

## ERS School



“A LEADING AUTHORITY IN EDUCATION”

### The educational pillar of the ERS

The ERS School provides training and education for clinical specialists and allied professionals in respiratory medicine. It also promotes the harmonisation of training across Europe, with the aim of achieving the highest quality of practice and the best standard of patient care.

To achieve its mission, the School offers courses, online resources, an educational publication, and much more to respiratory professionals across the world.

### Congress educational activities

Each year at our Annual Congress, the School organises and runs a range of educational courses. At the 2007 Congress in Stockholm, these included exciting new ventures, alongside popular course formats that are already a firm fixture of the event, as follows:

- a new interactive educational workshop aimed at researchers and featuring problem-based discussions – the topic of this first workshop was “Epithelial cell biology: culture methods and functional studies”;
- 15 standard Postgraduate (PG) Courses – providing clinicians, allied respiratory health professionals and researchers with an update on specialised topics;
- 7 Core Curriculum PG Courses – broad-based educational courses taught over 3 years, covering essential major topics in respiratory medicine;
- 18 “Meet the Professor” Seminars – enabling small

audiences to meet with experts in their field, encouraging in-depth discussion and promoting interaction;

- a Primary Care day and an educational track for allied health professionals;
- the second GRACE Course (**G**enomics to combat **R**esistance against **A**ntibiotics in **C**ommunity-acquired lower respiratory tract infections in **E**urope) on the topic “From cough to asthma: the role of infection”.

In order to promote international interaction and to ensure that our Society provides up-to-date and comprehensive educational courses, the School regularly collaborates with well-regarded respiratory societies in the organisation of Congress courses. At the 2007 Congress, the School worked with the American College of Chest Physicians (ACCP), the International Society of Aerosol Medicine (ISAM), and the European Society of Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases (ESCMID) in the production of several courses and seminars.

### Education without boundaries: beyond the Congress ERS School Courses

Every year, our School runs around 8 state-of-the-art interactive educational courses. Each event takes place in a different European location, runs over 2–3 full days, and is designed to offer a “hands-on” experience to 50–100 participants. With a faculty of 10 speakers, all experts in their field, ERS School Courses offer high-quality education to respiratory specialists and trainees.



*Congress Postgraduate Courses offer hands-on education to participants*

Ten School Courses ran in 2007 and early 2008. Topics included cystic fibrosis, lung transplantation and pulmonary rehabilitation. Course locations ranged from Prague in the Czech Republic, to Edinburgh in the UK.

The ERS recognises that the location and length of these courses can seem prohibitive to potential attendees from low-income countries. We therefore provided bursaries to 59 such participants in 2007 and early 2008. In this way, our Society works to ensure that respiratory education is made available to all.

### ***Breathe: our educational journal***

*Breathe* is the official educational journal of our Society produced under the Chief Editorship of Anita Simonds. It provides high-quality, peer-reviewed educational material to physicians, paediatricians, general practitioners and allied health professionals. The publication regularly features useful factsheets aimed at patients, which are produced in collaboration with the European Lung Foundation (for more on the Foundation's activities, see page 25). *Breathe* also offers continuing medical education (CME)-accredited material and, as an open access journal, is freely available at [www.breathe-cme.org](http://www.breathe-cme.org).

*Breathe* was first published in 2004, and in just 4 years, it has reached a circulation of more than 12,000, the highest of any ERS journal. A further marker of the publication's success is the number of hits to *Breathe* online, which have increased from 40,000 in 2005 to 180,000 in 2007. Downloads of articles have also risen, and in 2007, stood at 140,000 (see figure).

