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Maternal perspectives on probiotics, intake of probiotic food and occurrence of atopic dermatitis among children in selected urban communities in Laguna, Philippines

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In the Philippines, 2-3 out of 10 children suffer from atopic dermatitis (AD) or eczema. The most common treatment of atopic dermatitis is the application of topical corticosteroids especially for acute exacerbation. Antihistamine is also given to reduce the pruritus. However, despite the presence of pharmacological management, prevention of attacks by identifying and avoiding triggering factors is the focus of health teaching for parents of children with AD. Food allergy is found to co-exist in approximately 40% of children with moderate to severe AD. Nonetheless, potential food allergens can be difficult to avoid because most common food triggers are egg, milk, wheat, peanut, and soy, which are used in many food preparations. For this reason, the research community is investigating possible innovative prevention and treatment strategies for atopic dermatitis. One of these strategies is the manipulation of the intestinal flora through probiotics. Probiotics are defined by the FAO/WHO as “live microorganisms which when administered in adequate amounts, confer a health benefit on the host.” One of the biggest companies that supplies probiotic drink in the country released their annual report in 2014, and about 15% of the total population avails of the probiotic drink with average sales of 15.9 million bottles in one day. Despite of this data, there is very little research on the specific reasons why consumers avail of probiotics. Furthermore, the perspective of mothers on probiotics and its use is an area of research that is not yet explored, evidenced by the lack of published works in local peer-reviewed journals. Through a face-to-face interview using a guide questionnaire, this cross-sectional study gathers information on maternal perspectives on probiotics. A food frequency questionnaire is used to determine the frequency and amount of probiotic food consumption by the child. Using the diagnostic criteria in the ISAAC (International Study of Asthma and Allergies in Childhood) questionnaire, a medical doctor collects data on eczema. The results will hopefully reveal the effect of probiotic consumption to the occurrence of atopic dermatitis in children age four to five.

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