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Letter from the IEC President

I am excited to announce that the IEC will present the [Inaugural Dermatology Residents Virtual Meeting—Advanced Topics in Atopic Dermatitis](#)—on Saturday, October 23, 2021.

This one-day, comprehensive program on the most up-to-date information about the diagnosis, treatment, pathophysiology, and comorbidities related to the management of AD is designed for and open to all dermatology residents and fellows.

Emma Guttman, our immediate past president and co-chair of the program, has been involved in extensive planning to design a curriculum with sessions that range from epidemiologic trends, prevention strategies, and current and novel treatments to translational research. In addition to listening to didactic lectures presented by international experts in AD, participants will have the opportunity to participate in interactive discussions with the expert faculty and other residents.

The IEC is now accepting registration for this inaugural meeting on a first-come, first-served basis. I invite dermatology residents to [sign up today](#) to be amongst the first group of attendees to what will become an annual event. I look forward to welcoming you to a stimulating and informative educational program.

Robert Bissonnette, MD FRCPC MSc
IEC President

MEET THE
COUNCILOR

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interview with
**Dr. Alan
Irvine**

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Meet the Councilor: Dr. Alan Irvine

This issue's 'Meet the Councilor' features Alan Irvine, MD, DSc, who is the IEC president-elect. Dr. Irvine is a professor of dermatology at Trinity College Dublin and a consultant dermatologist at Children's Health Ireland in Dublin Ireland.

Read this summary of our Q&A with Dr. Irvine or [listen to his 5-minute audio interview](#).

What is your proudest accomplishment to date in the atopic dermatitis (AD) space?

On a research basis, I'm most proud of working on the identification of filaggrin mutations in the skin barrier of people with AD, which are a significant genetic risk factor for AD. The work served to focus on the relevance of skin barrier defects in AD, which led on to a focus on innate immunity in the skin and skin resident immune defects. Identifying the filaggrin mutations yielded insights into the pathogenesis of AD, highlighting the contribution of the barrier defect, which can be inherited or acquired, along with aberrant local immune responses and an aberrant microbiome.

What do you value most about being involved with the IEC?

The IEC is a fantastic transnational organization where a melting pot of ideas, energy, and stimulation help focus research efforts to develop better treatments for AD and better understanding of the disease. It's been a great energizing hub to bring together people from all areas around the globe, with different backgrounds, cultures, and mutually enhancing skill sets, to drive research into the condition and better outcomes for patients.

What do you think will garner the most attention over the coming year in the AD field?

A lot of new treatments are going through regulatory approval processes around the world, so we expect more advanced therapeutic options for people with moderate and severe disease by the end of this year and into the first half of 2022. We're watching developments around new topical Janus kinase (JAK) inhibitors with great interest, which would provide topical options beyond the existing topical steroids, calcineurin inhibitors, and phosphodiesterase 4 inhibitors. We continue to learn more about the epidemiology of AD, comorbidities, and the burden of disease for patients and their families. The neuroimmune axis is fascinating, and we're learning more about the interactions between the nervous system and immune system in the skin that will yield additional therapies for itch and skin inflammation in coming years.

IEC Councilors are involved across all those domains, from basic research, epidemiological research, and clinical trials to treatment. The IEC has very active research and education committees, which drive primary research, hopefully contributing to all these areas, as well as education of patients, families, and healthcare providers.

What do you see as the biggest need among AD patients?

There's still a significant unmet need for therapies for all degrees of disease—from mild, moderate, to severe—that can give patients largely symptom-free lives, particularly around itch and sleep. That said, there's a huge amount of promise that the unmet need can be matched in the near future.

JAAD International Publishes IEC's Position Paper on Therapeutic Patient Education in AD

A new IEC article, [Therapeutic Education in Atopic Dermatitis: A Position Paper from the International Eczema Council](#), has been published in *JAAD International*.

[Read, download, and share the infographic summary of the article](#), available from IEC.

