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**Immunologists Gather to Strengthen Ties and Research**

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Scientists will discuss recent advances in understanding and treating immune-mediated diseases as more than 1,500 researchers and physicians gather in San Francisco June 1-5 at the 6<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Federation of Clinical Immunology Societies (FOCIS).

Doctors will present findings linked to conditions in which the human immune system plays a significant role, such as Multiple Sclerosis, cancer, allergy and asthma, diabetes, inflammatory bowel disease, and AIDS.

And while physicians who specialize in any of these diseases have likely attended a conference where the latest research findings are discussed, the FOCIS approach to education about these conditions is different.

"FOCIS meetings highlight the similar pathologies shared among different diseases and conditions," said Dr. David Hafler, Professor of Neurology at Harvard Medical School and the co-founder and current president of FOCIS.

"When there are similarities in the causes and origins of a condition, it makes sense that therapies successful in treating one may translate to another with the same success. The idea behind FOCIS is to bring physicians out of their disease silos to start looking at clinical immunology in a more horizontal, translational manner," Hafler said.

Hafler says the translational approach to medicine is taking hold at medical schools and hospitals around the country. For instance, the National Institutes of Health, the US government's medical research body, launched its Roadmap for Medical Research in 2004. The Roadmap initiative establishes a call for scientists to move beyond the confines of their own discipline and explore new organizational models for team science.

"Translational medicine is the future, as we know it," Hafler said. "FOCIS has been the voice of translational immunology and we're very excited that this idea beginning to change the way we view medicine."

For more information about FOCIS 2006 and program scheduling, visit [www.focisnet.org](http://www.focisnet.org).