



Association of Scientists of Indian Origin

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President's Message

Dr. Mamta Behl

November 2016 Newsletter

Dear Friends and ASIO Family,

Hope everyone is having a productive and fun year. Yes, it is already time to gear up for the 2017 SOT Annual Meeting being held from March 12-16 in Baltimore, MD. The ASIO Annual Reception will be held on Monday, March 13th from 7-9 pm. Please mark your calendars and plan on attending and participating. Stay tuned for further details. The deadline for various ASIO awards is coming up soon - Dec 15th. Please apply for the awards and nominate yourself or colleagues. For further questions, please check out the ASIO website or contact Awards committee Chair, Dr. Udayan Apte at uapte@kumc.edu. As every year, ASIO also will be organizing Lunch N Learn and Coffee Hour. Please see section on "ASIO events at SOT" for further details of all ASIO events at the SOT Annual Meeting.

At ASIO, we have been going great lengths to strive to continually excel. ASIO has had a successful half year with active volunteers and a very dynamic team of Board of Directors (BOD). Recently, ASIO hosted a webinar presented by Dr. Prakash Nagarkatti, Vice President for Research, University of South Carolina, titled "Inflammation: Can we silence the secret Killer?" The webinar was attended by over 90 participants from five different countries. A big shout out to our webinar team- Sainath Babu and Kshama Doshi, Vice President Mayur Mitra, to our incredible speaker Dr. Nagarkatti, and the SOT team for wonderfully working together to make this webinar a grand success! For those of you who could not attend, I encourage you to take a look at the slides and recording which will be available online shortly on the ASIO events webpage. Please contact Sainath at biosainath@gmail.com or Kshama at kshamadoshi23@gmail.com. Thanks to our Past Presidents committee, ASIO has made some great strides towards continued improvement of the society this year. For further details, please see section on "Past Presidents committee." Among other updates, ASIO continues to work to improve visibility through social media, and keeping our website updated, thanks to our dynamic volunteers.

Finally, a big thank you to our sponsors and volunteers who work towards improving ASIO through their tireless efforts. I urge you all to continue to support your organization through sponsorship, volunteering, and continual and new membership.

Look forward to seeing you all in Baltimore!

Mamta Behl
President

Networking can be challenging but very important for career development and advancement. We welcome you to the various ASIO activities at SOT's 56th Annual Meeting and ToxExpo 2017 to be held in Baltimore, Maryland. Here's your three "Ws" that will provide you with friendly environment to establish new connections, seek advice, further your leadership and mentoring skills and initiate conversations with our budding toxicologists.

WHAT	WHEN	WHY
ASIO reception	Monday, March 13, 2017; 7:00 to 9:00PM	Great opportunity for everyone to network with fellow toxicologists and share their knowledge and expertise with the toxicologists of Indian origin
ASIO Lunch N Learn (LNL)	Tuesday, March 14, 2017; 12:15 noon to 1:15PM	A unique career guidance platform to discuss on diverse and varied topics with a panel of eminent professionals from different areas of toxicology (Government, Industry, and Academia)
"Coffee hour with an expert"	Mentees will initiate contact with the assigned Mentors	An exciting event for motivated students/postdocs to have targeted interactions with generous and experienced toxicologists. Exclusive chance to discuss and resolve your queries and make plans to achieve your career goals

There are plenty of opportunities for you to become part of these exciting events. If you are interested to volunteer then contact the following ASIO members:

- ASIO annual reception, **Mamta Behl** (mamta.behl@nih.gov)
 - ASIO Lunch N Learn (LNL), **Pankajini Mallick** (pankajini.mallick@gmail.com)
 - Interested to be a mentor, **Sainath Babu** (biosainath@gmail.com)
- Deadline: Dec. 31st, 2016
- Interested to be a mentee, please email, **Pooja Naik** (pnaik2@jhmi.edu)
- Deadline: Jan. 15th, 2017

This year ASIO-SIG is sponsoring awards in following different categories to recognize the accomplishments and support the career advancement of young scientists:

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

Please submit your application along with the supporting documents to **Dr. Udayan Apte** (asioawards@gmail.com) on or before Dec. 15th, 2016. For complete information of the awards, eligibility criteria and additional information please visit our website:

<http://www.toxicology.org/groups/sig/asio/Awards.asp>.

Would you like to share your successful experience???

Did you recently make a transition from being a graduate student/postdoctoral fellow in to your professional career? Graduate students always seek advise on how they can plan for their professional careers while in graduate programs and look up to role models for guidance. It is very helpful if they receive tips and learn from others' success and start early in their career planning endeavors.

Would you like to share your unique experience with budding and aspiring trainees? ASIO is initiating a “**Graduate Student to A Successful Professional**” column and welcomes contributions by guest mentors/advisors. Your thoughts and words of advice would be invaluable for graduate and undergraduate students in planning for career success.

