



Physician Allergy Times

Special point of interest:

- Many glucosamine-chondroitin supplements used to relieve joint pain contain ground shellfish (crab, shrimp and lobster shells) as a component. Severe allergic reactions have been reported by people who have taken this supplement and have a shellfish allergy.

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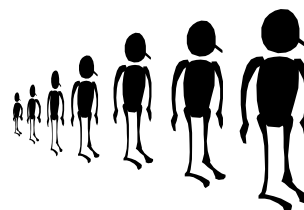
More Than Half of the U.S. Population Sensitive to Common Allergens

According to the most recent findings from the third National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES III), 54.3% of Americans are sensitive to one or more common allergens.

Researchers compared the most recent skin testing results from 10,500 study participants to those performed during NHANES II, performed between 1976 and 1980. The comparison of test results from these two studies revealed this marked increase in positive responses. For the six allergens that were common to both studies, the prevalence of positive results was 2.1 to 5.5 times higher. This increase is consistent with findings from other countries.

The participants enrolled in this study were 6- to 59-year-olds who tested positive to at least one of the 10 allergens that were selected for evaluation in this study.

The highest prevalence rates were for dust mite, rye, ragweed and cockroach with about 25% of the population testing positive to each allergen. Approximately 18% reacted to Bermuda grass,



Dust mite, ragweed, rye and cockroach were the most prevalent positive allergen responses for 25% of the people tested.

17% to cat, 15% to Russian thistle and 13% to white oak and mold. Peanut was the least common with 8.9% of the subjects having a positive response.

The researchers recently added another allergy component to NHANES 2005-06. Dust samples are being collected from the 10,000 homes to be analyzed for allergens and blood samples will be collected from these same individuals to test for antibodies to those allergens. This new component will allow researchers to gain a better understanding of asthma and the roles that indoor allergens play in asthma and other allergic diseases.

Complete study findings were published in the August issue of the *Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology*.

Food Allergy Link to Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS)

Elevated food-specific antibodies may play a pathophysiologic role in IBS. A recent study found that IBS patients had significantly higher IgG4 antibodies to wheat, beef, pork, lamb and soy beans compared with healthy controls. There was also an elevation, but not of significance, to egg yolk and egg white. Contrary to the belief that dairy products are incriminated in IBS patients, the differences in IgG4 titers to dairy prod-

ucts between IBS patients and controls were neither significant or different. Additionally, there was no significant difference in IgE titers between the IBS group and the controls.

This study was conducted by Dr. Devinder Kumar of St. George's Hospital in London

Complete findings can be found in the July issue of the *American Journal of Gastroenterology*.



"Drugs that help to control allergic asthma don't work as well for allergy triggered by viral infections."

"Key" Found to Virus-Induced Asthma

A recent study conducted by Peter G. Gibson of John Hunter Hospital in New Lambton, Australia, found that virus infections are responsible for nearly 80% of severe asthma attacks. The cold virus seems to be the major culprit.

"In virus-induced asthma there are different mechanisms operating than those described in allergen-induced asthma." This would explain why drugs that

usually help control allergic asthma don't work as well for allergy triggered by viral infections.

Gibson and his colleagues found that virus-induced asthma triggers the release of a specific chemical messenger, interleukin 10 (IL-10). This finding may help to identify what causes a severe asthma attack.

There are still some "missing

pieces" to this puzzle i.e., what makes a person susceptible to virus-induced asthma, how does it cause difficult-to-treat airway blockage and how can virus-induced asthma be treated and prevented but these new findings are a step in the right direction.

Ann Allergy Asthma Immunology
2005;94:301-306

"Despite the increased use of sesame seeds and oil in the U.S., public awareness is very limited."

Sesame Allergy on the Rise

Researchers at Michigan State University have found that reports of sesame allergies are growing significantly since the first case was reported in 1950.

Sesame allergy ranks fourth in prevalence among Australian children after egg, milk and peanut. In Israeli children, sesame was the third most common food allergy and the

second leading cause of anaphylaxis.

In the United States, the FDA's list of allergenic foods for labeling purposes does not include sesame. It has, however, been added to the list of major food allergens in both Canada and Europe.

Despite the increased use of

sesame seeds and oil in food products, soaps and cosmetics and pharmaceutical products here in the U.S., public awareness of sesame allergy is very limited.

Ann Allergy Asthma Immunol.
2005; 95: 4-11.



Montelukast reduced the number of days that patients required asthma rescue or allergy medications.

Singulair (Montelukast) Approved for Allergy Treatment

Dr. Alan Luskin from the University of Wisconsin, Madison, conducted a study using a pharmacy claims database of children under the age of 16 years. All of the children participating in the study had received two or more consecutive asthma controller medications and one or more allergy prescriptions within the following 12 months. Researchers

matched 618 children taking montelukast with 618 using inhaled corticosteroids. At the conclusion of the study, the results indicated that montelukast may provide better asthma control than inhaled corticosteroids because it reduced the number of days that montelukast patients required asthma rescue or allergy medications.

