



INTERNATIONAL ECZEMA COUNCIL

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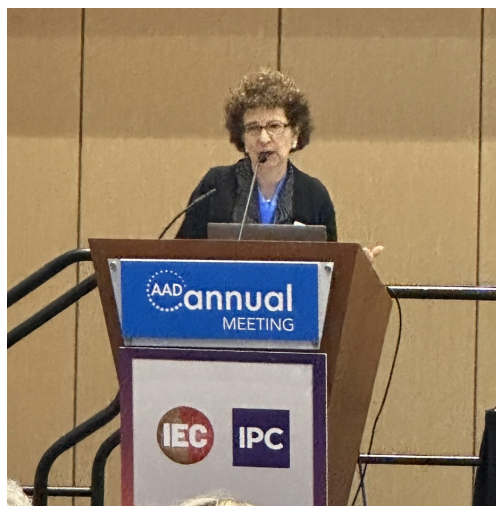
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IEC Councilor, Past President, and Cofounder Amy Paller, MD, (above) and IEC Councilor Kilian Eyerich, MD PhD, (right) present at the joint IEC/IPC symposium at AAD's Global Education Day in Denver, CO.



Letter from the IEC President



Throughout 2026, the International Eczema Council (IEC) is reinforcing one of our most important assets: our partners and the collaboration they make possible. This year's early highlights reflect the momentum that is possible when we bring together clinical experts, researchers, and sponsors to advance best practices and accelerate progress for people living with atopic dermatitis worldwide.

Our work has always been rooted in a shared belief: that meaningful progress is achieved not in isolation, but together. Partnership is the force that propels our mission forward. It is what allows our ideas to travel farther, our impact to deepen, and our collective voice to be heard more clearly across the global dermatology community.

Above all, IEC is a partnership among people. Our members represent a remarkable coalition of expertise, experience, and commitment—spanning disciplines, regions, and perspectives, yet united by a common purpose: improving the lives of people living with atopic dermatitis. As clinicians, researchers, educators, and leaders, you serve not only as contributors to IEC's work, but as ambassadors of its mission. Through your daily interactions with patients and peers, your scholarship and leadership, and your engagement within the broader dermatology community, you carry IEC's values and insights outward—extending our reach into clinics, classrooms, conferences, and conversations worldwide. Each connection strengthens the fabric of IEC and reinforces the influence of our shared voice.

Partnerships also sustain our ability to act on this mission. IEC is deeply grateful for the collaboration of our sponsors, whose support helps make our work possible. These partnerships enable research initiatives, educational programs, and strategic efforts that allow IEC to remain a trusted, independent, and evidence-based authority in atopic dermatitis. By working alongside partners who share our commitment to advancing care and understanding, we are able to invest not only in today's priorities, but in the long-term future of the field.

Equally powerful are our partnerships with like-minded organizations that share our vision and values. Collaborations with groups such as the International Psoriasis Council (IPC) demonstrate the true strength of alignment—where shared goals create shared momentum.

That spirit was on display at the American Academy of Dermatology (AAD) Annual Meeting this year, where IEC and IPC partnered on an educational symposium, [**Psoriasis or Dermatitis? When Boundaries Blur and Treatments Flip the Script**](#). The session created space for cross-disease dialogue and practical takeaways and brought together perspectives on pathogenesis, patient-centered outcomes, and real-world challenges in managing chronic inflammatory skin conditions.

IEC Director Yael Anne Leshem, MD MCR, and I served as co-chairs representing the IEC. We were joined by my IPC counterpart, Bruce Strober, MD PhD, and IPC Board Member and IEC Cofounder and Director Amy Paller, MD MS, who were representing the IPC. We're grateful to everyone who contributed their expertise to help make the program a success.

