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Prevalence of allergens among pediatric patients tested at Georgetown public hospital allergy clinic

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Background: There is an increasing trend in allergic diseases worldwide, particularly among children. Currently, however, there are no published statistics on the burden of allergies among children in Guyana.

Aim: Aim of this study is to determine the prevalence of allergens among pediatric patients (<13 year old) in Guyana and to assess the types and possible risk factors.

Methods: A retrospective chart review was conducted among pediatric patients who were seen at GPHC Allergy Clinic during 2014 July-2016 July. A standard allergy questionnaire was completed, skin prick test (SPT) was carried out in an attempt to identify the allergen. Descriptive statistics was applied to estimate the prevalence and trends for allergens.

Results: 50 patients met inclusion criteria, 46 (92%) had SPT. Majority of cases (44.4%) were of mixed decent, nearly all of the patients were from Georgetown-Mahaica. 25 (54%) patients had a positive SPT, 60% of positive SPT were females although the gender distribution was equal in the study population, rash was the most common presenting feature (60%, $p < 0.05$), 40% had a history of dermatitis while 36% had history of asthma. 60% of individuals who had a positive SPT were allergic to just one allergen, and two (8%) were allergic to four or more allergens. Dust mites were the most common allergen (88%) followed by peanuts (20%) and mixed fish (16%).

Conclusion: Allergies are common among children in Guyana with a prevalence of 54% in children with risk factors. Dust mites were the most common allergen. Predictors for positive SPT included history of asthma and dermatitis, and positive family history. Patients who were treated for their allergies had more control of their asthma and eczema. The results of the study will also be used to sensitize the population on the functions of the clinic.

Biography

Bibi Alladin-Karan established the first allergy clinic in Guyana in 2014 as a Pediatric Resident who received training from a Pediatric Allergist from Humber River Hospital in Canada. He completed Master's in Pediatrics in May 2016 and also has an Associate Degree in Pharmacy. He currently lectures four courses at University of Guyana, School of Medicine and Pharmacy.

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