

AAMR Obstructive Airway Disease Symposium

Jornada de enfermedades obstructivas de la vía aérea de AAMR

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On April 9 and 10, 2026, the Argentine Association of Respiratory Medicine (AAMR) held the “Dr. Juan Carlos Figueroa Casas” Meeting on Airway Obstructive Diseases. The meeting addressed the most relevant topics in asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), and bronchiectasis through presentations delivered by nearly 30 national respiratory health professionals and five Spanish-speaking international experts who are recognized leaders in the field.

The first day was organized in four scientific sessions and two industry-sponsored symposia, covering the following topics:

NAVIGATING UNRESOLVED ISSUES IN CURRENT GUIDELINES

There were three concise presentations focused on ongoing controversies in major guidelines for asthma and COPD management. Dr Martín Sívori, who has an extensive career in COPD research and clinical management, examined the role of spirometrically measured airflow obstruction in disease management. International guidelines have overlooked this point in recent years. Therefore, it was crucial to emphasize its key role

in specific patient subgroups –supported by an appropriate literature review– and to clarify that the degree of spirometric obstruction remains a critical factor in therapeutic management

Dr. Luis Nannini reviewed the evidence supporting the use of different symptom-reliever medications in asthma. He emphasized that newer combinations of rapidly acting bronchodilators with inhaled corticosteroids offer advantages over the traditional use of short-acting bronchodilators as rescue therapy. This aligns with the latest 2026 Global Initiative for Asthma (GINA) recommendations, which increasingly de-emphasize the role of salbutamol monotherapy.

The session concluded with an evaluation, defense, and critique of various strategies used to define spirometric obstruction. Drs. Malet, Salvado, and Arce presented evidence-based perspectives, informed by both research and clinical experience, regarding the use of fixed thresholds, the lower limit of normal, and z scores in the interpretation and reporting of lung function tests. ¿Conclusion? The conclusion was left to the audience. The discussion demonstrated that every method presents unique advantages and limitations depending on its clinical application.

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ASTHMA MODULE 1

Following the formal opening of the event, and with the auditorium already filled to capacity early in the morning, the first asthma session began with a presentation by Dr. María Eugenia Franchi on the concepts of asthma control, clinical remission, and complete remission. This concise review detailed diverse clinical scenarios to evaluate potential management targets for patients. Broadly speaking, it is critical to differentiate clinical remission—defined as sustained disease control over time—from complete remission, which requires the absence of all evidence of disease activity, including biomarkers. This remains an area of active research and ongoing evolution.

In a novel addition to the scientific program, Dr. Joaquina López Moras, a specialist in thoracic imaging, discussed the role of imaging studies in asthma management. Her presentation reviewed characteristic CT findings, including mosaic attenuation, bronchial wall thickening, and mucus plugging, as well as emerging imaging modalities. Particular attention was given to functional magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) techniques using inhaled tracers capable of identifying regions of hypoventilation, along with other imaging approaches that may support diagnosis and disease assessment.

The third lecture featured the first international guest speaker from Spain, Dr. Francisco Casas, who addressed the relationship between asthma and exercise. Key topics included the distinction between exercise and physical activity, the diagnosis of exercise-induced bronchoconstriction, therapeutic approaches, and the clinical relevance of these conditions. Concluding remarks Exercise-induced bronchoconstriction and asthma associated with exercise represent physiopathologically distinct entities. Unlike asthma, exercise-induced bronchoconstriction may occur in the absence of chronic airway inflammation and therefore may require a different management approach. However, diagnostic challenges warrant caution when applying this conceptual distinction, as differentiating between these conditions in clinical practice can be difficult.

COPD MODULE 1

To foster collaboration among respiratory healthcare stakeholders, Mr. Ignacio Capparelli

discussed pulmonary rehabilitation beyond traditional center-based settings. He emphasized that limited access to these programs should not prevent implementation, as remote delivery via telerehabilitation has yielded excellent outcomes in patients with COPD.

Dr. Pedro Grynblat, a pulmonologist and interventional bronchoscopist with extensive experience in the field presented and analyzed bronchoscopic lung volume reduction, an intervention infrequently used in routine clinical practice. Although not widely used in routine clinical practice, bronchoscopic lung volume reduction remains a viable therapeutic option for carefully selected patients and can be performed using various techniques.

The session concluded with a presentation by the next international guest speaker, Dr. Juan José Soler Cataluña, internationally recognized for his extensive contributions to the study and management of COPD exacerbations and, more recently, for his leading role in generating evidence on cardiovascular risk in COPD. The discussion focused on this topic under the session title, “Bidirectionality and Therapeutic Impact.” COPD and cardiovascular disease share common risk factors, epidemiologic characteristics, and systemic consequences. Their coexistence results in a detrimental bidirectional interaction that is associated with increased mortality, underscoring the need for coordinated management by pulmonologists and cardiologists.

CASE REPORT MODULE

The first day of the meeting concluded with a session led by Dr. Ana López and Dr. Fernando Saldarini, featuring a segment that has become a hallmark of the event: the Case Report Competition. In the weeks preceding the meeting, case report presentations related to the conference theme were submitted by residents from across the country. The cases were reviewed and scored, and the five highest-rated cases were selected for live presentation during the event. At the conclusion of the presentations, a winning case was chosen and awarded a prize by the AAMR. This year's winner was a colleague from the province of Córdoba, who delivered an outstanding presentation of a highly uncommon case: Diffuse Idiopathic Pulmonary Neuroendocrine Cell Hyperplasia

(DIPNECH) in a patient initially diagnosed with asthma.