Though eczema and psoriasis have distinct biology and patient experiences, they also share important scientific questions—about barrier function, inflammation, comorbidities, measurement of disease control, and how we define meaningful outcomes for patients. By working together, the IEC and IPC can learn faster, avoid duplication, and identify research priorities that benefit the broader inflammatory skin disease community. We are excited to carry this partnership forward with the upcoming [**IEC–IPC Eczema and Psoriasis Research Incubator: Cross-Disciplinary Innovation Forum**](#) at ESDR 2026 in Heidelberg, Germany. You'll find more details about the incubator, including how to [**register**](#), later in this newsletter.

For the IEC, partnerships like this are not simply “nice to have”—they are a force multiplier for our mission. When these partnerships come together—members, supporters, and organizational allies—the IEC becomes more than a council; it becomes a catalyst. Our collective expertise accelerates discovery. Our shared advocacy elevates awareness. Our unified efforts help ensure that the needs of patients with atopic dermatitis remain visible, urgent, and globally recognized.

The IEC remains firmly committed to strengthening and expanding these partnerships. Read on to find out about how you can continue to partner with us. By continuing to work side by side—with one another and with those who share our mission—we will extend our reach, magnify our impact, and carry our voice even farther. It is through partnership, collaboration, and shared leadership that IEC will continue to shape the future of atopic dermatitis care worldwide.

Alan Irvine, MD DSc

IEC President

Three Symposia to Come in 2026, Plus a New Research Incubator

With our shared session at AAD Global Education Day in the rearview mirror, we're looking forward to connecting with members and colleagues at the Society for Investigative Dermatology (SID) Annual Meeting. The IEC will host an educational symposium, [**Decoding the Dialogue: Skin–Microbe–Immune Interactions in Atopic Dermatitis**](#), from 8 am to noon May 13 in Chicago. Program chairs are IEC Director April W. Armstrong, MD MPH, and IEC Councilor Patrick M. Brunner, MD MSc.

This session explores key mechanisms underlying infection risk in atopic dermatitis—from epidermal barrier failure and microbiome dysbiosis to developmental vulnerability and type 2 immune suppression of antimicrobial defense. Faculty will also highlight immune endotypes and molecular risk profiles and review comparative infection risk across AD therapies using clinical trial and real-world data to help guide clinical care.

The program will also include three Flash Talks featuring abstracts submitted for the SID Annual Meeting on the topic of atopic dermatitis.

Just 6 days later, the IEC will debut a new symposium, [**Atopic Dermatitis in Adults: Diagnosis, Misdiagnosis, and Therapeutic Approaches**](#), at the Reunión Anual de Dermatólogos Latinoamericanos on May 19 in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

The educational program's speakers all practice in South America and will present the educational content in Spanish. IEC Director Valeria Aoki, MD PhD, and IEC Councilor Fernando Valenzuela, MD, are the program chairs. [Register now to join us for the symposium at RADLA.](#)

At ESDR and again in partnership with our colleagues at the International Psoriasis Council, together we will host a new research incubator that you can read more about next, prior to our planned symposium at EADV in Vienna, Austria.

Then, the educational event at EADV, [The Relevance of Clinical Trials and Real-World Data](#), tentatively will be on October 3. It will be led by symposium co-chairs IEC Councilor Thomas Bieber, MD PhD MDRA, and IEC Director Kenji Kabashima, MD PhD. We will share the event time and faculty information as it becomes available.

Symposia



Society for Investigative Dermatology (SID)

Decoding the Dialogue: Skin-Microbe-Immune Interactions in Atopic Dermatitis

Wednesday, May 13, 8 am-Noon CDT
Chicago, IL, USA



Reunion Annual de Dermatologos Latinoamericanos (RADLA)

Atopic Dermatitis in Adults: Diagnosis, Misdiagnosis, & Therapeutic Approaches

Tuesday, May 19, 16:00-17:30 ART
Buenos Aires, Argentina



European Academy of Dermatology and Venereology (EADV)

The Relevance of Clinical Trials and Real-World Data

Saturday, October 3 (*tentative*)
Time to be announced
Vienna, Austria

Special Events



European Society for Dermatological Research (ESDR) **Eczema and Psoriasis Research Incubator**

Wednesday, September 9
08:00-12:00 CEST
Heidelberg, Germany

Get details on this special event below.

