



POSTER PRESENTATION

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Effect of feeding genetically modified Bt-corn on allergic disease

Daniela Reiner*, Rui-Yun Lee, Michelle M Epstein

From Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Meeting 2011
Venice, Italy. 17-19 February 2011

The rising prevalence of allergic disease in the last decades is unexplained. However, it has been postulated that the widespread introduction of genetically modified (GM) foods since 1996 may play a role in this evolving allergic disease epidemic. Currently, the most common GM plant is the genetically engineered *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt)-corn. This transgene confers resistance against corn borers leading to an enormous economic benefit. Corn products are found in a diverse variety of foodstuffs. Our hypothesis is that Bt-corn consumption influences allergic disease. We sought to determine whether feeding Bt-corn to mice would influence allergen-induced disease to a non-crossreactive allergen. To examine the influence of GM corn feeding on, the initiation and exacerbation of ovalbumin (OVA)-induced allergic asthma, we injected female BALB/c mice on days 0 and 21 with OVA intraperitoneally and nebulized them with OVA on days 28 and 29 to initiate disease and then allowed mice to recover until they were re-exposed to OVA for the induction of a disease exacerbation. We fed mice pellets containing 33% Bt (MON810)- or isogenic-corn vs. normal mouse food containing no corn for 4 weeks prior to inducing disease or inducing disease exacerbation. To evaluate the effects of the Bt-corn on OVA-induced disease, we measured lung and airway inflammation, mucus hypersecretion and OVA-specific antibodies. We observed that Bt-corn feeding had no effect on OVA-induced allergic disease or exacerbations indicating that Bt-corn using this protocol has no effect on the propensity for another allergen to initiate allergic disease or induce disease exacerbations in mice.

Published: 12 August 2011

doi:10.1186/2045-7022-1-S1-P13

Cite this article as: Reiner et al.: Effect of feeding genetically modified Bt-corn on allergic disease. *Clinical and Translational Allergy* 2011 **1**(Suppl 1):P13.

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