



POSTER PRESENTATION

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# Prevalence of strawberry allergy in Bosnian children and management

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

## Introduction

A strawberry allergy is an allergy to certain proteins found in strawberries. The specific symptoms that can vary considerably amongst children from a severe anaphylactic reaction to asthma, abdominal symptoms, eczema or headaches. Some experience an allergic reaction with itching and swelling in mouth and throat.

## Objective

The goals were to estimate the prevalence of strawberry food allergy and to describe trends in food allergy prevalence and health care use among Bosnian children.

## Methods and materials

The sample included 40 primary care pediatricians from Sarajevo during last ten years 2000-2010; 95% of the respondents reported providing care for strawberry allergic children patients. The specific criteria used to diagnose food allergy may therefore have a significant impact on the results of these studies, especially those used to measure the prevalence of strawberry allergy. The allergen was identified using blood serum from children patients experiencing adverse reactions to strawberry.

## Results

Red strawberries cause allergies, but white ones do not. The symptoms for strawberry allergy occur after exposure to strawberry fruit and strawberry products. The prevalence of strawberry allergy peaks at 3% to 4% at two year of age and then falls progressively until late childhood, after which the prevalence remains stable at 0.5% to 1% in children from Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Some cases of life-threatening conditions have been reported, such as anaphylactic reactions and asphyxia due to the impossibility of breathing.

## Discussion

All children with strawberry food allergy should also be reevaluated by their allergist at regular intervals to determine whether the allergy has been outgrown.

## Conclusion

The best treatment consists of prevention: individuals should avoid eating any form of strawberries, including raw berries, jam, cakes, jellies and even some naturally-flavoured products. In most of the cases strawberry allergy is not a life threatening one. Being allergic to strawberries is fairly common specially in children.

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Published: 12 August 2011

doi:10.1186/2045-7022-1-S1-P45

Cite this article as: Bajraktarevic et al.: Prevalence of strawberry allergy in Bosnian children and management. *Clinical and Translational Allergy* 2011 **1**(Suppl 1):P45.

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