

# EXPLORERS COURSE 2026: Surgical & Medical Management of Airway Disease in Otolaryngology — *Hybrid*

Live: January 22 – 24, 2026

90-Days Access: December 22, 2025 – March 23, 2026

Fairmont Sonoma Mission Inn & Spa, Sonoma, CA

Pre-Work	
Session	Faculty
Immunology of Allergy	Jennifer Villwock, MD, FAAOA
Allergen Characteristics and Standardization	Scott Fortune, MD, FAAOA
Allergen Classes	John Krouse, MD, PhD MBA, FAAOA
Cross-Reactivity Selection	Christopher Brook, MD, FAAOA
The Great Allergy Panel Bake Off: What/How Many Antigens Do You Test For	Mona Patadia, MD, FAAOA; Scott Fortune, MD, FAAOA; Meha Fox, MD, FAAOA; Rebecca Kamil, MD, FAAOA; Farrah Siddiqui, MD, FAAOA
Skin Testing I: Testing Board, Controls, Indications and Contraindications	Rebecca Kamil, MD, FAAOA
Skin Testing 2: Skin Prick Testing and Modified Quantitative Testing	Scott Fortune, MD, FAAOA
Specific IgE Testing	Meha Fox, MD, FAAOA
Avoidance and Environmental Control	Farrah Siddiqui, MD, FAAOA
Pharmacotherapy for Allergic Rhinitis Part II: Treatment and Guidelines	Michael Platt, MD, MSc, FAAOA
Immunology and Principles of Immunotherapy	Farrah Siddiqui, MD, FAAOA
SCIT Vial Prep and Protocol	Kevin Wilson, MD, FAAOA
SLIT Vial Prep: Escalation, Maintenance, Withdrawal	Mona Patadia, MD, FAAOA
Use of Biologics in Respiratory Disease	Dana Crosby, MD, MPH, FAAOA
Case Study AAOA Affinity Program Boosts Bottom Line	Cheyenne Brinson

Thursday, January 22					
Start Time	End Time	Session	Description	Faculty	
4:30 PM	5:00 PM	<b>Demo Labs</b>			
5:00 PM	5:05 PM	Welcome to California		Jennifer Villwock, MD, FAAOA, Course Director	
5:05 PM	5:20 PM	Overview of Environmental Extremes & Their Impact on Allergic and Inflammatory Airway Disease	This session will introduce key types of environmental extremes—such as heat waves, wildfires, air pollution events, and severe storms—and outline their emerging relevance to respiratory health. We will highlight current evidence linking these exposures to allergic sensitization, airway inflammation, and exacerbations of asthma and related diseases.	Keith Sale, MD, FAAOA	
5:20 PM	5:35 PM	Impact of Precipitation, Hurricanes, and Flooding on Allergies and Airway	This session will introduce key types of precipitation-related environmental extremes—such as floods and severe storms—and outline their emerging relevance to respiratory health. We will highlight current evidence linking these exposures to allergic sensitization, airway inflammation, exacerbations of asthma and related diseases, and clinical tips for managing patients with indoor mold problems.	William Reisacher, MD, FAAOA	
5:35 PM	5:50 PM	Heat, Drought, Fire and Inflammatory Airway disease	This session provides an overview of how rising temperatures, prolonged drought, and wildfire smoke impact allergic and inflammatory airway disease. Topics include how heat stress, dryness-driven shifts in aeroallergens, and combustion byproducts increase symptom burden, trigger exacerbations, and may impact clinical management.	Keith Sale, MD, FAAOA	
5:50 PM	6:05 PM	What's the deal with PM?	This session breaks down what clinicians need to know about particulate matter—where it comes from, how it is measured, and why its size and chemistry matter.	Keith Sale, MD, FAAOA	
6:05 PM	6:20 PM	Air Quality and Pollen Monitors — Accuracy & Clinical Implications	This session examines the strengths and weaknesses of current air quality and pollen monitoring technologies and their ability to capture real-world, and clinically meaningful, exposures.	William Reisacher, MD, FAAOA	
6:20 PM	6:35 PM	Special Populations of Exposures — Farmers, Veterans, and More!	This session will provide an overview of how unique environmental exposures in special populations—such as farmers, veterans, and other high-risk groups— influence allergic and inflammatory airway disease. We will review exposure profiles otolaryngologists should be aware of and their impact on allergy, sinus, and other respiratory outcomes.	John Krouse, MD, PhD, MBA, FAAOA	
6:35 PM	7:35 PM	<b>AstraZeneca/AMGEN Product Theater</b>			

