

Letter to the editor

The prevalence of latex allergy in children seen in a university hospital allergy clinic

With reference to the paper of Novembre et al. (1) on the prevalence of latex allergy in children seen in a university hospital allergy clinic, the results in our university clinic outpatients (mean age 4.5 years) were similar to most of their findings (2); the history was positive in 6/12 (50%) children allergic to latex, and the rate of provocation-positive children among the sensitized group was 25% (12/48) compared to 33% in the Italian study.

However, the prevalence of latex sensitization in atopic children was much higher (20.8%) in our population than in theirs (3%). The most probable explanation of this finding is that the clinical diagnosis of atopic dermatitis in the atopic children was much more frequent in our children (58%) than in the subjects of Novembre et al. (15.4%). Besides atopy in general, atopic dermatitis seems to be a major risk factor for developing sensitiza-

tion and allergy to latex; this is supported by the fact that atopic dermatitis was seen in 75% of our children with positive provocation to latex.

References

1. Novembre E, Bernardini R, Brizzi I, et al. The prevalence of latex allergy in children seen in a university hospital allergy clinic. *Allergy* 1997;52:101-5.
2. Liebke C, Niggemann B, Wahn U. Sensitivity and allergy to latex in atopic and nonatopic children. *Pediatr Allergy Immunol* 1996;7:103-7.

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