

Meet the Assemblies

Assembly 7: paediatrics

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With 1471 members in 2018 and eight groups, the Assembly 7 is a very active and varied one. Its mission is to promote knowledge and understanding of paediatric respiratory diseases, and advance the respiratory health of children around the world. To achieve these goals, our Assembly provides a platform for interaction between clinicians and researchers, and ensures that educational and scientific needs are met during the ERS International Congress and other relevant meetings.

Why does the ERS need a paediatric assembly? There is overwhelming evidence that many respiratory and nonrespiratory diseases in adulthood have their origins in early childhood, or even prenatally. For example, maternal smoking, mode of delivery, exposure to indoor and outdoor air pollution, and respiratory tract infections during childhood are amongst the risk factors for clinically apparent chronic obstructive pulmonary disease later in adulthood. Preterm birth, particularly before 30 weeks of gestation, predisposes children to long-term respiratory and cardiovascular consequences like an increased risk of pulmonary hypertension. Paediatricians have the task to increase awareness of the early origins of adult respiratory diseases amongst those caring for adults.

Cystic fibrosis and primary ciliary dyskinesia are diseases in which important progress has been made in early diagnosis, early and aggressive treatment, and monitoring, leading to improved quality of life, prognosis and survival. Transition to multidisciplinary teams for adults is an important issue.

Growth and development of a child with a (chronic) respiratory illness are unique features

of paediatrics, with important impact on later life. Therefore, the wellbeing of the child and family, and possibilities for attending school and playing sports are central aspects for paediatricians when treating children with a respiratory disease.

The assembly has eight scientific groups, representing paediatric counterparts to the other groups and assemblies of ERS and several other professional societies.

7.1 Paediatric respiratory physiology and sleep

This group covers all aspects of paediatric respiratory physiology, ranging from the basics of ventilation and gas exchange, to lung function measurements, and assessment of sleep and sleep disordered breathing. The group works closely together with related working groups and task forces of ERS and the American Thoracic Society.

7.2 Paediatric asthma and allergy

Asthma and allergy are the most prevalent chronic disorders in childhood in high-income countries. Not surprisingly, the Group 7.2 is the largest group of Assembly 7, with >600 members. The group is very active in developing symposia and task forces, and establishing international research networks. There is active cooperation with the paediatric section of the European Academy of Allergy and Clinical Immunology.



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7.3 Cystic fibrosis

The cystic fibrosis group forms a lively platform where paediatricians, paediatric pulmonologists, pulmonologists, microbiologists, radiologists and allied respiratory health professionals meet and discuss the many new developments in cystic fibrosis. The secretary of the Group 7.3 is an adult respiratory physician, reflecting the close collaboration with other groups within the ERS.

7.4 Paediatric respiratory infection and immunology

Worldwide, respiratory tract infections are amongst the leading causes of death in children. Group 7.4 covers infections like community- and hospital-acquired pneumonia, complicated pneumonia, tuberculosis, and infections in immunocompromised children and children with intellectual disability or neuromuscular disease. There are many cross-links to other groups and assemblies.

7.5 Neonatology and paediatric intensive care

The neonatology and intensive care group is one of the smaller, but growing, groups of the assembly, and aims at intensivists and neonatologists with an interest in respiratory disease. Topics that are of particular interest include neonatal and paediatric resuscitation, ventilatory techniques, the evolving spectrum of chronic lung disease and lung function testing in the intensive care unit. The group is very successful with proposals for symposia and postgraduate courses.

7.6 Paediatric respiratory epidemiology

This group consists of epidemiologists, paediatricians, and other healthcare professionals and health scientists with interests in the early origins and environmental/genetic contributions to paediatric respiratory disease. The focus of Group 7.6 is on the epidemiology of asthma and other obstructive diseases, but also includes respiratory infections, and rare acquired and congenital lung

diseases and their long-term outcomes. There are strong associations with the Epidemiology Group of the Epidemiology and Environment Assembly, and with Groups 7.1, 7.2 and 7.4.

7.7 Paediatric bronchology

The main interest of this group has been the investigation of the paediatric (upper and lower) airways by endoscopy, including special procedures such as bronchoalveolar lavage and bronchial and transbronchial biopsy, and their application in respiratory disorders from infancy to adolescence. One of the most successful courses of the paediatric assembly is the annual paediatric hands-on flexible bronchoscopy course, held for the first time in 2001.

7.8 Lung and airway developmental biology

This new group started in 2017 with the aim to drive cutting-edge, basic science research in lung and airway development into the assembly, and bridge the gap between basic science and translational paediatric pulmonology. The group focuses on lung and airway development, and the relationship between lung and airway development and respiratory health during childhood and beyond.

Assembly 7 highlights

- Successful Paediatric Summer School and paediatric HERMES examination
- Long-standing paediatric bronchoscopy course
- Active members submitting 400–500 abstracts for the ERS Congress
- Input into symposia proposals, postgraduate courses, State of the Art sessions, *etc.*, for almost all assemblies of the ERS
- Successful in clinical research collaborations and task forces
- The paediatric dinner at the ERS Congress

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Conflict of interest

M. Pijnenburg has nothing to disclose.