Friday, January 23					
Start Time	End Time	Session	Description	Faculty	
6:00 AM	6:30 AM	<b>Demo Labs</b>			
6:35 AM	6:45 AM	Welcome & Course Overview		Jennifer Villwock, MD, FAAOA	
6:45 AM	7:00 AM	An Immunodeficiency Primer — Basics of the Mechanisms Contributing to Sinus and Airway Disease	This high-yield session will provide a concise and clinically relevant, overview of the immunodeficiencies we are likely to see in our patients with sinus and airway disease.	Meha Fox, MD, FAAOA	
7:00 AM	7:15 AM	Otolaryngology Manifestations of immunodeficiency	This session will highlight key otolaryngologic manifestations of primary and secondary immunodeficiency such as recurrent sinusitis, chronic otitis, upper airway infections, and presentations that should increase our suspicion for an underlying immune dysfunction.	Kenneth Rodriguez, MD	
7:15 AM	7:30 AM	Essential Components of Immunodeficiency Work-Up	You've done great surgery, but your patient keeps getting sinus infections. You want to test for immunodeficiency. Where do you begin?	Meha Fox, MD, FAAOA	
7:30 AM	7:40 AM	Are All Immunoglobulin Deficiencies Created Equal?	As testing methods become more sophisticated, our ability to detect deficiencies increases. Are all lab abnormalities clinically relevant? Find out in this talk!	Kenneth Rodriguez, MD	
7:40 AM	7:55 AM	Autoimmune Disorders Manifesting in the Upper Airway	This session provides an overview of autoimmune diseases that present with upper airway symptoms, from chronic rhinosinusitis patterns to laryngeal and subglottic involvement. Attendees will learn to recognize hallmark signs, differentiate autoimmune from infectious or structural causes, and understand implications for diagnosis and treatment.	Robert Stachler, MD, FAAOA	
7:55 AM	8:10 AM	Essential Components of Autoimmune Work-Up	This session focuses on the principles of autoimmunity and appropriate multidisciplinary workup. We present interesting cases that	Peter Filip, MD, FAAOA	
8:10 AM	8:25 AM	Recalcitrant Sinus Cases — Immunodeficiency or Autoimmune Disorder?	Join us for an exciting panel of challenging cases that illustrate key points in the workup and management of patients with sinusitis superimposed on immunodeficiency and/or autoimmune disorders.	Kenneth Rodriguez, MD; Meha Fox, MD, FAAOA; Peter Filip, MD, FAAOA	
8:25 AM	8:40 AM	Phone a Friend — What Our Immunology and Rheumatology Colleagues Wish We Did before Referring	Medicine is a team sport, especially when it comes to complex patients. Join us in this session to learn what are the "do not miss" components of history, physical, and laboratory testing that will allow outpatients to get the most out of their appointments with our colleagues?	Haidy Marzouk, MD, MBA, FAAOA	
8:40 AM	8:55 AM	Panel — Immunodeficiency and Autoimmune Cases		Moderator: Jennifer Villwock, MD, FAAOA Panelists: Peter Filip, MD, FAAOA; Kenneth Rodriguez, MD; Michelle Liu, MD, MPH, FAAOA	
9:00 AM	9:30 AM	<b>Demo Labs</b>			
9:35 AM	9:55 AM	"Sinus" Headaches — Best Practices in Evaluating, Diagnosing, Treating		Keith Sale, MD, FAAOA	
9:55 AM	10:05 AM	Sinus Manifestations of Migraine	Not all "sinus headaches" are rhinologic in origin. Learn the differentiating factors of migraines masquerading as sinus disease.	Jennifer Villwock, MD, FAAOA	
10:05 AM	10:25 AM	Approaches to Treating Migraine and Non-Sinus "Sinus" Headaches	What should the otolaryngologist be prepared to discuss, and potentially offer, when it comes to non-sinus "sinus" headaches? This session will review first-line treatments for these challenging headache cases.	John Krouse, MD, PhD, MBA, FAAOA	