A comparison of monthly costs for acute asthma, allergy and other respiratory medications after initiating therapy also revealed a cost savings for those patients prescribed montelukast (\$5.55) versus the corticosteroid patients (\$12.08).

Annals of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology, August 2005

Mayo Findings Call for Changes in Treatment of Chronic Sinus Infections

Researchers at the Mayo Clinic have found that the origin of chronic sinus infections is in the nasal mucus and not the nasal and sinus tissue that has been targeted in the past.

Instead of the breakdown of inflammatory cells releasing toxic proteins into the airway tissue as has been taught world-wide, these study findings indicate that instead they are released into the mucus.

These findings have far-reaching implications and could significantly change the way chronic sinus infection is treated. Some surgeons have already started to change the way they do surgery for these patients. The focus is now on removing the mucus which is loaded with toxins from the inflammatory cells rather than the tissue. Leaving the mucus behind can predispose patients for an early

recurrence of the chronic sinus infection.

This investigation was based on the findings from 22 consecutive Mayo Clinic chronic sinus infection patients who were undergoing endoscopic sinus surgery. Laboratory findings revealed that this toxic protein was found in abundance in all 22 mucus specimens but not in the tissue.

Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology, August 2005



Study results indicate that the focus during surgery should be on removing the toxic-ridden mucus rather than the tissue.

The 2005 Fall Allergy Capital™ Rankings

Rankings for the Allergy Capitals™ are based on data from three factors: Annual Pollen Scores, Utilization of Medicine per Patient and the number of Board Certified allergists per capita. Weights were applied to each group of factors as an indicator of how it affects the quality of life. This year's top ten ranking Capitals that are

the most challenging places to live if you have fall allergies are:

1. Chicago, IL
2. Little Rock, AR
3. Tampa, FL
4. Daytona Beach, FL
5. South Bend, IN
6. Dallas-Ft. Worth, TX
7. Tulsa, OK
8. Oklahoma City, OK
9. Stockton, CA
10. Melbourne, FL

All rankings can be found at www.AllergyCapitals.com.

"The most challenging places to live if you have fall allergies."

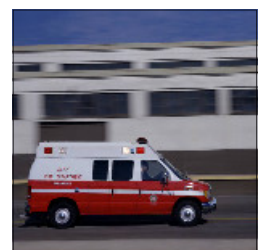
Treatment Guidelines Fall Short in Treating Insect Sting Allergies

Researchers at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston reviewed the medical records of 617 patients treated for insect stings at fifteen North American hospital emergency departments (ED). Of the 617 patients, 58% had a local reaction, 11% had a mild systemic reaction and 31% had anaphylaxis.

The study also revealed that only 12% of the patients with mild or severe allergic reactions received epinephrine. Instead, 69% received antihistamines and 50% received systemic corticosteroids.

Upon leaving the hospital, only 31% were given a prescription for self-injectable epinephrine and only 21% were referred to

a specialist for follow-up treatment. "Because the ED is the most common medical setting for diagnosing and treating anaphylaxis, advances in anaphylaxis management will need the active participation of emergency medicine clinicians and researchers," study co-author and emergency physician Dr. Carlos Camargo said.



Only 12% of the patients with mild or severe allergic reactions received epinephrine.

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Commonwealth Medical
Laboratories, Inc.

4228 Aiken Drive
Warrenton, VA 20187

Phone: 800-222-5775
Fax: 540-428-2905

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NEW GUIDELINES FOR SHIPPING DIAGNOSTIC SPECIMENS

New directives issued from the International Air Transportation Authority (IATA) and the Department of Transportation (DOT) have mandated a change in the packaging required to ship diagnostic specimens. Effective immediately, all requests for supplies will be filled with certified kits that meet these new requirements. Please **DO NOT** write on the outside of the boxes or place any additional labels on this box since it could then compromise the packaging. After you have placed your specimens and paperwork into the box, place the box into the pre-addressed, pre-paid outer wrap (i.e., UPS, USPS, etc.)

If you have any questions about shipping your specimens to us, please do not hesitate to give us a call at 800-222-5775. Thank you for your anticipated cooperation and understanding.

U.S. Surgeon General Speaks Out on Asthma 'Epidemic'

ASTHMA FACTS

- 20M Americans suffer from asthma (3 times as many as 25 years ago)
- 1 in every 8 children has asthma
- 12 people die from asthma daily

These numbers have been provided by the U.S. Surgeon General, the CDC and the American Lung Association.

While the emergency room needs to be part of the plan to manage asthma, it needs



The U.S. Surgeon General, Dr. Richard Carmona, “....asthma is a very manageable disease if you understand the triggers in your life.”

to be plan “B”. Far too many people fail to keep their asthma under control and therefore rely on the hospital when they suffer an attack. Experts believe that helping people manage their

asthma more effectively could save the health care system more than \$500M each year. The EPA has determined that fewer than 30% of people with asthma take simple steps to reduce their exposure to triggers such as smoke, cockroaches, dust mites, mold and ozone.

“There is no cure for asthma, but it is a very manageable disease if you understand the triggers in your life.” says U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Richard Carmona.