Please contact Saurabh Vispute at sgvispute@gmail.com if you would have questions/ ideas or would like to contribute in the upcoming ASIO Newsletter.

Ashwini Phadnis-Moghe, PhD
Study Director, Covance, Inc.

I always tell that anybody who asks me about toxicology that I landed in this field by accident and it continues to be a 'blessing in disguise' for me. I started out with a Bachelors in Microbiology and Biotechnology, followed by a Masters degree in Microbiology. I then joined the Advanced Center for Treatment, Research and Education in Cancer (ACTREC) in Mumbai, where, for one year, I studied the mechanisms of centrosome duplication in Cancer. This short but productive stint, which helped me get a publication in a respectable journal, made me realize the importance of integrating different concepts of biology to solve the complex problems and prepared me for the rigors of benchwork. Despite being employed at ACTREC; I was always interested in eventually coming to the US for my PhD.

In 2008, I joined the doctoral program in Genetics at Michigan State University and soon learned about the dual-degree Integrative Toxicology program through my lab rotation in the field of dioxin-immune toxicity. It is during this rotation that I first realized that toxicology research was my calling. Not only was the biology of the Aryl hydrocarbon receptor (AHR) interesting, the real world application of the field also was an important motivating factor. In addition, I also was impressed by the mentoring and the significant contributions of Dr. Norbert Kaminski, who would later be my PhD mentor, to the field of toxicology. Joining his lab turned out to be another blessing in disguise. I got several opportunities through my PhD to attend the SOT meetings, present my research, and network with other attendees from other universities, industry, and regulatory agencies. Getting involved with the Immunotoxicology Specialty Section at the SOT meetings and getting recognized through ASIO and other groups kept me motivated to do more for the field. I took advantage of the mentor-match program at SOT and attended mentoring events and networking lunches to gain broader perspectives. My interests and direction were largely shaped through these interactions with mentors aside from my PhD mentor. During my PhD I had numerous opportunities to work in teams on multi-institutional collaborative projects, write grants, and volunteer in student organizations at MSU, which not only played a formidable role in developing my career but also served as resume-building activities. After my PhD, I pursued a short postdoc at MSU and worked on a project in collaboration with the Dow Chemical Company. This project gave me a taste of industry research. Collaboration with scientists and pathologists at Dow, conducting 28 day and 90 day in-life rodent studies critical for safety assessment helped in developing my toxicology skills-set. When I started applying for my next career move, I selectively chose places that were close to my interest and in the end I chose to work for a CRO to gain an all-round toxicology experience.

Currently working as a Study Director and Immunotoxicology Contributing Scientist at Covance Inc. is giving me an exposure to the non-clinical drug safety assessment space. The increasing drive towards biologics has spurred an interest in understanding the effects of drugs on the immune system and its responses. As an immunotoxicologist, I contribute by providing scientific expertise to the overall conduct of the immunotoxicology aspect in studies, developing protocols, analyzing the results and writing reports thereby assisting in the decision-making for the fate of the drugs in the pre-clinical phase. In summary, I can identify three important things that helped me make the transition from graduate student to a job: 1) Networking, 2) identifying a niche, and 3) supporting that with training and relevant experience.

American College of Toxicology (ACT) 2016 Young Professional Award

ASIO is proud to announce that one of our active ASIO member and our ASIO Past President, **Dr. Sudheer Reddy Beedanagari** was the recipient of the 2016 Young Professional Award. He was presented with this for his myriad leadership and scientific contributions to the ACT over the past few years, including his service as an Editorial Board member to ACT official journal *International Journal of Toxicology*. More detailed information on the criteria for the ACT 2016 Young Professional award can be found at <https://www.actox.org/aboutACT/awards.asp>.

Dr. Sudheer Beedanagari is currently working as a Principal Toxicologist (Assoc. Director) at Alkermes Inc., in Waltham, Massachusetts. Before joining Alkermes, Dr. Beedanagari worked as a toxicologist at Bristol-Myers Squibb, New Brunswick, New Jersey (October 2011– June 2016), and at Lexicon Pharmaceuticals, The Woodlands, Texas (April 2010– September 2011), as a discovery and developmental toxicologist. Dr. Beedanagari earned his Doctorate degree in molecular toxicology (September 2009) from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), and his Master's degree from University of Georgia (UGA), Athens, Georgia. Dr. Beedanagari has been a member and active participant in the ASIO and SOT since 2006 and ACT since 2009.



