Press Release:

Allergy School Bilbao 2024: International Gathering of Allergists in Bilbao to Address the Latest Advances in Insect Venom Allergy and Mastocytosis

- **An event organised by the European Academy of Allergy and Clinical Immunology (EAACI) with the support of the Spanish Society of Allergology and Clinical Immunology (SEAIC).**
- **Over 150 allergy specialists from 28 countries will convene to update their knowledge on insect venom allergy and mastocytosis.**

Zúrich, 6th September 2024—Bilbao will host the Allergy School 2024 from 19 to 21 September, an event organised by the European Academy of Allergy and Clinical Immunology (EAACI) with the support of the Spanish Society of Allergology and Clinical Immunology (SEAIC).

More than 150 allergy specialists from 28 countries will gather during these days to update their knowledge on insect venom allergy and mastocytosis.

Insect Venom Allergy: A Public Health Concern

Insect stings are the leading cause of severe allergic reactions (anaphylaxis) in Europe. The insects most commonly associated with these reactions are hymenopterans: the honeybee (Apis mellifera), wasps (Polistes paper wasps, common wasps (Vespula), and hornets (Vespa velutina).

Illustration 1: Sting Challenge Test

For patients allergic to bees or wasps, a single sting can trigger anything from a localised skin reaction, such as hives, to a more severe, potentially life-threatening allergic generalised response reaction known as anaphylaxis. In some cases, anaphylaxis can be fatal.

As a result, it is recommended that patients who have experienced anaphylaxis following a sting be trained in the use of an adrenaline auto-injector for emergency self-administration and be referred to an allergist. Treatment with venom immunotherapy can protect against reactions from future stings in up to 98% of cases.

Illustration 2: Immunotherapy Treatment

Mastocytosis: Risks and Clinical Management

Illustration 3: Diagnostic tests in Hymenoptera venom allergy

The Allergy School Bilbao 2024 will also address mastocytosis, a group of disorders characterised by the abnormal activation of mast cells, the key cells involved in allergic reactions. Patients with mastocytosis are at an increased risk of anaphylaxis following insect stings, and their reactions are often more severe than in the general population.

The Allergy School Bilbao will provide an opportunity for young allergists to learn from experts from various countries about diagnostic and treatment approaches for these patients. Additionally, the impact of climate change and rising temperatures on the prevalence of hymenopteran stings will be discussed, as warmer

climates extend the lifespan of these insects and facilitate the spread of new species into specific areas.

How to Avoid Stings

The risk of stings increases in warm weather and rural or water-rich areas such as ponds and swimming pools, where preventive measures should be heightened. Hymenopterans sting to defend their food or offspring, and their aggression increases when they feel threatened. They are more aggressive on hot days, particularly when food is nearby.

It is important for allergic patients to be well-informed about the insect responsible for their allergy, recognise it, and observe some simple precautions to help reduce their risk.

Allergy School Bilbao 2024

“This event represents a vital platform for advancing and disseminating knowledge in the field of allergology, particularly regarding insect venom allergy and mastocytosis,” highlights Dr Arantza Vega, allergist and one of the Chair of the event’s organising committee. “Allergy School Bilbao not only promotes scientific updates and international collaboration but also reinforces the importance of continuous education to improve the quality of life for allergic patients.”

“It is a great satisfaction for our society to contribute to the dissemination of such continuous training and scientific updates, in line with our Board of Directors’ commitment to advocating the crucial role of officially recognised specialists in Allergology in the comprehensive care of allergic patients throughout their lives,” concludes Dr David González de Olano, President of the SEAIC Hymenoptera Allergy Committee.

About EAACI

The European Academy of Allergy and Clinical Immunology (EAACI) is a non-profit organisation composed of researchers and healthcare professionals dedicated to improving the health of people affected by allergic and immunological diseases. The Academy has over 16,000 members from 125

countries, representing more than 50 national allergology societies. For more information, visit www.aaci.org.

About SEAIC

The Spanish Society of Allergology and Clinical Immunology (SEAIC) is a non-profit scientific professional society composed of the majority of Spanish allergists and scientists from other fields of Medicine and Biology with an interest in Allergology. SEAIC maintains close scientific ties with EAACI, contributing to the dissemination of knowledge and health education in Allergology among healthcare professionals and the general public.

Event Organisers:

Arantza Vega Castro / Elisa Boni / David González de Olano / Christine Breynaert / Patrizia Bonadonna / Jolanta Walusiak-Skorupa / Tomas Chivato

Press Contact:

For more information, please contact:

Pablo Frieyro González
pablo.frieyro@eaaci.org
686 75 73 91

Carolina López Cuesta
carolina.lopez@alabra.es
674 09 60 78

Helena Pastor Campoy
helena.pastor@alabra.es
647 24 16 15