The manuscript was authored by IEC Associates and Councilors Lawrence F. Eichenfield, MD; Sébastien Barbarot, MD, PhD, MSc; Mette Deleuran, MD, DMSc; Danielle Marcoux, MD; Audrey Nosbaum, MD, PhD; and Jean-Francois Stalder, MD, along with authors Ayan Kusari, MA; Allison M. Han, MA; and Peter Lio, MD.

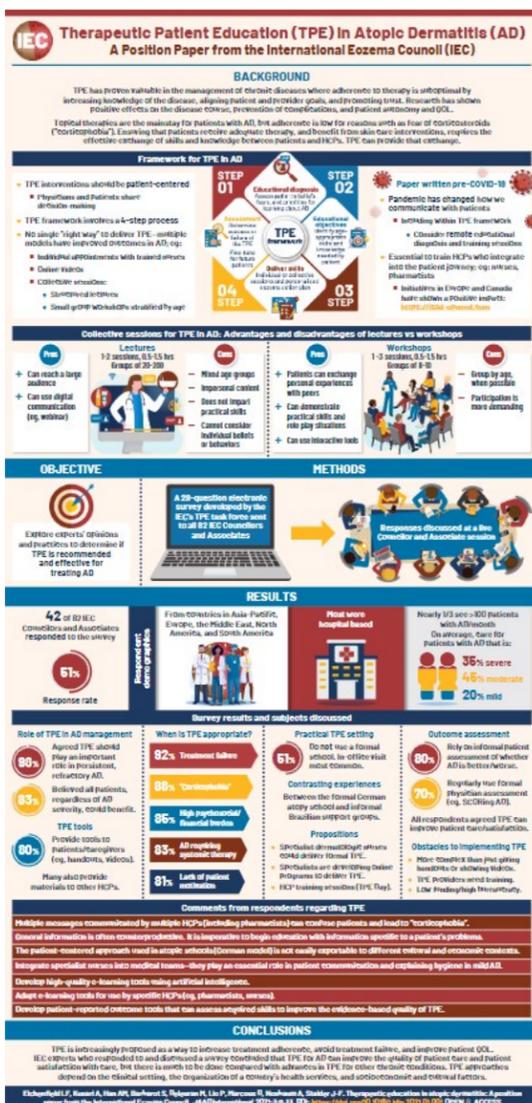
Therapeutic patient education (TPE) has proven valuable in the management of chronic diseases where adherence to therapy is suboptimal. It increases knowledge of the disease, aligns patient and provider goals, and promotes trust. Research has shown TPE positively affects the course of the disease, the prevention of complications, and patient autonomy and quality of life.

Topical therapies are the mainstay for most patients with AD, but adherence is low for many reasons, such as fear of topical corticosteroids (“corticophobia”). Patients and providers must effectively exchange skills and knowledge to ensure patients receive adequate therapy and benefit from recommended skin care interventions. TPE can provide that exchange.

TPE should be patient-centered, with physicians and patients sharing decision making. This article describes a framework for TPE interventions in AD, which involves a four-step process starting with an assessment of the patients' beliefs, fears, hopes, and interest in learning more about their disease. This “educational diagnosis” is followed by “educational objectives”—the determination of the age-appropriate skills and knowledge needed by the patient or family. Then, skills are acquired at individual or collective sessions and through a personalized eczema action plan. Finally, assessment determines the success or failure of the TPE and finetunes the intervention for future patients.

To explore experts' opinions and practices to determine if TPE is recommended and effective for treating AD, a 28-question electronic survey developed by the IEC's TPE task force was sent to all 82 IEC Councilors and Associates. The responses collected were discussed at a live IEC Councilor and Associate session.

Forty-two (51%) of the 82 IEC Councilors and Associates responded to the survey. Most respondents (97.5%) agreed that TPE should play an important role





About the IEC

The **International Eczema Council** (IEC) is a global nonprofit organization led by dermatology experts on atopic dermatitis (AD). The IEC is dedicated to increasing the understanding of AD and promoting its optimal management through research, education and patient/family care. More than 100 Councilors and Associates from 24 countries contribute their expertise to support the IEC's research, programs, events, and education. **[Make a donation to further the IEC's mission](#)** of eczema research and education or **[contact the IEC to learn more](#)**.

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