10:25 AM	10:40 AM	Frontal Sinus Disease — In-Office Pearls	This session will provide an overview of strategies to optimize success when addressing frontal sinus disease in the office.	Peter Filip, MD, FAAOA	
10:40 AM	10:55 AM	Frontal Sinus Disease — OR Pearls	This session reviews keys to success when instrumenting the frontal sinus, including ensuring adequacy of surgery, considerations when deciding extent of surgery, and technical tips.	Kenneth Rodriguez, MD	
10:55 AM	11:55 AM	<b>Non-AAOA Satellite Event   Regeneron</b>			
10:55 AM	3:30 PM	<b>MIDDAY BREAK</b>			
3:30 PM	4:00 PM	<b>Aperitivo   Demo Labs</b>			
4:05 PM	4:20 PM	Healthy Sinuses — Biomes	There are many biomes present in the upper airway. This includes bacteria, viruses, and fungi. This session will review need-to-know basics about this emerging topic and clinical implications.	Jennifer Villwock, MD, FAAOA	
4:20 PM	4:35 PM	The Sinus Microbiome — Overview of Importance	This session provides an up-to-date overview of what is known about the sinus microbiome and how the bacterial populations in our sinuses contribute to their health or, conversely, disease.	Jennifer Villwock, MD, FAAOA	
4:35 PM	4:50 PM	Common Causes of Microbiome Derangement	What causes good bacterial populations to go bad? What can be done to prevent or remediate microbiome issues? Learn the answers to these questions – and more – in this session.	Haidy Marzouk, MD, MBA, FAAOA	
4:50 PM	5:20 PM	Role of Topical Antibiotics in Acute, Chronic, and Recalcitrant Sinusitis	Increasingly available from compounding pharmacies, what does the data show regarding the role of topical antibiotics in sinusitis? This session reviews the literature surrounding topicals in the treatment of sinusitis and key clinical considerations.	Meha Fox, MD, FAAOA	
5:20 PM	5:35 PM	The Sinus Virome	Initially focused on bacteria, the microbiome is now understood to contain fungi and viruses as well. This session will review what is known about the presence of viruses as part of the sinus microbiome.	Jennifer Villwock, MD, FAAOA	
5:35 PM	6:00 PM	Microbiome Assessment — Cultures & Beyond	What do we need to know about the fancy microbiome assessments available? Beyond presence of absence of species, what can these tests tell us and when/why should we consider ordering them? Join us for a high-yield talk on culture and non-culture-based options of the sinus microbiome.	Peter Filip, MD, FAAOA	
6:00 PM	6:15 PM	Recalcitrant Sinusitis — Surgical Techniques & Pearls	This session will overview key operative considerations and technical advice for recalcitrant sinusitis cases.	Kenneth Rodriguez, MD	
6:15 PM	6:45 PM	<b>Demo Labs</b>			
6:50 PM	7:05 PM	The Microbiome & Allergies	This session will explain the relationship between the gut microbiome and sinonasal manifestations of allergic disease.	Haidy Marzouk, MD, MBA, FAAOA	
7:05 PM	7:15 PM	Immunotherapy's Impact on Airway Microbiome	Immunotherapy has an impact not just on our immunology, but also our microbiome. This session will highlight key aspects of this interaction and why it matters clinically.	Meha Fox, MD, FAAOA	
7:15 PM	7:45 PM	Panel — Challenging Recalcitrant Cases	Join us for a robust case discussion of our worst recalcitrant sinusitis cases, what we did, and what we wish we would have done.	Moderator: Jennifer Villwock, MD, FAAOA Panelists: Peter Filip, MD, FAAOA; Kenneth Rodriguez, MD	