The second day of the meeting opened with a general session covering a range of topics related to airway disease.

A central aspect of disease management served as the starting point for discussion: “Inhaler Devices: A Tailored Approach for Each Patient,” presented by Dr. Juan Pablo Casas. The lecture provided a comprehensive review of available inhaler therapies and the criteria that should guide device selection for individual patients.

Subsequently, Dr. Daniel Schonfeld presented highly relevant data regarding the management of patients with airway obstruction and bronchiectasis, a clinical scenario increasingly encountered during patient evaluations. Whether considered a comorbidity or a treatable trait, the presence of bronchiectasis in these patients has important implications for quality of life, survival, and clinical management.

The general session concluded with an opportunity to analyze and reflect on a highly relevant topic in contemporary respiratory health: vaping. Dr. Cristina Borrajo, former coordinator of the Smoking Cessation Section of our Association and a recognized expert in the field, delivered several clear messages: vaping causes airway injury and has no established role as a smoking-cessation intervention.

COPD MODULE 2

Continuing the discussions on current topics in COPD, Dr. Ramón Rojas clearly described how patients with COPD who continue to smoke represent a distinct phenotype from those who no longer smoke. The evidence presented left little doubt regarding the impact of ongoing tobacco use on morbidity and mortality in this patient population.

Addressing a topic that is frequently debated, the applicability of major COPD management guidelines was examined, focusing specifically on the discordance between guideline recommendations and real-world clinical practice. Dr. Gustavo Zabert presented the results of a survey conducted in the weeks preceding the meeting, highlighting clear examples of the discrepancy between ideal management and everyday practice. He then proposed a practical clinical scenario

for discussion and analysis with the audience and session moderators.

The segment concluded with a presentation by the third international guest speaker, Dr. Antonio Anzueto, who provided an update on current concepts related to COPD exacerbations. He described exacerbations as a complex clinical challenge because of their multiple triggering factors and focused on one of the most significant contributors worldwide: poor treatment adherence.

ASTHMA MODULE 2

Addressing what has remained a persistent challenge without a clear solution over recent decades, Dr. Marcos Hernández reviewed the various tools available for the diagnosis of asthma. In a disease lacking a single definitive diagnostic test, how can lung volume measurements, impulse oscillometry, fractional exhaled nitric oxide (FeNO), and other complementary assessments be integrated to establish the diagnosis with maximal confidence?

At the closing of the day directed to specialists, the last two international guest speakers were presented. They discussed the management of the patient with non-T2 asthma, a complex topic that presents a challenge and an unmet obligation for the specialty. Dr. Vicente Plaza discussed the role of a promising new therapeutic tool, tezepelumab, as a biologic treatment for this group of patients, who have historically lacked targeted management strategies. Subsequently, Dr. Francisco de Borja García Cosío presented his experience and reviewed available evidence regarding an emerging approach for the phenotyping and in-depth evaluation of patients with severe asthma: endobronchial biopsy.

MODULE FOR CLINICIANS AND GENERAL PRACTITIONERS

The event concluded with a special “bonus track” session that welcomed internal medicine specialists, family physicians, and general practitioners interested in expanding their knowledge of the management of obstructive airway diseases. This space was created by the AAMR through the coordination of its immunology and obstructive diseases section as an opportunity to dialogue with those who manage a large number of patients with asthma and COPD, generally mild cases, who

have extensive contact with the first consultation and, therefore, are in the setting of initial diagnosis. Participants shared their experiences and discussed certain recommendations aimed at facilitating detection and eventual timely referral of these cases.

THE ROLE OF INDUSTRY SYMPOSIA

As in previous years, industry participation played an important role in the meeting. The sessions sponsored by the industry provided valuable updates on therapeutic tools in the area of obstructive diseases of the airway.

In the first industry space titled “New Strategies, Better Expectations. Advancing a More Ambitious Respiratory Medicine for Patients with COPD,” Drs. María Eugenia Franchi and Marcos Hernández analyzed the benefits of triple therapy and biologic medications in patients with exacerbating COPD, focusing on those with underlying eosinophilic inflammation who are candidates for biologic treatments.

Continuing with the presentation of growing evidence on the role of biologic medications in obstructive diseases, Dr. Sebastián Gando discussed “Single Airway. Role of Tezepelumab in Severe Asthma and Chronic Rhinosinusitis with Nasal Polyposis.”

The second day gave way to the presentation by Drs. Fernando Saldarini and Ignacio Zabert and the opportunity to address a novel and increasingly accepted viewpoint: “Asthma/COPD: Two Sides of the Same Coin.” The inflammatory basis of obstructive diseases as a common point and therapeutic target.

CONCLUSIONS

A highlight of the meeting was the tribute paid to Dr. Figueroa Casas, a longstanding member of the AAMR, distinguished pulmonologist, and dedicated educator whose extensive contributions to the specialty left a lasting legacy through the many fellows, trainees, and students he mentored. The event was named in his honor.

The meeting spanned 2 full days, during which the scientific program provided a comprehensive overview of the most relevant topics. The course directors were Drs. Sebastián Ferreiro, Manuel Ibarrola, and Manuela Garro. The academic program was developed by the Scientific Committee, consisting of Drs. Miguel Penizzotto, Daniel Pascansky, Diego Litewka, Ana Stok, Gabriel García, Ricardo Del Olmo, Valeria Brichetti, Sebastián Wustten, Rosana Morales, Ana María López, and Fernando Saldarini.