Questionnaire Survey of the infrastructure for managing allergy in schools around Leicester, UK

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Aims: The children’s allergy service in Leicester continues to work with local authorities (LAs) to ensure there are guidelines in managing allergy, including emergency action plans. The aim of this survey was to ascertain whether school staff had the appropriate infrastructure in place to manage children with allergies.

Methods: Two LAs were sent a link to an online questionnaire to all schools under their jurisdiction (377 schools). The schools were requested to circulate the questionnaire to all members of staff to complete.

Results:
- 234 staff members completed the survey. Of those, 166 taught children <11 yrs old.
- 86.2\% of staff state there is a school policy relating to managing allergy.
- The responsibility for checking the expiry dates of Adrenaline autoinjectors (AAIs) lies with parents (37.9\%), administration staff (23.7\%), teacher (12.9\%), other (23.8\%), Unsure/no procedure (1.7\%).
- 85.1\% of respondents maintain a clear log with 65.8\% checking expiry dates at least once a term.
- AAIs are kept with the child (19.2\%), unlocked central location (36.2\%), locked central location (25.8\%), Classroom (37.1\%)
- AAIs are taken on the school playing fields 52\% of the time, but 96.5\% of the time for visits off the school premises.
- Schools request the following number of AAIs per child; one AAI (55.8\%), two AAI (24.3\%) and leave it for the doctor to decide (19.9\%)

Discussion:
- Most schools have policies in place relating to managing allergy in schools.
- More guidance surrounding storage of AAI and checking expiry date may prevent out of date AAIs as well as AAIs being locked away, which in an emergency could prove problematic.
- Schools appear to be influencing AAI prescription practices by specifying numbers of AAIs they require.

Conclusion: Ongoing partnership between the allergy clinic, LAs and school nurses are required to further improve the infrastructure for managing allergy in schools.