Message from the Issue Editor

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This past year has included many ups and downs with waves of COVID-19 cases, now finally near the end of the fourth wave. With the rolling out of the vaccine, we can all hope that some semblance of normal routines is around the corner. Bless you all and I wish everyone a healthy rest of this year. I urge you all to continue to protect yourselves with the rolling out of the vaccinations moving forward.

This message to you marks another issue of the HKIA e-newsletter. Our editorial team expresses our genuine appreciation to all subeditors and authors to help us keep up to date on the latest clinical practice and research progress relevant to our allergy practices despite the recent social and health-related pressures. Thank you all so much for your hard work during these difficult times!

There are several updates in this issue. First, we thank Dr. Marco Ho for his guidance, support and many successes he achieved for us as our HKIA president the past few years and now the immediate-past President. Thank you very much, Dr. Marco Ho! With that said, we are very excited Professor Gary Wong has become our new HKIA president. Professor Gary Wong is a well-respected and accomplished physician scientist in the field of allergy who will certainly continue to lead and grow HKIA!

Secondly, thanks to the important addition of Dr. Aziz Kam, Associate Consultant at the Department of Ophthalmology at Prince of Wales Hospital, into our group, to add to our new section on Eye Allergy. Dr. Aziz Kam has kindly undertaken to offer his expert perspectives to the Eye Allergy section for HKIA regularly of this relatively new HKIA e-Newsletter section. We are also pleased to welcome Dr. Polly Ho, Associate Consultant, Department of Paediatrics, Queen Elizabeth Hospital as a subeditor to the section on Environment and Microbes!

COVID-19 has proven to be life changing for all of us and here to stay over the past year. With the initial buzz, I am sure everyone has been a bit COVID'd out. This issue gives us a sense of a normality with a shift of most topics to something other than COVID-19.

Dr. Alson Chan introduces us to an exciting and promising area in global technological advances – artificial intelligence and how this is applied to allergy in general.

Dr. Alice Ho offers a take on how obesity increases the risk of asthma in both children and adults.

Dr. Birgitta Wong discusses recent guidance from the well-respected Japanese Rhinological Society on the management of disorders with smell, while I discuss non-allergic rhinitis and its management.

Dr. Allie Lee reviews and discusses a range of anti-allergic eye drops that we can use to alleviate symptoms of allergic conjunctivitis, while Dr. Aziz Kam through the Hong Kong Children Eye Study provides epidemiological data showing that allergic conjunctivitis is prevalent among Hong Kong schoolchildren.

Dr. Agnes Leung, Ms. Chloris Leung and Ms. Ann Au provide insight and advice on how to reduce the occurrence of food allergic reactions while dining out in restaurants, something that we all treasure during the pandemic.

Dr. Polly Ho enlightens us on the association between universal masking in our current environment and the development of allergies, in particular allergic skin reactions.

Dr. David Luk tackles the unmet needs of children with atopic dermatitis, highlighting a few important ways how we can improve the care of children with this debilitating problem.

Dr. Jaime S Rosa Duque discusses something at the forefront of the general public's mind these days, allergic reactions and their relation to COVID-19 vaccines. This topic is further complemented by an excellent article by Mr. Andrew Li and Mr. Brian Lam discuss polyethylene glycol, a substance that has widespread use in the medical field from pharmaceutical products to cosmetics and how it is associated with a range of hypersensitivity reactions.

Dr. Temy Mok explores the relationship between air pollution and COVID-19 infection. An area that is particularly apt for this densely populated city of ours.

Ms. June Chan interviews Dr. Philip Li to relay a topic at the forefront of the Hong Kong community at large, vaccine allergies in particular relation to the COVID-19 vaccines.
Finally, Dr. Jane Wong highlights key note speeches and her research on piperacillin-tazobactam allergy presented at the Japanese Society of Allergology (JSA) co-organized with the XXVII World Allergy Congress with the World Allergy Organization in September 2020.

All the articles in this issue were well prepared and written, so I am sure you will all enjoy this issue very much!

Again, please be sure to take good care of yourselves this summer, with the hope that the vaccines will mitigate the current situation with some light at the end of the tunnel during this pandemic. Please consider receiving the vaccines whenever possible! During this time, we hope that this issue of the HKIA e-Newsletter will be helpful to you and your patients.



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