

LETTERS

MMR VACCINATION AND EGG ALLERGY

Vaccination of people with suspected egg allergy is safe and feasible

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Rolfe and Sheikh cite recent guidelines recommending that all egg allergic children should receive the measles, mumps, and rubella vaccine.^{1 2} These guidelines also recommend that an allergy specialist should guide the provision of other egg containing vaccines (including flu and yellow fever), for which the risk-benefit is less clear.²

Several life threatening travel related diseases are preventable by vaccines containing egg antigen, but limited data on the safety of their administration to egg allergic individuals are available to inform risk-benefit analysis.^{3 4}

From 2000 to 2010 we immunised 14 people with suspected egg allergy aged 18-43 years, using a clinical protocol based on risk assessment (clinical presentation and radioallergosorbent test (RAST) for egg white specific IgE) and supervised immunisation depending on risk (possibly including prophylactic intravenous cannulation with or without 20% intradermal test doses).

Eleven of these people underwent RAST (4/11 were positive) and 12 were prophylactically cannulated. Three received an intradermal test dose. Of these, one RAST positive individual had an immediate urticarial reaction to the test dose, precluding full dose administration. Another RAST positive individual developed a minor local reaction that did not prohibit full dose

administration. Of the 14 egg allergic patients, 10 (including 2/4 with positive RAST) received egg containing vaccines without major adverse events; four received vaccines that did not contain egg.

Overall, the frequency of serious allergic reactions was low in this cohort with suspected egg allergy referred for specialist guided immunisation. Under appropriately supervised and monitored conditions, people with egg allergy may be vaccinated without excessive risks, so egg allergy is not necessarily a barrier to receiving egg containing vaccines.

Competing interests: None declared.

- 1 Rolfe A, Sheikh A. Measles, mumps, and rubella vaccination in a child with suspected egg allergy. *BMJ* 2011;343:d4536. (3 August.)
- 2 Clark AT, Skypala I, Leech SC, Ewan PW, Dugue P, Brathwaite N, et al. British Society for Allergy and Clinical Immunology guidelines for the management of egg allergy. *Clin Exp Allergy* 2010;40:1116-29.
- 3 Roukens AH, Vossen AC, van Dissel JT, Visser LG. Reduced intradermal test dose of yellow fever vaccine induces protective immunity in individuals with egg allergy. *Vaccine* 2009;27:2408-9.
- 4 Chino F, Oshibuchi S, Ariga H, Okuno Y. Skin reaction to yellow fever vaccine after immunization with rabies vaccine of chick embryo cell culture origin. *Jpn J Infect Dis* 1999;52:42-4.

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