

CORRESPONDENCE

Possible explanation for the different trends of asthma and allergy in East and West Germany and immigrants

I have read the article by Dr Wichmann on 'possible explanation for the different trends of asthma and allergy in east and west Germany' with great interest [1]. I think that the term 'western lifestyle' includes differences among the communities in factors such as daily salt intake, breast feeding, fish consumption, active and passive smoking, occupational environment, outdoor herbal flora, sick building syndrome, public awareness on asthma and allergy, in addition to the factors listed by the author. Furthermore, some of the characteristics the author has noted like 'similar ethnic background, similar housing and living conditions and one language until 1945' which represent the differentiation of a community by time, might resemble the situation in some of the communities which have encountered emigration. Immigrants living in the USA [2], Tokelauan children [3] south east Asian immigrants in Australia [4] and Turkish immigrants in Sweden and Belgium [5–8] demonstrate this.

Investigation of German society will yield invaluable information for the explanation of different trends of asthma and allergy and determination of the factors which influence that trend. Also studies in immigrants in Germany and other parts of the world might make a similar contribution. Detailed analysis of this subject with its possible multifactorial explanations is important in the prevention and treatment of asthma and allergic diseases.

References

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Spelling of chromone

In his review article on new drugs for asthma (*Clin Exp Allergy* 1996; 26:738–45), Professor Barnes uses the spelling 'cromone' as the collective noun for sodium cromoglycate and nedocromil sodium. The correct spelling for this group of compounds is 'chromone' which is a chemical term derived from the fact that most of the chemicals in the series are yellow in colour. They all contain in their structure the chromone ring and the early compounds screened in the late 1950's were a series of chromone-2-carboxylic acids. Sodium cromoglycate, which is white, is a bis-chromone with two such rings and nedocromil sodium which is yellow is a monochromone with one ring. All members of the series have used the spelling 'crom-' in their individual names. As well as the two cited in the article there have also been proxicromil and probicromil.

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Corrigendum

The article cited below appeared in the October 1995 issue of the journal. On the list of authors supplied at the time the paper was submitted and subsequently accepted for publication one of the authors (W.H. Macfarlane Smith) was omitted. The correct citation, listing the authors as approved by the Scottish Crop Research Institute, is:

R.D. Butcher, B.A. Goodman, N. Deighton, W.H. Macfarlane Smith. Evaluation of the allergic/irritant potential of air pollutants: detection of proteins modified by volatile organic compounds from oilseed rape (*Brassica napus* ssp. *oleifera*) using electrospray ionization-mass spectrometry. *Clin Exp Allergy* 1995; 25:985–92.

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