

Letter to the Editor

Parental smoking and allergic sensitization

Editor,

We welcome the paper by Larsson et al. (1) on parental smoking and allergic sensitization as it provides valuable insights into an important area of research.

Unfortunately, the definition of atopy used by the authors is very broad (i.e. skin prick test positive for at least one of 15 allergens), which hampers our understanding of their findings. Why not report results on the most prevalent allergens, including their relation with parental smoking?

The interaction between the contribution of smoking of each of the parents is interesting but not surprising. If a mother smokes, a smoking father will probably not add much, whereas when a mother does not smoke a smoking father will play a much larger role.

Because of the retrospective data collection, it will be impossible to disentangle smoking during

pregnancy (by either parent) and smoking during childhood. For these kinds of questions, we need prospective data.

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Reference

1. LARSSON ML, MAGNUSON A, MONTGOMERY SM. Parental smoking and allergic sensitization in offspring defined by skin prick testing. *Pediatr Allergy Immunol* 2005; 15: 449–52.