Saturday, January 24					
Start Time	End Time	Session	Description	Faculty	
6:00 AM	6:30 AM	<b>Demo Labs</b>			
6:35 AM	6:50 AM	Ocular Complaints — When Is It Allergy?	Not all eye irritation is allergy. This session will review what eye symptoms we can reasonably presume to be related to allergies.	Haidy Marzouk, MD, MBA, FAAOA	
6:50 AM	7:05 AM	Ocular Complaints — When to Refer?	Not all eye irritation is allergy. This session will review clues as to when eye symptoms warrant ophthalmologic, or other specialty evaluation.	Keith Sale, MD, FAAOA	
7:05 AM	7:20 AM	Endocrine Influences on Allergy — Menopause	Times of hormonal transition impact the immune system and allergic disease. Join us for an eye-opening session on how menopause impacts allergies.	Michelle Liu, MD, MPH, FAAOA	
7:20 AM	7:35 AM	Endocrine Influences on Allergy — Puberty	Hormonally mediated changes in TH2 mediated disease occur during puberty. Join us to learn what hormonal and immunologic changes are occurring and how they impact allergic disease.	Michelle Liu, MD, MPH, FAAOA	
7:35 AM	7:50 AM	Nutriceuticals, Probiotics, and Other Supplements for Inhalant Allergies & Asthma? What Does the Evidence Say?	Understanding what treatment options our patients are exploring – especially the ones they may be hesitant to discuss with us – is critical to optimizing their outcomes. This session will provide an up-to-date review of the literature around complimentary and alternative medicine options for the treatment of allergies and asthma.	Haidy Marzouk, MD, MBA, FAAOA	
7:50 AM	8:05 AM	Beyond Avoidance — Nontraditional Therapies for Food Allergy	Food avoidance has historically been the mainstay of food allergy. Due to the effort involved, and continued risk of accidental exposure, there is both an interest and need for more options. This session will focus on food allergies and the emerging evidence for interventions beyond simply avoiding the offending allergens.	William Reisacher, MD, FAAOA	
8:05 AM	8:20 AM	Safety & Surgical Considerations of Natural Remedies	Supplements ≠ Safe. What supplements or natural remedies should we be asking our patients about prior to surgery? How might these supplements interact with medications commonly prescribed for allergy and sinusitis? If these questions are relevant to your practice, this is the session for you.	Robert Stachler, MD, FAAOA	
8:25 AM	8:55 AM	<b>Demo Labs</b>			
9:00 AM	9:20 AM	Worst Questions...and Best Answers: Pediatric Allergy	Whether on the sidelines at the kids soccer game or discussing what Dr. Google had to say in the office, we will go over the most common questions asked by parents regarding pediatric patients...	Haidy Marzouk, MD, MBA, FAAOA Michelle Liu, MD, MPH, FAAOA	
9:20 AM	9:35 AM	Worst Questions...and Best Answers: Allergy immunotherapy	Ever get stumped by a patient question about immunotherapy? Is there an aspect of immunotherapy that you wish you had a better explanation for to help patients understand? Join us to review, and contribute to	Robert Stachler, MD, FAAOA John Krouse, MD, PhD, MBA, FAAOA William Reisacher, MD, FAAOA	

			the conversation, challenging questions and the best ways we've come up with to address them.	
9:35 AM	9:50 AM	Worst Questions...and Best Answers: Recalcitrant Sinusitis	"Why can't you make my sinuses healthy?" How do you handle these patients and answer their questions? Join us for an interactive conversation around navigating these challenging scenarios.	Moderator: Kevin Wilson, MD, FAAOA Peter Filip, MD, FAAOA Kenneth Rodriguez, MD Meha Fox, MD, FAAOA
9:50 AM	10:20 AM	Worst Questions...and Best Answers: Your "Sinus" Issues Are Not Coming from Your Sinuses	"...but the 'sinus headache' medication helps so the problem must be my sinuses." What do you do when the patient doesn't have any objective evidence of sinus disease, but is sure that's where their issue is? This panel will discuss their approaches and most effective talking points. We hope you will join us and contribute your wisdom as well!	John Krouse, MD, PhD, MBA, FAAOA William Reisacher, MD, FAAOA Kenneth Rodriguez, MD
10:25 AM	10:55 AM	<b>Demo Labs</b>		
11:00 AM	11:25 AM	Case Wrap-Ups		
11:25 AM	11:40 AM	Case Wrap-Ups		
11:40 AM	12:20 PM	Why Does Wine Make Me Feel "Off"?: Toxicity, Allergy, or Intolerance?	Review + wine tasting	John Krouse, MD, PhD, MBA, FAAOA
12:20 PM	5:50 PM	Course/Case Wrap-Ups		