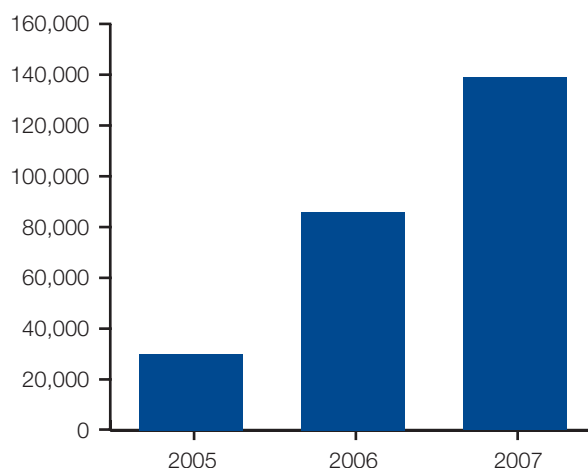
### **Connecting with others: the ERS School Seminar Scheme**

The School Seminar Scheme enables our Society to forge closer links with other national groups. Through the Scheme, national societies can apply for support to organise an ERS School-sponsored joint educational seminar or PG course to take place at their own or other regional meetings. The School provides financial assistance to cover the travel and accommodation costs of 2 speakers representing the ERS, or the travel costs of up to 4 speakers, with priority given to courses in low-income countries. Our School also works in conjunction with local organisers to plan the programme of each event. In 2007–2008, €43,000 was spent in support of such courses, and participating countries included Poland, Kyrgyzstan, Peru, Georgia, Turkey, Argentina, Latvia, Romania and Bulgaria.

### **Web-based Learning Resources**

The e-Learning Resources Centre of our Society's website is widely recognised as being a highly developed educational site, offering the most extensive resources for learning and teaching currently available in the field of respiratory medicine. Through the site, ERS members can gain access to: material from the ERS Annual Congresses, ERS School Courses and the Lung Science Conferences; ERS guidelines; ERS publications; and much more.

**Figure – Downloads of *Breathe* articles**





“My 3-year term of office as Chair of the School draws to a close at the 2008 ERS Congress in Berlin. During my tenure, the ERS School has seen many exciting advances and changes, and 2007 has certainly been no exception. Over the course of the year, the School has: seen a rise in the readership and download of *Breathe*; made improvements to the e-Learning Centre; produced a curriculum for training; and composed a European Examination in adult respiratory medicine. It has been one of the greatest pleasures of my career to serve in such a dynamic, innovative and productive environment with so many highly motivated and supportive colleagues.”

Patricia L. Haslam, ERS School Chair

As a Society, we recognise that travel to international events can often be difficult for economic reasons. Our School's e-Learning Resources Centre therefore offers several online Live Educational Courses on a range of topics each year. These courses run at programmed times over a period of several weeks, and comprise live lectures on the web given by renowned experts, web casts and interactive text modules. Our Live Educational Courses are also the first to be CME-accredited by the European Board for Accreditation in Pneumology (EBAP). During 2007, 3 online courses were held: “Growing points in paediatric respiratory medicine”, “Pneumonia” and “Pulmonary hypertension”.

A further development of 2007 and 2008 has been the improvement of the structure and usability of the e-Learning Resources Centre. The aim is to provide a searchable “tree” structure through which users can browse according to topic, making it easier to find the resources they require amongst the vast amount

available. Work on this project began in 2007 and the School aims to launch the new-look site in mid 2008. Similar work has also commenced to provide a searchable tree that allows users to selectively access resources according to the recently defined HERMES (Harmonised Education in Respiratory Medicine for European Specialists) syllabus for knowledge-based training in adult respiratory medicine. One of the School's further major long-term objectives is to restructure the resources into educational tracks based on defined European syllabi and curricula for the different professional groups our Society serves.

### Harmonising education in respiratory medicine: HERMES

The HERMES initiative was established by the ERS School in 2005. Its aim is to address the need to promote common standards of high-quality medical education and training across Europe.

In 2006, the first phase of the HERMES project was completed: a European syllabus was produced, which defined all core competencies that any specialist in adult respiratory medicine should possess. As the syllabus lists what topics need to be covered in a training programme, a curriculum was then needed to describe how these topics should be taught, learned and assessed. This second phase of the project commenced after the Munich 2006 Congress. Our School is happy to report that the full curriculum is now complete and will be published in the September 2008 issue of *Breathe*. Its recommendations will be of value to many groups, including policy makers, curriculum developers, educational and clinical supervisors, and trainees in respiratory medicine.

