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## Same drug, different outcomes in the Environmental Exposure Unit

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### *To the Editor:*

In the January 1998 issue of The Journal (J Allergy Clin Immunol 1998;101[Pt 2]:S245), Day et al reported on a study conducted in their Environmental Exposure Unit (EEU) in which loratadine was found to be effective for symptoms of seasonal allergic rhinitis as compared with placebo. Subsequently, in the May 1998 issue of The Journal (J Allergy Clin Immunol 1998;101:638-45), Day et al reported on the results of another study, also conducted in their EEU, in which loratadine, cetirizine, and placebo are compared in patients who also have allergic rhinitis to ragweed.

Given that the experimental conditions appear to be identical in both studies, it is interesting to note the differences in the results. For example, in the first study, efficacy with loratadine began within 90 minutes after dosing, but in the second study, onset of action was not evident until 3 hours after dosing. Also in the first study, loratadine produced a significant reduction in total symptom scores compared with placebo, whereas in the second study, loratadine total symptom scores were not statistically significantly reduced when compared with the placebo group. I wonder if the authors would speculate as to why loratadine performed so differently as compared with placebo from one study to the next, and whether this raises doubts as to the validity of the EEU as a research tool for the study of allergic rhinitis treatments.

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