

Letters to the Editor

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Sir,

Is mite hypersensitivity sex linked in children?

About 150 prepubertal children aged 2 to 12 years were examined in a day-care unit for suspected atopic disease or asthma.

An increase of total IgE level (Phadebas IgE PRIST®) was found in fifty: eleven girls and thirty-nine boys.

Specific IgE antibody to *Dermatophagoides pteronyssinus* (RAST) was found in twenty-seven children: twenty-six boys and only one girl.

This sex ratio was significant ($P < 0.001$) in the total number of atopics.

It is well known that asthma and other atopic diseases are more frequent in male children. Among other hypotheses it has been suggested that the pathogenetic mechanism of atopy is related to a secretory IgA defect in the first months of life, but this transient immunodeficiency is as frequent in girls as in boys; so that this theory does not explain the sex ratio of atopy.

I suggest two (or more) independent mechanisms for the pathogenesis of asthma and atopic diseases:

The first, may be related to IgA deficiency in both sexes and related to animal dander or pollen hypersensitivity;

The second, due to another mechanism with a strong male linkage related to *Dermatophagoides pteronyssinus* hypersensitivity.

I would like to know whether there are any paediatricians or allergists who have experience which might or might not agree with this. Is mite hypersensitivity sex linked in children and/or in adults?

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(27 October 1978)

Sir,

Blood groups and reaginic hypersensitivity

Many studies have been carried out to demonstrate a correlation in allergic patients of a genetic marker. Most are based on clinical information. So far, no convincing results

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