



Association of Scientists of Indian Origin

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Vice President's Message

Dr. Mayur Mitra

September 2016 Newsletter

Dear ASIO members,

Hope that the summer has been enjoyable for everyone! I would like to take this opportunity to update our membership about the ASIO activities during this period. ASIO is **organizing our first Tox-Webinar** for the year. We are delighted to have Dr. Prakash Nagarkatti, distinguished scientist of Indian origin, who will be speaking about the latest developments in the field of Immunology (see announcement in the newsletter). Email announcements from SOT regarding the webinar are forthcoming. Please help us make this event a success by not only actively participating in the webinar, but also sharing the information with your colleagues and organization. ASIO's **Facebook page is now up and running** (see announcement and link to the webpage in the newsletter). Please join, share your thoughts, provide feedback, and network with your fellow Indian scientists on this portal.

As discussed during the annual meeting at New Orleans, ASIO is currently facing a shortage of general funds. ASIO would sincerely urge our members to **consider donating towards the ASIO general funds. Also, please let us know if you would like to be a Sponsor or could assist us in identifying Sponsors.** These general funds are used to cover expenses for our year-round activities and the annual reception, and go a long way to enhance collegiality, networking, and professional development of scientist involved in the field of toxicology.

Finally, I would like to thank each and every member of this organization, the volunteers, and the officers who have contributed to make ASIO one of the most successful Special Interest Groups (SIG) of SOT.

Kind regards,
Mayur Mitra
Vice President

Now ASIO is on Facebook. Like Us. Share Us. For updates stay tuned on Facebook



Association of
Scientists of
Indian Origin
Special Interest
Group of SOT



Would you like to share you success story???

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 advise 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.



Adarsh Gandhi, PhD
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Drug Metabolism and Pharmacokinetics (DMPK) can be considered as a backbone of the drug development process. I was always intrigued by the many aspects of DMPK in refining a drug molecule right from the discovery phase to the final product. I think I personally made a right choice in advancing my career in this field along with sharpening my bioanalytical skills as they complement each other at several stages. I had my graduate training at the University of Houston College of Pharmacy. My training in drug metabolism, liver toxicity and bioanalytical chemistry allowed me discover the role of different cell signaling proteins in the Toll like Receptor signaling pathway, the primary immune receptor sensing pathway. Our life as a graduate student where we are trying to excel in our scientific experiments, fulfilling Teaching/Graduate Assistantship responsibilities, preparing talks and posters for conferences, and last but not the least, managing the chore can sometimes make us doubt our decision to join the PhD program. But as the saying goes – No pain, No gain! I would encourage all the aspiring scientists to consider the big picture once you step in this profession – To serve for the mankind. Moving on, my technical skills with the hepatocyte (mouse liver cells) culture helped me get a postdoctoral position at the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), part of the premier NIH research institutions. As a fellow working on elucidating metabolic pathways of synthetic cannabinoids using human hepatocytes and mass spectrometry, I could see the meaningful change of my findings to help curb drug abuse. A little more than 1 year of postdoctoral fellowship in NIDA granted me a wider exposure not only in science, but also in leadership (Fellows Editorial Board of NIH), mentoring (judging at symposiums) and team building (collaborating across different NIDA labs).

Although I could stay longer at NIDA on a J-1 visa (which I tried to avoid), I decided to pursue my first industrial job at Lundbeck Research Inc. USA, a CNS drug discovery company located in North New Jersey. I supported the Drug Metabolism and Bioanalytical division at Lundbeck. My manager at Lundbeck gave me ample freedom to explore and learn new arenas in CNS drug discovery without compromising the existing project needs. My 2 years of service at Lundbeck was not only challenging but also rewarding at the end as I learned to wear many different hats (roles) to effectively communicate the experimental findings with the project leaders. Although industrial workload may put a toll due to tight deadlines and turnover, you are also blessed with having many automated work spaces (e.g. robotic liquid handlers to manage high-throughput sample preparation, luxury to test different platforms/HPLC columns/software, etc.) to relieve some of that burden off of your shoulders. I then decided to shift my career path towards closing the gap between scientific innovation and product review and improving public health by joining the Division of Applied Regulatory Science (DARS) at the US FDA in Maryland. Although being less than 1 year at the FDA, I have already started admiring the tremendous efforts employees put in building and translating knowledge of drug response into science-based, patient-centered regulatory decisions of the highest quality.