On October 21, 2016, the special interest group, Association of Scientists of Indian-Origin (ASIO) held a very successful webinar on “Inflammation – Can we silence the secret killer?” The speaker Dr. Prakash Nagarkatti is a Carolina Distinguished Professor in the Department of Pathology, Microbiology & Immunology at University of South Carolina, Columbia, South Carolina. Dr. Nagarkatti divided his talk in two main sections 1) Basic – for non immunologists and scientists, and 2) Advanced – focused for immunologists and inflammatory mechanism researchers.



Initially, Dr. Nagarkatti introduced the topic with a brief overview on inflammation and the two basic components of immune system, i.e. innate and adaptive immunity. The talk eventually transitioned into discussing hypersensitivity and its four main types in detail. Dr. Nagarkatti bolstered the concepts with relevant examples to help the attendees achieve better understanding. He further briefed on the role of inflammation in various pathological conditions including obesity and autoimmune diseases.

Later, Dr. Nagarkatti focused his presentation on current research efforts to tame the inflammation using dietary supplements and other botanicals that can be used to regulate inflammation. His research suggests that a large number of natural compounds can activate aryl hydrocarbon receptor (AhR) which in-turn activates the regulatory T-cells (Tregs) via FOXP3 induction. Dr. Nagarkatti further narrowed the observation from two biologicals, resveratrol and indoles where the former was seen to regulate inflammation by regulating microRNAs that regulate pro-inflammatory T helper 17-cells (Th17) inactivation and FOXP3 induction resulting in Treg activation. There were 93 participants representing five different countries (Egypt, India, Peru, United Kingdom and United States) attended the webinar. The webinar was fully funded by SOT Headquarters. The webinar was assisted by Ms. Rosibel Alvarenga, Ms. Ashley Black, and Mr. Tierre Miller. The ASIO Webinar committee includes Dr. Sainath Babu (Chair), Dr. Mamta Behl, Dr. Mayurranjan Mitra and Ms. Kshama Doshi. The complete recording of this webinar is available on the ASIO-SOT Events website (<http://www.toxicology.org/groups/sig/asio/events.asp>). To learn more about this SOT Special Interest Group, please visit the ASIO website. New members can enjoy the free membership up to a year.

One of the new initiatives taken by ASIO team during this year was to increase the active participation of experienced/senior ASIO members to further the missions and goals of ASIO organization. As part of this initiative ASIO Past Presidents committee was created. The ASIO Past Presidents committee includes the past presidents of ASIO from 2007-2016, current ASIO President Dr. Mamta Behl, and Vice President Dr. Mayur Mitra. A list of ASIO presidents from the past decade (2007-2017) are listed below. The past-presidents committee holds a bi-monthly telecon to discuss a wide range of topics brought forward by the ASIO members and provide guidance to current ASIO leadership team. A few topics that were discussed in last couple of telecons were:

- How to actively engage the senior ASIO members in ASIO activities?
- How to increase the sponsorship or raise funds to support ASIO activities?
- How to foster and enrich interactions among ASIO members?
- How to better assist and mentor Students/ Postdocs/young professionals of ASIO?
- How to foster better collaborations with toxicology organizations from India (STOX/AOT etc)?

Tenure/Term	ASIO Presidents
2007-2008	Dr. Madhusudan Soni
2008-2009	Dr. Gopala Krishna
2009-2010	Dr. Sanjay Chanda
2010-2011	Dr. Binu Philip
2011-2012	Dr. Vinayak Srinivasan
2012-2013	Dr. Saryu Goel
2013-2014	Dr. Satheesh Anand
2014-2015	Dr. Sachin Devi
2015-2016	Dr. Sudheer Beedanagari
2016-2017	Dr. Mamta Behl

If any of the ASIO members has a topic to discuss or have ideas to empower ASIO as an organization, please send an email to Sudheer at Sudheer.Beedanagari@alkermes.com.

Call for Sponsors...

ASIO would like to urge our members to consider making a one-time donation towards the ASIO general funds. The ASIO general funds are used to cover expenses for our year-round activities and the annual reception. Therefore, these funds would go a long way to bring together pre-clinical scientists and companies of Indian origin to serve their common goals. Your contribution to SOT are tax deferred. Please contact Mayur Mitra at mayur.mitra@bms.com if you would like to donate or have questions.

While our existing ASIO officers have contributed tremendously, it is time to begin thinking about ASIO 2017-2018 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 Biosketch to Mamta Behl (mamta.behl@nih.gov) and Ashley Black (ashley@toxicology.org) by December 31, 2016.

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

ASIO Membership Renewal 2017

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 SOT Annual 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 2017 membership is December 15, 2016. ASIO membership is free for the students. The following link will take you to the webpage for dues renewal. We look forward to seeing you at the ASIO-SOT reception 2017. [Renew your 2017 membership.](#)

ASIO 2016-2017 SPONSORS

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ENDOWMENT SPONSORS



Dr. Dharm Singh



Dr. Harihara Mehendale



Dr. Laxman Desai

