

Group Allergen Immunotherapy Education Improves Patient Knowledge and Staff Satisfaction

Kirk H. Waibel, MD, FAAAAI Landstuhl, Germany

“Practice Pearls” help an allergist-immunologist practice more safely, effectively, timely, efficiently, equitably, or in a more patient-centered way. This feature is coordinated by Stuart Abramson, MD, Giselle Mosnaim, MD, and Andrew Murphy, MD, from the AAAAI Federation of Regional, State, and Local Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology Societies Assembly and by Editorial Board member Matthew Rank, MD. More information about submitting a “Practice Pearls” article can be found on the JACI: In Practice Web site (www.jaci-inpractice.org).

PRACTICE CHALLENGE

Step 7 of the Allergen Immunotherapy practice parameter outlines obtaining informed consent, counseling, and educating the patient on risks, benefits, and expectations.¹ However, when this information is provided (ie, during initial visit, follow-up visit, at the time of initial allergy shot, etc) and who provides this education (ie, allergist, nurse, tech, etc) can vary significantly.

PRACTICE SOLUTION

A standardized 45-minute mandatory group education class for all new patients starting allergen immunotherapy was developed as a quality improvement project in 2013. The class includes a 30-minute PowerPoint presentation (see [Figure S1](#) in this article's Online Repository at www.jaci-inpractice.org) that covers all aspects of immunotherapy followed by 15 minutes for questions, completion of required forms, and a clinic walkthrough. Even though patients received individualized counseling during one-on-one visits with their allergist before the group education class, a

preclass and postclass survey (see [Figure E1](#) in this article's Online Repository at www.jaci-inpractice.org) given to the first 11 patients showed significant improvement in knowledge ($P < .05$), and 11 of 11 (100%) “strongly agreed” with both (1) liking the group education format and (2) recommending the class to other patients who were starting allergy shots (see [Figure E2](#) in this article's Online Repository at www.jaci-inpractice.org). Furthermore, staff reported increased satisfaction as patients were more knowledgeable, understood the clinic patient flow process better, and only needed to highlight key aspects of allergen immunotherapy. Standardizing patient counseling and education in a group education format was well received by both patients and allergy clinic staff and provided a consistent and comprehensive education for new allergen immunotherapy patients.

REFERENCE

1. Cox L, Nelson H, Lockey R, Calabria C, Chacko T, Finegold I, et al. Allergen immunotherapy: a practice parameter third update. *J Allergy Clin Immunol* 2011; 127:S1-S5.

Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, Landstuhl, Germany

The opinions or assertions herein are the private views of the author and are not to be construed as reflecting the views of the Department of the Army, the Department of Defense, or the US Government.

Conflicts of interest: K. H. Waibel declares no relevant conflicts of interest.

Received for publication May 10, 2017; accepted for publication May 12, 2017.

Corresponding author: Kirk H. Waibel, MD, FAAAAI, Allergy Clinic and Immunology Clinic, Ward 10D, Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, Geb 3377, Landstuhl, Germany 66849. E-mail: kirk.h.waibel.mil@mail.mil.

2213-2198

Published by Elsevier Inc. on behalf of the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jaip.2017.05.004>

ONLINE REPOSITORY

Immunotherapy Group Education survey

- **Pre-class questions***

1. I know why I am being started on allergy shots
2. I have a clear understanding of the indications, risks, and benefits of allergy shots
3. I know what is in my allergy shot(s)
4. BEFORE this class, I felt the allergist spent enough time to explain allergy shots to me
5. I know how long I should remain on allergy shots
6. I know the signs and symptoms of a severe allergic reaction
7. I know what I am supposed to do when I come in for my allergy shot

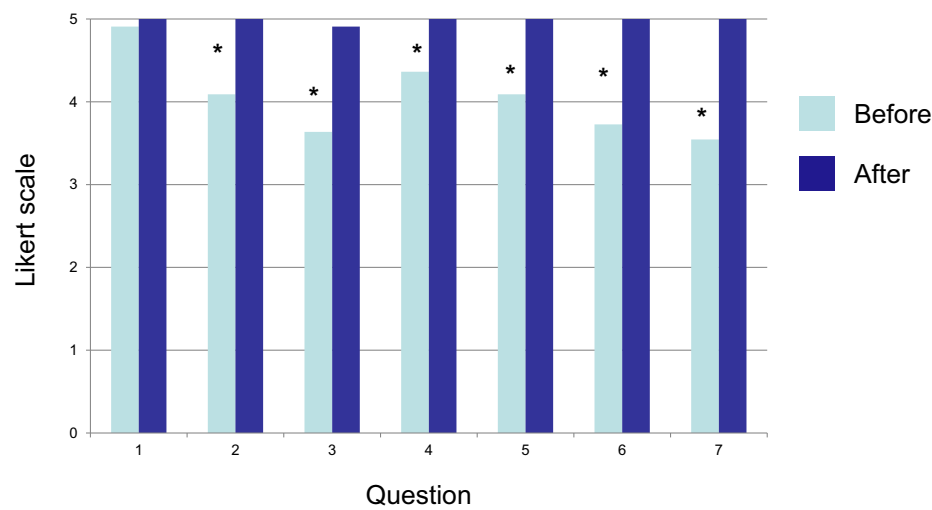
- **Post-class questions***

1. I know why I am being started on allergy shots
2. I have a clear understanding of the indications, risks, and benefits of allergy shots
3. I know what is in my allergy shot(s)
4. AFTER this class, I felt the allergist spent enough time to explain allergy shots to me
5. I know how long I should remain on allergy shots
6. I know the signs and symptoms of a severe allergic reaction
7. I know what I am supposed to do when I come in for my allergy shot

* Responses were on a 5 point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly disagree (1) to "Strongly agree" (5)

FIGURE E1. Immunotherapy group education preclass and postclass survey.

Survey results



2-tailed paired t-test; * $P < 0.05$

FIGURE E2. Mean Likert scale responses to survey questions in the first 11 patients attending the class.

Reproduced with permission of copyright owner.
Further reproduction prohibited without
permission.