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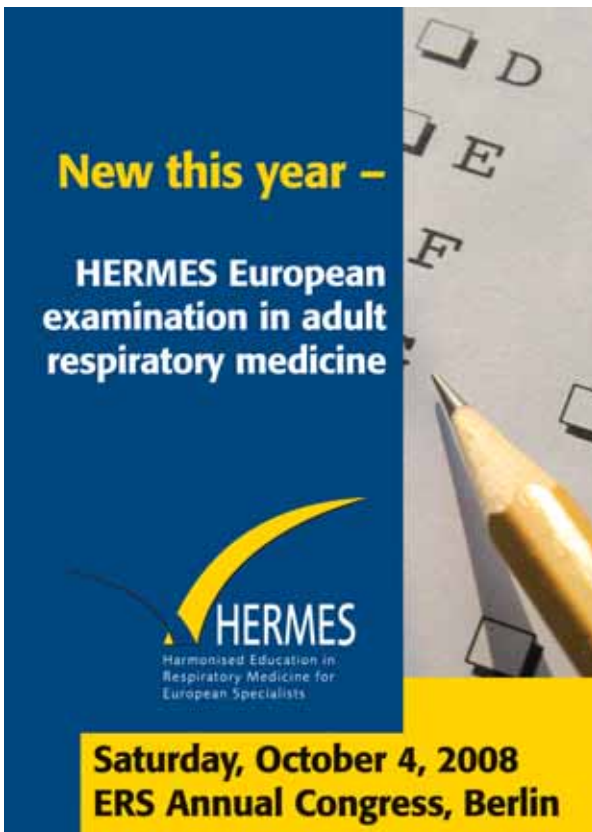


The searchable “tree”: a new system of organisation for e-Learning Resources

Our School is also supporting the expansion of the HERMES initiative into other areas of respiratory medicine. A Paediatric HERMES Task Force has been established to produce a European syllabus and updated curriculum for training in paediatric respiratory medicine, and similar undertakings are being established for respiratory physiotherapy and spirometry training.

### Studying for the future: a new European respiratory exam

Looking to the future, our School is pleased to announce firm plans for an exciting innovation in education for 2008: a European Examination in Adult Respiratory Medicine. This exam will be the first of its kind in Europe and will be aimed at registered medical practitioners, as only national authorities are able to grant doctors the right to practice.



**New this year –**

**HERMES European examination in adult respiratory medicine**

**HERMES**  
Harmonised Education in Respiratory Medicine for European Specialists

**Saturday, October 4, 2008**  
**ERS Annual Congress, Berlin**

### Educational Research Grants

To aid educational development, our School provides support for research projects on educational methods in respiratory medicine. In 2007, the following 3 research grant awardees were selected:

- Susan Smith, London, UK: What factors influence medical trainee attitudes to computer-based learning? – €5,564
- Silvia Quadrelli, Buenos Aires, Argentina: Are e-learning courses a valid method to deliver competency-based postgraduate training? – €15,500
- Nicholas Hart, London, UK: Evaluating an educational package to improve psychological care of and communication with ventilated patients in intensive care units – €11,816

The examination blueprint will be based on the HERMES syllabus published in 2006 and the purpose will be to represent a mark of excellence throughout the profession, demonstrating commitment to high-quality life-long learning and making working in other countries easier. The examination will be knowledge-based and will consist of 90 multiple-choice questions in English.

The first exam will take place at the Berlin 2008 ERS Congress, and it is hoped that, should it prove a success, it will become an annual feature of the event.

### School Committee

**Chair:** Patricia L. Haslam.

**Directors:** Paolo Palange, Gilbert Massard, Johannes Wildhaber, Anita Simonds.

**Committee members:** Johan Vansteenkiste, Bernd Schönhofer, Thomas Geiser, Peter Calverley, Mario Cazzola, Christina Gratiou, Monika Gappa, Annette Boehler, Michelle Agnew, Roberto Cosentini, Anne-Pascale Meert, Konrad Bloch, James Y. Paton.