Proposal Review	SudheerReddy Beedanagari	sudheerreddy.beedanagari@bms.com
3.	ASIO Sponsorship	Mayur Mitra	mayur.mitra@bms.com
4.	ASIO Awards	Saurabh Chatterjee or Udayan Apte	schatt@mailbox.sc.edu or asioawards@gmail.com
5.	ASIO Outreach	Sachin Bhusari	bhusaris@gmail.com
6.	ASIO Newsletter	Vivek Dadhania	vivekdadhania@gmail.com
7.	ASIO LNL/Coffee Hour	Sainath Babu	biosainath@gmail.com
8.	ASIO Website	Sridhar Jaligama	sridhar.jaligama@gmail.com

[Call for officers: 2016-2017](#)

While our existing ASIO officers have contributed tremendously, it is time to begin thinking about ASIO 2016-2017 officer elections and the recruitment of candidates! ASIO will have the below listed openings and solicit nominations for the open positions

1. Student Representative (1 year term)
2. Postdoc representative (1 year term)
3. Councilor (2 year term)
4. Vice President-Elect (4 year term)

Please send your nominations indicating the position you are interested and provide your Bio-sketch to Mamta Behl (mamta.behl@nih.gov) and Ashley Pomper (ashley@toxicology.org) by December 31, 2015.

NOTE: Please remember that candidates in the President or Treasurer Chain must be Full, Associate, Retired, or Emeritus members of SOT.

[ASIO Membership Renewal 2016](#)

Dear fellow member, Greetings!! Hope you are doing great. Thanks to your support for making ASIO one of the prominent Special Interest Groups (SIGs) of SOT. As you know we are the only SIG to successfully establish four endowment funds, and we sponsor several students/postdocs

to receive awards each year from these endowment funds. We have also instituted an International student award that allows a graduate student from India to attend the annual SOT meeting every year. We are also proud to sponsor webinars for the purpose of continuing education. All these have been possible only with the help of members like you. For ASIO to continue growing and to focus on promoting the growth of our members and society, we need your continuous support. I would like to take this opportunity to request you to kindly renew your ASIO membership and keep supporting our activities. Your membership is valuable to us. The deadline to renew your 2016 membership is December 15, 2015. ASIO membership is free for the students. The following link will take you the webpage for dues renewal. We look forward to seeing you at the ASIO-SOT reception 2016. For more information, please feel free to contact Sachin Bhusari (bhusaris@gmail.com).

Link: <http://www.toxicology.org/script/loginredirect1.asp?page=dues>

[Historical highlights by Dr. Harihara M. Mehendale](#)

As one of the founder members of the ASIO, could you please tell us what prompted you to establish it at the SOT?

When I attended SOT meetings, I was eager to meet my fellow countrymen and women attending the meetings. This was an event that occurred once a year. My thinking was that other Indians would be equally eager to meet others from their country! To my surprise and disappointment what I found was that other Indians would look the other way when I tried to greet them! I knew in my heart that such a reaction by my countrymen and women has to be something we had adopted from our British rulers of India. What we observed and followed in India from the British rulers and Indian Government servants have picked up the British manners and behaviors, rightly or wrongly. Unless you were formally introduced to a person you would not talk to that person. Therefore, even though we saw other Indians we would not meet and greet them. I felt that these behaviors to shunning our own countrymen when we see them in the U.S. did not seem natural. The same Indian who shunned you is in fact a very friendly and caring person after we got to know him. It occurred to me that this was a totally an 'un-Indian' behavior. I and my friend Mr. Durisala Desaiiah observed this year after year. We decided to introduce ourselves to as many Indian students at SOT and FASEB meetings. Our experience was very positive. There were other Indian students who felt exactly as I and Desaiiah felt. This was very heartwarming to find out.



Could you please walk us through the early days of the ASIO?

The late 70's was very challenging to us when we had to find other ways of communicating with hundreds of Indian students. We collected the addresses of all Indian students. Desaiiah and I copied all the name and addresses of "Indian sounding" names from the FASEB and SOT Directories and contacted them about their interest in communicating with each other as well as

having an Association of Scientists of Indian Origin in America (ASIOA) meeting during SOT and FASEB meetings. I still remember those days when Sreeramulu Chetty and other students of mine and Desai's students folding our letters stuffing the addressed envelopes and licking them to seal. Admittedly, those were very difficult and challenging days. But alas! Because of the overwhelming support and encouragement of several volunteers and hard work, here we are today enjoying the fruits of those efforts. I must thank all those who worked with us shoulder to shoulder. Without their help and those who are continuing these efforts now we would not be where we are now.

How do you feel about the ASIO today?

ASIO needs to grow more. I also feel that we have failed in some areas and not progressed in other areas. For example we are not monitoring the members' advancement in their professional achievements and helping them to get rid of any impediments. Are there any members who are experiencing undue obstacles in their professional advancement? When we hear of deliberately created impediments by unfriendly or non-cooperative colleagues unjustly held back promotions and recognition, are we willing to report such actions to authorities and if needed to take appropriate legal actions when all else fails? ASIO as a solid organization should be in a strong position to assist its members. To that extent I feel good that we organized ourselves to deter such adversities.

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

The most important thing is to make everybody feel comfortable and welcome. New comers should feel comfortable without any fear of obtrusion by anyone. I think we have seen that ASIO members feel confident that if they need any assistance, they can easily avail by approaching ASIO authorities. This is not limited to academic environment nor to professional environment. ASIO is there to help its members in business environment as well. The more widely it is known that ASIO is solidly behind its members, the better it is for one and all.

What message would you like to give to the budding toxicologists to make exceptionally successful career like yours?

There is no substitute for success. Your actions should be predictable. Offer guidance and assistance to the new members. Get to know more people. Soon you will see that others have similar needs and with little assistance they can progress and advance forward. When we look back most of us have benefitted by the advice and assistance offered by others. Such positive experiences act as a cementing factor that holds our organization together. Years from now we would be enjoying the fruits of our own collective efforts and contributions.

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Dr. Dharm Singh



Dr. Harihara Mehendale



Dr. Laxman Desai



Thank you so much for your generous contribution!