I would also like to highlight the diverse opportunities we can avail in NIH/FDA as opposed to academic environment. Moreover, the funding for your projects at the NIH/FDA is preapproved every year based on the budget which makes your life little easier by not having to write grant proposals. Seminars from invited renowned speakers at different agencies of FDA also help grow your professional network. In the end I would like to motivate the young talented life scientists of the 21st century by claiming that your chosen path will always be self-rewarding along with making a positive impact on public health.

Neera Tewari-Singh, Ph.D.

Assistant Research Professor
University of Colorado Denver



Neera Tewari-Singh

ASIO Young Investigator Awardee 2016

How does your research impact human health?

I received the ASIO young investigator award for my research contributions to detect and develop medical defense against chemical agents of mass destruction that could be used in the act of warfare and terrorism, which is of high importance to the mass civilian population, armed forces personnel, national security as well as the environment. My current research is focused to develop injury models of toxicity, identify molecular targets, and develop countermeasures against toxic chemicals like sulfur mustard, nitrogen mustard, lewisite, phosgene oxime, chloropicrin and other environmental toxicants to treat skin, ocular, lung and other systemic toxic effects from their exposure.

The ASIO travel award is important for your success because...

It is an honor to be recognized for my work as a young toxicologist by ASIO, I thank the ASIO awards committee. It not only gives enthusiasm and motivation to contribute more towards my research, but also recognizes my work at this important stage of my career. ASIO is a great platform for Indian scientists in this field and might help me develop collaborative research with ASIO scientists for my ongoing work or assist to contribute in new exciting areas of toxicology.

How was SOT meeting 2016 different?

I have been attending the ASIO/SOT meeting for the past 9 years and this year's meeting was informative as well as important for me. Meeting toxicologists as well as learning the advances in toxicology at every ASIO/SOT meeting widens my knowledge and contributes towards my research. My work was recognized at ASIO, and as a senior Councilor of Dermal Toxicology Specialty Section, I also got a chance to work on graduate student and post-doctoral awards to recognize and promote their work.

Any advice for aspiring scientist and high school students about Toxicology as a career?

In the industrialized and developing world we inhabit today, toxic and chemical exposures are heavily impacting human life and the environment. There are wide as well as exciting areas of research for young researchers to pursue their career in the field of toxicology. This area provides career opportunities in academia or industry to work towards improving human health and contribute to research in fundamental, translational and applied areas of toxicology.

Most memorable experience of my graduate school training

The most memorable experience is when I received my first award from the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), which gave me an opportunity to do my graduate work at the Institute of Molecular Genetics, Hannover, Germany.

ASIO is proud to announce **Tox-Webinar** on the latest developments of Immunology. The speaker is Dr. Prakash Nagarkatti, Distinguished Professor and Vice President for Research at University of South Carolina, Columbia. Dr. Nagarkatti is an expert immunologist and his recent research focus on cannabinoids and other AhR ligands as potential anti-inflammatory agents.

Topic: Inflammation—Can we silence the secret killer?

Speaker:



Dr. Prakash Nagarkatti, PhD

Carolina Distinguished Professor,
Department of Pathology, Microbiology & Immunology
University of South Carolina, Columbia, South Carolina

Date: Friday, Oct 21, 2016

Time: 12:00 noon–1:00 PM Eastern Daylight Time, USA (EDT)
(International attendees please convert your local time accordingly)

[Register Online](#)

This webinar will introduce the basic mechanisms of inflammation triggered by innate and adaptive immune system. The key role of AhR ligands in suppressing inflammation and dietary compounds that act as AhR ligands will be highlighted in light to the recent developments in immunological research.

****Registration for this event is required****

Sponsored by Society of Toxicology

[Click Here to Register for the Webinar](#)

It's not only during SOT meetings that you get to network with fellow toxicologists of Indian origin; there are opportunities all year around. Best way to showcase your involvement, connect with experienced professionals from academia, government as well as industry, and be a part of buzzing ASIO is to *volunteer for ASIO activities*. Participate in year-round activities in one of the following committees; each committee needs 2-3 volunteers:

- Outreach committee
- Reception committee
- Website committee
- LNL and Coffee Hour committee
- Newsletter committee
- Awards committee
- Sponsorship committee



Please contact any of the ASIO officers or sub-committee chairs/ members/ volunteers to learn more...!

pankajini.mallick@gmail.com

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Call for Sponsors...

Dear ASIO members,

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.

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Thank you so much for your generous contribution!

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