

ERS School: the educational arm of the ERS



“LEARNING FROM THE EXPERTS”

Objectives

The main aim of the ERS School is to provide postgraduate education across Europe, with the ultimate objective of improving the quality of respiratory medicine and clinical care for patients with lung disease. Furthermore, the ERS School aims to harmonise clinical practice within respiratory medicine throughout Europe.

This is achieved by:

- Providing educational resource material and teaching tools.
- Offering continuing medical education (CME) to ERS members through the European Board for Accreditation in Pneumology (EBAP).
- Developing a criteria for training specialists in respiratory medicine; with the ultimate aim of forming a recognised curriculum, which will map the educational capacities of respiratory specialist departments in Europe and set standards for the required knowledge and skills necessary to become a European Respiratory Specialist.

ERS School activities

The ERS School Chair, Kai-Håkon Carlsen, is supported by three Directors each focused on one of the three main activities of the School:

- 1) Postgraduate Courses at the ERS Annual Congress

- 2) Educational activities and courses held outside of the ERS Annual Congress, throughout Europe
- 3) Web-based educational activities: e-Learning Centre

Congress Postgraduate Courses

In 2004, at the ERS Annual Congress in Glasgow, 22 half-day Postgraduate Courses were organised on the first day. These courses are held every year and are becoming increasingly popular. They are designed for clinicians and allied respiratory professionals, and are broad-based to cover essential major topics in respiratory medicine. Seven courses have been running since 2003, as they form part of a series designed to be completed over a 3-year period. The topics covered by these courses, referred to as Core Curriculum Courses, for the period 2003–2005 are: Basics in chest imaging, Lung cancer, Asthma, COPD, Sleep problems, Paediatric respiratory medicine and Respiratory physiology.

“Meet-the-Professor” Seminars

There were 20 “Meet-the-Professor” Seminars, organised by the ERS School, held during the ERS Annual Congress. These Seminars are aimed at small audiences and have approximately 20 participants, enabling them to have close communication and contact with the Professor.

ERS School Courses

The ERS School Courses are 3–4 day Postgraduate

Courses organised outside the Congress in locations all over Europe. These courses were initiated in 2003 and four were organised for the first year. The success of these courses saw the number double to eight in 2004. The courses are interactive and bring the speakers and participants in close contact with each other, providing them with a great opportunity for exchanging knowledge and obtaining the most up-to-date information in the field.

Bursaries are provided for the courses to support participants from low-income countries. For example, 70 bursaries were provided to participants of the Smoking Cessation Course held in Bucharest (Romania) in December 2004. Further to the continued popularity of these courses and the fact that all eight courses were fully booked in 2004, we look forward to another successful year in 2005 with many exciting courses planned.

Breathe: the new educational journal from the ERS

An exciting new development in September 2004, was the successful launch of *Breathe – Continuing Medical Education for Respiratory Professionals* during the ERS Annual Congress in Glasgow. It is the official educational journal of the ERS School and aims to provide respiratory professionals, including ERS members and other interested readers, with up-to-date information on topics of interest in their daily clinical practice. *Breathe* publishes peer-reviewed articles and offers the added advantage of giving readers the opportunity to earn CME credits by taking part in the *Breathe* CME test programme.

Educational Task Forces and European training in respiratory medicine

In 2004, it was decided that the ERS School would initiate a Task Force to help define the standard of education and training for pulmonologists across Europe. From this we hope to develop a recognised curriculum and provide high-quality teaching material to fulfil these needs. The ultimate aim being to develop a European training programme which will result in a European Certificate in Pulmonology. This project will be further developed in 2005 and will be carried out in collaboration with the Forum of European Respiratory Societies (FERS), EBAP and the pneumology section of Union Européenne des Médecins Spécialistes (UEMS).

ERS School Seminars

The ERS School provides financial assistance to support seminars held during certain national or regional meetings. The programme is planned jointly with the local organisers, and the ERS School covers the cost of 2–4 speakers (usually representing ERS). In 2004, a total of €47,000 was spent in supporting such seminars, as detailed in table 1 overleaf.

e-Learning Centre

The e-Learning Centre was created in late 2002, in order to give members centralised access to all the educational material produced by the ERS. The year 2004, has seen a huge increase in the amount of material available through the e-Learning Centre and it now contains a wealth of valuable educational tools for respiratory professionals worldwide.

The following are just some of the resources that can be found in the e-Learning Centre:

- Interactive case reports with audio and web casts
- ERS Annual Congress presentations and abstracts
- Presentations from the: Lung Science Conference; International Consensus Conference; Research Seminars
- Postgraduate Course booklets from the ERS Congress
- Publications: *Breathe* and the *European Respiratory Monograph*
- Educational material from all external ERS School Courses
- Printed and web-based guidelines

> www.ersnet.org/elearning



*“Harmonising standards throughout Europe”***Table 1 – School seminars held in 2004**

Seminar Title	Place	Date 2004
1st International Orphan Pulmonology Conference	Vilnius, Lithuania	April 17
Acute exacerbations of chronic respiratory failure: diagnosis and therapeutical approaches	Sibu, Romania	April 22-24
Course on Lung Cancer chemotherapy for interns in pulmonology	Athens, Greece	Spring 2004
The new insight of pulmonology: update for diagnostics and treatment options	Astana, Kazakhstan	June 3-4
Pulmonary hypertension: new aspects in pathophysiology, diagnosis and treatments	Bucharest, Romania	June 17-18
Asthma and COPD: one or two diseases	Bratislava, Slovak Republic	June 18
Current advances in pulmonary medicine	Budapest, Hungary	September 18
Advanced respiratory update for South-Eastern Europe	Belgrade, Serbia	November 11-13
2nd Postgraduate Course on Medical Thoracoscopy	Heraklion, Greece	November 13

In 2004, a study of ERS members based in different European countries was carried out to assess their interest in web-based educational activities. This was done, in part, through the e-ProLearn project, an European Union (EU) supported programme. The results from this study will form the basis for further developments in 2005 which include: 1) an image database; 2) interactive web-based courses for CME accreditation; and 3) an interactive web-based course on asthma as a model for other interactive courses, together with an evaluation of the needs of the target audience.

Educational research grants

Educational research grants are open for application by any member of the ERS. Funded projects are aimed at research in education for respiratory medicine, either for undergraduate or for continuous medical education (including paediatrics, intensive care and surgery). The following grants were awarded in 2004:

- Martyn R. Partridge (London, UK). How best do we teach accurate diagnosis of respiratory conditions? €11,660
- C. Michael Roberts (London, UK). Understanding the use of a web-based clinical image database by respiratory specialists. €9,717
- Snezana Radic and Zorica Zivkovic (Belgrade, Yugoslavia). Childhood asthma educational and smoking prevention project. €9,717

School Committee**Chair**

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