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Rhinology in the forefront of European political attention

On Oct. 14, 2015, a symposium on Precision Medicine in Allergy and Airways Diseases took place in the European Parliament in Brussels. The burden of disease in patients with rhinitis and rhinosinusitis was brought to the attention of European policy makers and different stakeholders involved in patient care, highlighting the high prevalence of allergic rhinitis and rhinosinusitis reaching epidemic proportions [1, 2], the major socio-economic consequences [3, 4] and the impact uncontrolled disease despite evidence-based treatment [5, 6]. The Commissioner of Health and Food Safety of Europa, Vytenis Andriukaitis, as well as the presidents of large European Academies and Associations agreed upon the fact that a joint action plan is needed to arrest the epidemic of allergy and chronic airways diseases in Europe via joining forces between patient organizations, health care professionals and researchers. The European Rhinologic Society was one of the organisers of the symposium and highlighted the often overlooked burden of upper airway diseases like allergic and non-allergic rhinitis and rhinosinusitis with or without nasal polyps [7, 8]. Precision Medicine, a novel medical approach combining personalized care with prevention of disease [1, 9], prediction of success of treatment [10, 11] and participation of the patient in the therapeutic approach [7, 12], is at the forefront of the European action plan. The implementation of the principles of Precision Medicine in best practise centers in Europe will be a major step forward to arrest the Epidemic of Allergy and Chronic Airways Diseases. The Finnish Allergy and Asthma Programme has been very successful in the reduction of the prevalence and burden of allergic diseases and asthma, and should therefore be considered for dissemination in Europe [13, 14]. Recent data from the UK suggest that early (surgical) intervention in chronic rhinosinusitis may improve long term clinical outcomes regardless of comorbid lower airway disease [15, 16] also pointing to a role for secondary prevention. Hope arises at the horizon for our patients.

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