Helsinki, Finland
GARD Annual Meeting
The 12th GARD General Meeting was held at the National Institute for Health and Welfare, Helsinki, Finland August 30 – September 1, 2018. This year’s meeting was hosted by the Finnish Lung Association (FILHA) and the National Institute for Health and Welfare. Over 120 GARD members attended the meeting. Details of the meeting agenda can be found in http://gard-breathefreely.org/meetings-news-events/

Special Themes & Panel Discussion
The Natural Step to Respiratory Health
Dr. Tari Haahtela gave an inspiring overview followed with a 4-member panel discussion (Drs P Jousilahti, E Furman, J Lehtimäki and A Cruz), moderated by Dr N Billo.

Work Group Discussions
Six groups devoted an evening on August 31, 2018 to identify challenges, opportunities and actions to improving technical assistance in LMIC.

Plenary
Planning Green Cities
Anni Sinnemäki, Vice Mayor of Helsinki City gave the Plenary speech Helsinki being a model of green city.

Helsinki Alert
The natural step to health
Drs T Haahtela and N Khaltaev reminded us the potential health benefits and protective effects that we may get from nature.

Poster and Lightning Rounds
22 posters highlighted efforts & achievements in improving prevention & management of CRDs in GARD countries. The poster lightning rounds was chaired by Dr C Varghese. Top 3 posters: Mozambique, Kyrgyzstan, Romania
Highlights of the 12th GARD General Meeting

Welcome & Opening

Dr Tuula Vasankari, Secretary General of FILHA, Dr Marina Erhola, Director General of the National Institute for Health and Welfare and HE Pirkko Mattila, Minister of Social Affairs and Health welcomed GARD delegates to Helsinki and opened the 12 GARD General Meeting.

Impact of CRDs

Assistant Director General WHO, Dr Svetlana Akselrod Addressed GARD delegates and highlighted that CRDs have a life-long impact in the population from childhood to old age.

Tackling NCDs is a Priority

WHO Coordinator of NCD Management, Dr Cherian Varghese, in his opening remarks emphasized that tackling NCDs is a priority.

GARD’s Role in Tackling CRDs

Dr Nikolai Khaltaev, Chairman of GARD, pointed out that there was a visible decline of CRD mortality in GARD countries which corresponds well with the global decline of CRD mortality recently reported by WHO Independent High-Level Commission on Noncommunicable Diseases.

An Asthma Patient Story

Isaack Sunte, an asthma patient from Kenya shared his inspiring journey of living and coping with asthma highlighted the issues of underdiagnosis, misdiagnosis and lack of proper and adequate treatment for asthma, all adversely impacted quality of life.
Launch of the Global Asthma Report

Dr Guy Marks presented highlights from the New Global Asthma Report published by the Global Asthma Network which suggested people with asthma getting inadequate treatment. The report were a collective contribution from 53 experts around the world.

Asthma Right Care:
A movement for global change

Dr Jaime C de Sousa of IPCRG said “it is paramount that even a perfectly designed system has to be delivered to the right people at the right time & in the right place to get results”.

Helsinki Alert
– Natural Step to Health

Drs Tari Haahtela & Nikolai Khaltaev alerted that the good news is that many respiratory & other NCDs are preventable. It is important for us to understand and recognize the protective effects from nature that we might have lost through urbanization. Embracing biodiversity may be the key natural steps to health: “expose to green areas around the house which may reduce the risk of allergy in children, doing gardening, rubbing hands in soil may in fact strengthen one’s immunity”.
On behalf of all GARD members, the GARD Executive Committee thanks FILHA and the National Institute for Health and Welfare for their hospitality and for hosting the 12th GARD General Meeting in Helsinki, Finland

See you all at the next GARD General Meeting!

https://gard-breathefreely.org/  @GARDbreathe  GARDbreathefreely

Upcoming International Conferences, Meetings & Events:

CONFERENCES:
- 13 September 2018 - The 2018 Global Respiratory Summit, Paris France, cost-hosted by COPD Global & Global Allergy & Asthma Patient Platform (GAAPP), contact kwillard@copdfoundation.org for details
- 27 September 2018 - Third UN High-level Meeting on NCDs, New York USA http://www.who.int/ncds/governance/third-un-meeting/en/

EVENTS:
- 25 September 2018 - World Lung Day, join respiratory organizations from around the world and celebrate World Lung Day on 25 September. To get involved email Lisa Roscoe from the Forum of International Respiratory Societies (FIRS) on lisa.roscoe@firsnet.org or visit the World Lung Day Toolkit where you can download images, a factsheet and sign The Charter for Lung Health at https://www.firsnet.org.

To submit items for the upcoming newsletter or to subscribe: Contact the GARD Newsletter Editors: Drs Teresa To (teresa.to@sickkids.ca) & Stefania La Grutta (lagrunta@ibim.cnr.it)

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GARD Planning Committee (in alphabetical order of last name): Eric Bateman, Niels Chavannes, Alvaro Cruz, Bilun Gemicioğlu, Peter Hellings, Ali Ben Kheder, Hironori Sagara, Boleslaw Samolinski, Jaime Correia de Sousa, Rafael Stelmach, Arunas Valiulis, Giovanni Viegi, Kristine Whorlow, Tonya A. Winders

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