Stay up to date on every event from the IEC by [bookmarking the symposia page.](#)

New for 2026: IEC–IPC Eczema and Psoriasis Research Incubator at ESDR

IEC is proud to partner again with the International Psoriasis Council (IPC) on a half-day scientific workshop on September 9, preceding the 55th Annual Meeting of the European Society for Dermatological Research (ESDR) in Heidelberg, Germany. **Early-career investigators are strongly encouraged to apply to attend this event.**

The **IEC–IPC Eczema and Psoriasis Research Incubator: Cross-Disciplinary Innovation Forum** is designed to catalyze collaboration across inflammatory skin diseases.

This pre-congress incubator will bring together early-career and senior investigators and incorporate patient perspectives to help shape new research directions. This highly interactive forum is designed to catalyze cross-disciplinary collaboration and accelerate innovation across inflammatory skin diseases.

The program will feature two keynote presentations from thought leaders and move from cutting-edge insights on disease mechanisms and precision stratification to data-driven, translational approaches that inform real-world practice. Lightning Talks will feature 5 early-career investigators, before participants take part in structured small-group Challenge Labs focused on priority research themes, culminating in report-outs and expert commentary aimed at identifying actionable gaps and shaping collaborative project concepts.

We are grateful to the LEO Foundation for awarding a research networking grant to support this initiative.

Program chairs are:

- IEC Councilor Sara Brown, MBChB, MD (University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, Scotland, UK)
- IPC Board Member and IEC Councilor Johann Gudjonsson, MD, PhD (University of Michigan, Department of Dermatology, Ann Arbor, MI, US)
- IEC and IPC Councilor Fernando Valenzuela, MD (University of Chile / University of the Andes, Santiago, Chile)
- IPC Councilor Nicole Ward, PhD (Vanderbilt University Medical Center, Nashville, TN, US).

Learn more and register to attend, especially if you are an early-career investigator.

Learn More & Register



Consensus Statement

International Eczema Council Definitions of Low Disease Activity and Remission in Atopic Dermatitis

A Consensus Statement

Joseph F. Merola, MD, MMSc¹; Beth A. Childs, MSc¹; Brooke R. Bartley, MD¹; et al

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JAMA Dermatol
Published Online: April 15, 2026
doi: 10.1001/jamadermatol.2026.0662

JAMA Dermatology Publishes IEC Article on Low Disease Activity

The IEC consensus statement “International Eczema Council Definitions of Low Disease Activity and Remission in Atopic Dermatitis” was published online ahead of print in *JAMA Dermatology* on April 15, 2026. It is the **25th journal article published as a result of IEC work.**

This work addresses a key need in the field by proposing shared, internationally endorsed definitions of low disease activity and remission to support consistent endpoints across studies, clearer communication across research and care settings, and treat-to-target approaches in clinical practice. The publication describes how the authors developed “a globally endorsed, expert-derived framework” that defines *low disease activity*, *very low disease activity*, *on-drug complete control*, and *off-drug remission* in AD.”

The authors are IEC Councilor and project leader Joseph F. Merola, MD MMSc; Beth A. Childs, MSc; Brooke R. Bartley, MD; IEC Past President Robert Bissonnette, MD MSc; IEC Councilor Thomas Bieber, MD PhD MDRA; IEC Past President and Cofounder Emma Guttman-Yassky, MD PhD; IEC Past President and Cofounder Amy S. Paller, MD, MS; IEC Councilor Eric L. Simpson, MD MCR; IEC Director April W. Armstrong, MD MPH; and IEC President Alan D. Irvine, MD DSc.

IEC also shared this work at the AAD 2026 Annual Meeting (Abstract #73585) in the oral presentation and e-poster abstract titled “International Eczema Council Atopic Dermatitis Low Disease Activity and Remission Consensus Definitions: Results of a Global Modified Delphi Initiative.”

