

# Prologue

The guidelines popularly known as GEMA (The Spanish Guideline on the Management of Asthma, in Spanish “Guía Española para el Manejo del Asma”) were edited in 2003. The main aim of the document was to write a text that compiled and summarized the scientific evidence available at the time in order to improve the care and management of the asthma patients in our geographical context. Its content and recommendations are adapted to the reality, in terms of diagnostic and therapeutic resources, of our clinical practice. Experts from various Spanish scientific associations have contributed to this multidisciplinary text. The final document constitutes the most extensive asthma consensus ever to have been reached by experts in this country and it has been widely circulated amongst professionals in the field.

The last edition was published six years ago. Continuous advances in our knowledge and treatment of the disease have made it necessary to renew and update its recommendations. This edition continues the “philosophy” of its predecessor: to draw up practical, independent and consensual guidelines, agreed upon by as many experts as possible from the various Spanish scientific associations involved in asthma care, with the backing of the Spanish pharmaceutical industry. This new GEMA, the GEMA 2009, is not an updated reedition of its former counterpart, but a new guide with a different design, content and work methodology. Amongst other innovations, technical help has been provided by the Cochrane Latin American Centre and, on behalf of people affected by the disease, the Spanish Patient Forum has offered its support.

Experts and representatives of nine Spanish scientific associations specialized, for example, in Respiratory Diseases, Allergology, Paediatrics, Otorhinolaryngology and Primary Care: SEAIC (Spanish Allergology and Clinical Immunology Society), SEICAP (Spanish Clinical Immunology and Paediatric Allergy Society), semFYC (Spanish Family and Community Medicine Society), GRAP (Primary Respiratory

Care Society), SEMERGEN (Spanish Society of Primary Care Doctors), SEMG (Spanish Society of General and Family Practitioners), SENP (Spanish Paediatric Respiratory Disease Society), SEORL (Spanish Otorhinolaryngology Society) and SEPAR (Spanish Respiratory and Thoracic Surgery Society) have participated in the writing of the guide. Altogether, a total of 101 professional asthma specialists, including editors, coordinators and proofreaders (using the Delphi method), contributed to its preparation.

This new GEMA 2009 is not an attempt to synthesize everything that is known about the disease. Nor is it a monograph about asthma. It has been designed to improve diagnostic and therapeutic interventions of clinicians by publishing a text that is concise, clear and easy to read. This is why any aspects not directly related to the above mentioned objectives are not covered or are referred to only briefly.

If Clinical Practice Guidelines are not accompanied by a proper dissemination plan, they will have no impact on the way the healthcare professionals they target do their work. This time, right from the start of the project, a decision was made to draw up a distribution or implementation plan for the guide called the GEMA 2009 Distribution Plan. It includes various interventions that have been carefully and specifically prepared for each of the four collectives it targets: Primary Care, pulmonologists, allergologists and otorhinolaryngologists.

Given its scope, contributors, design and content, this GEMA 2009 has every chance of a success. We are convinced it will prove a benchmark, due to the Spanish multidisciplinary consensus reached, and, above all, we are confident that all our efforts will lead to an improvement in the training and performance of our professionals and, as a result, better control of the disease and improved quality of life of the people it affects, which is the ethos and essential aim of the GEMA 2009.

**Dr. Vicente Plaza Moral**  
*On behalf of the editors and coordinators*