

Allergy and Asthma – double trouble

- **Allergies and asthma often occur together: people with allergic rhinitis, atopic eczema, food allergy and those who have asthma running in the family are at risk of developing asthma**
- **Asthma is one of the most common chronic disorders; it affects 300 million patients around the world of all ages and is a serious challenge to public health. Its prevalence and impact are particularly on the rise in urbanized regions, associated with environmental and lifestyle changes**
- **By 2025, asthma will represent the most prevalent chronic childhood disease and result in one of the highest causes of health care costs**
- **Testing for allergies followed by their correct management is recommended for a better asthma control**
- **Allergic asthma is a controllable disease**

Zurich, Switzerland, 30 October 2014 – Allergy is a public health problem of pandemic proportions that affects more than 150 million people in Europe. According to experts, 1 out of every 3 children has an allergy and they expect the disease to affect more than 50% of all Europeans in 10 years' time.

The European Academy of Allergy and Clinical Immunology (EAACI) has launched an awareness campaign (www.bewareofallergy.com) to help the society to better understand how allergy sufferers feel, how profound allergy impacts quality of life, how severe and costly the diseases can become and how important it is to diagnose early and better manage this disease. By focusing on education for allergy prevention, early diagnosis and correct management, EAACI hopes to help patients and their families to better control their allergy and improve their quality of life and to increase the resources allocated by the society to manage the allergy epidemic.

The campaign will roll out through 2014-2015 and will highlight different types of allergies such as: asthma, food allergy and anaphylaxis, allergic rhinitis, allergen immunotherapy (AIT) and skin allergy.

The first wave of the campaign focuses on asthma as a major allergic disease with the aim to **increase awareness on how close allergy and asthma are linked.**



Asthma is one of the most common chronic disorders; it affects 300 million patients around the world of all ages and is a serious challenge to public health. It affects profoundly the school and work performance of the patients.

Asthma prevalence and impact are particularly on the rise in urbanized regions, associated with environmental and lifestyle changes. With a projected surge in the world's urban population by 2025 it is estimated that a further 100 million people will suffer from asthma, adding to the number of current sufferers. This will represent the most prevalent chronic childhood disease and result in one of the highest causes of health care costs.

The reasons behind asthma are not well understood, however people with allergic rhinitis, atopic eczema, food allergy and those who have asthma running in the family are at risk of developing asthma. This position is also supported by the European Commission: "In many people, asthma appears to be an allergic reaction to substances commonly breathed in through the air, such as animal dander, pollen, or dust mite and cockroach waste products".

There are several other arguments to support the relation between allergy and asthma:

- many patients are aware of allergic triggers for their asthma (house dust mites, animal dander, molds)
- atopic eczema is often the first sign that the child has an atopic phenotype and may develop rhinitis and asthma when they grow up
- childhood wheeze often develops into asthma if an allergic background is present
- 75% of adults with asthma have allergic rhinitis
- 50% of people with allergic rhinitis have asthma
- treating rhinitis may improve asthma symptoms, especially cough

How to identify if you suffer from allergic asthma

You may have asthma if you experience recurrent episodes of coughing, wheezing (noisy breathing), breathlessness and chest tightness. The complaints may be triggered by colds, exposure to cigarette smoke, air pollution and/or allergens such as house dust mites, grass pollens, animal dander, mold, etc. Because allergens are everywhere, it's important that people with allergic asthma identify their triggers and learn how to prevent a crisis.

Allergic asthma is a controllable disease

Optimal asthma control is the goal of asthma management. Controlled asthma means no daily or nighttime symptoms, not missing school or work, good capacity to exercise and no asthma crisis leading you to the hospital. The important thing is to recognize and treat the disease.



The majority of people with asthma can be controlled by environmental measures and asthma medications. Many good asthma treatments are available but the control of allergic triggers and associated allergic diseases, such as allergic rhinitis, is an essential step in gaining asthma control. **Testing for allergies is thus recommended to get your asthma under better control.** Given the strong relation between atopy and asthma tolerance, induction to indoor allergens is a promising strategy for asthma prevention.

About EAACI

The European Academy of Allergy and Clinical Immunology (EAACI) is a non-profit organisation active in the field of allergic and immunologic diseases such as asthma, rhinitis, eczema, occupational allergy, food and drug allergy, and anaphylaxis. EAACI was founded in 1956 in Florence and has become the largest medical association in Europe in the field of allergy and clinical immunology. It includes over 8,000 members from 121 countries, as well as 47 National Allergy Societies. (www.eaaci.org)

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