[Read the New IEC Journal Article](#)

IEC Welcomes 6 New Members to the Council, Adds New Country

The IEC Board of Directors is pleased to introduce new members whose applications were approved in March. IEC now comprises 187 members: 135 Councilors and 52 Associates. We continue to grow our global representation, including Nigeria as a newly represented country. We are grateful for the expertise and global perspectives our members bring to the IEC community. See the infographic for details about [IEC membership and global representation](#).

Help us continue to grow by sharing the [IEC membership application](#) with dermatologists, allergists, and researchers with a passion for atopic dermatitis care.



New Councilors

- Perpetua Uchechi Ibekwe, PhD MBBS FMCP FWACP, Nigeria
- Emmanuella Guenova, PhD MD MSc, Austria

New Associates

- Gianluca Avallone, MD, Italy
- Shamir Geller, MD, United States
- Hazel H. Oon, MD, Singapore
- Pedro J. Gomez-Arias, MD, Spain

Fellows Completing Clinical and Research Fellowships with IEC Mentors

The [IEC Fellowship Program](#) continues to support emerging leaders through international research and clinical training experiences. Our eighth and ninth fellows are completing their year of mentorship in April and July, respectively.



[Christabel A. Ovesuor, MBBS FMCP FWACP](#), of Nigeria, is completing her International Clinical Fellowship this month under the mentorship of Carsten Flohr, MA MSc PhD FRCP FRCPC, at St John's Institute of Dermatology, Guy's & St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust and King's College London. [Meet Dr. Ovesuor and watch her short video.](#)



[Carlos Eduardo Forero Ángel, MD](#), of Colombia, will complete his International Research Fellowship in July under the mentorship of Katrina Abuabara, MD MA MSCE, at the University of California, San Francisco. [Meet Dr. Forero Ángel and watch his short video.](#)

Both of these fellowships are supported by a grant from the IEC Foundation.

Previous research and clinical IEC fellows have published articles based on their IEC research, joined the IEC as members, and [shared their experiences with the program.](#)

Meet the Councilor: Reiko Tanaka, PhD



IEC Councilor Reiko J. Tanaka is professor of computational systems biology and medicine in the Department of Bioengineering at Imperial College London, where she leads the Biological Control Systems Lab.

Trained as a mathematical engineer and evolved into a computational systems biologist, she now works at the interface of systems medicine, bringing a uniquely interdisciplinary perspective to her research.

Her work applies computational and mathematical tools, including mechanistic modelling, statistical machine learning, and AI, to uncover the design principles of biological systems in disease, with a particular focus on atopic dermatitis, skin microbiome, and epithelial barrier function.

How does your personal or professional vision and mission align with the [IEC mission and vision?](#)

My professional mission is to improve patient care by advancing computational research for atopic dermatitis. That goal resonates deeply with the IEC's mission to promote research, education, and best practices in AD treatment worldwide. At the heart of my work is a commitment to a patient-centred perspective. Every research question I pursue begins with asking what truly matters to patients living with AD. What excites me most about computational approaches is their versatility. They can integrate diverse data types, model complex biological systems, and ultimately generate insights that can translate into more personalised and

effective care. I see my work as a contribution to the IEC's vision of transforming the lives of people with atopic dermatitis, one algorithm at a time.

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

My proudest accomplishment has been helping to establish computational modelling as a recognised and valued research methodology within the AD field. When I began this work, quantitative and systems-based approaches were relatively novel in dermatology. Seeing the community increasingly embrace these methods, and witnessing the collaborations and discoveries they have enabled, is deeply rewarding. A particular milestone along this journey was being invited to co-author the IEC expert panel review [Human and Computational Models of Atopic Dermatitis: A Review and Perspectives by an Expert Panel of the International Eczema Council](#), published in the *Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology* in 2019, a recognition that *in silico* modelling had truly earned a place alongside more established methodologies in the field. It is a testament to the openness and collaborative spirit of the AD research community, and I hope it inspires other computational scientists to bring their expertise to this important field.

