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# Introduction

The World Allergy Organization (WAO) has published (WAO Journal, June, 2008; [www.waojournal.org](http://www.waojournal.org)) its first report on the increase in allergic diseases throughout the world. In the last 20 or 30 years, the prevalence of allergic diseases has increased considerably, and it has been suggested that such disorders will become an important problem in the XXI century.

Given the importance of allergic diseases in our setting, we consider it necessary for physicians who are in contact with these disorders to receive constant information and training. This has led us to prepare this monograph on "Current topics in allergy".

The present monograph addresses different aspects which we believe to be of interest and current relevance in the field of allergic diseases. Such aspects include the role and importance of genetics in allergic rhinitis; the influence of stress upon the immune response, which may favor the development of allergic diseases in susceptible individuals; the way in which allergic rhinitis and its treatment can

affect school performance among children; the importance of conjunctivitis as a condition associated to allergic rhinitis and its management with antihistamines; the way in which pollinosis may account for the appearance of food allergy, demonstrating the inter-relationship between the respiratory apparatus and the digestive system; and finally the way in which microarrays applied to allergen molecular diagnosis represents the immediate future in the diagnosis of allergic diseases.

All the participants in this monograph hope that it will be of help in offering further insight to the different aspects of the allergic diseases dealt with.

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