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

Being part of the IEC means being connected to a remarkable global network of professionals united by a shared mission and vision. What I treasure most is the opportunity for genuine cross-disciplinary collaboration, where clinicians, basic scientists, and computational researchers come together and learn from one another. My connection with the IEC goes back to my co-authorship of the 2019 IEC expert panel review, an experience that showed me just how much can be achieved when diverse expertise is brought together around a common goal. Becoming a Councilor now feels like a natural and deeply rewarding next step in that journey.

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

I believe artificial intelligence and digital twin technologies will increasingly take centre stage in AD research and care. AI is already transforming how we analyse patient data, identify disease subtypes, and predict treatment responses. Looking further ahead, digital twins (personalised computational models of individual patients) hold promise for simulating disease trajectories and tailoring interventions in ways that were previously unimaginable. I am excited to see how the field embraces these tools, and equally excited to contribute to that journey.

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

A personalised management tool. Despite the remarkable advances in our understanding of AD and the expanding therapeutic landscape, patients still largely lack tools that translate this knowledge into actionable, individualised guidance for their day-to-day disease management. This is a key motivation behind my work in computational modelling and AI, and I believe it represents one of the most exciting and impactful frontiers for our community to pursue together.

What's the most recent good thing you watched, listened to, or visited?

Cherry blossoms in full bloom! There is something wonderfully grounding about witnessing nature's own annual transformation. It is a timely reminder that beauty and renewal are always just around the corner. It was the perfect moment to pause, reflect, and feel grateful for the work we do and the community we are part of.

Get to know other Councilors and Associates by reading [past Meet the Councilor features](#).

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MDRI/IEC Canadian Research Fellowship: January 2024–December 2024
Funded by a generous grant from the Montreal Dermatology Research Institute. 1:23

Carlos Eduardo Forero Ángel, MD, Dermatologist, Colombia
International Research Fellowship: August 2025–July 2026
Funded by a grant from the IEC Foundation. 1:13

Christabel A. Ovesuor, MBBS FMCP FWACP, Nigeria
International Clinical Fellowship: May 2026–April 2028
Funded by a grant from the IEC Foundation. 3:10

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On-Demand Learning: View IEC YouTube Learning Center Recordings

Missed a recent IEC program—or want to revisit a session? IEC symposia recordings are available through our [YouTube Learning Center](#).

Symposia recordings ensure our expert faculty’s knowledge can be accessed freely by physicians and researchers worldwide, regardless of ability to travel to meetings. This resource furthers our mission: “Improve patient care by promoting research, education, and best practices in treatment for atopic dermatitis in people worldwide” by removing barriers to education.

[Go to IEC's YouTube Learning Center](#)

Celebrating the Corporate Partners Who Make Our Work Possible

We are grateful to our industry supporters and corporate members for their continued partnership, which helps make IEC education, research initiatives, and global collaboration possible.

Welcome to our new corporate partner: [Apogee Therapeutics, Inc.](#), a clinical-stage biotechnology company advancing optimized, novel biologics with the potential for best-in-class profiles in the inflammatory and immunology markets. They join our existing partners, shown below.

Interested in supporting IEC? We welcome new corporate partners to help advance education and research in atopic dermatitis globally. Become a corporate sponsor by emailing [CEO Alan Stiles](#). Learn more about [corporate sponsorship](#).

If you're a physician or researcher, please encourage your industry contacts to consider supporting our mission by becoming [IEC corporate members](#).

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About the IEC

The [International Eczema Council](#) (IEC) is a global nonprofit organization led by 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. The IEC comprises 187 Councilors and Associates from

38 countries who contribute their expertise to support the IEC's research, programs, events, and education. The Council's mission is furthered by the support of our [valued corporate partners](#).

Connect with the IEC on social media

