

LETTER

ABIDEC drops and peanut allergy

BACKGROUND

ABIDEC multivitamin drops are a commonly prescribed nutritional supplement for young infants in day-to-day practice. ABIDEC multivitamin drops contain 1333 IU retinol (as vitamin A palmitate), 400 IU ergocalciferol solution, 0.4 mg thiamine hydrochloride, 0.8 mg riboflavin, 0.8 mg pyridoxine hydrochloride, 8 mg nicotinamide and 40 mg ascorbic acid in each 0.6 ml dose. The excipient used is peanut oil, so these drops should not be taken by patients known to be allergic to peanut and soya as per the manufacturer's advice.^{1,2}

Most healthcare providers including physicians are unaware of the fact that ABIDEC multivitamin drops are to be avoided in children with peanut and soya allergy.

METHODS

We conducted a postal and a web-linked survey involving the local general practitioners (GPs) and our departmental paediatric

junior doctors to assess their awareness of this clinically vital information. We requested the participants to provide their response without referring to any medicine information resources.

RESULTS

Twenty-six GPs and 20 paediatric doctors responded to the survey. Among the participants of the survey, only one (3.8%) GP and five (25%) paediatric junior doctors were able to provide the correct answer.

CONCLUSION

Our survey ascertains that many physicians are unaware of the fact that ABIDEC multivitamin drops should be avoided in children with peanut and soya allergy. ABIDEC drops has the potential to lead to serious allergic reactions if given unknowingly to children with peanut or soya allergy. This crucial information should be actively shared among the GPs and paediatricians nationwide in order to raise their awareness.

In addition, we believe that peanut oil as an excipient should be avoided in the medicines used for children, particularly

the commonly used ones, and the British National Formulary for Children could explicitly state the contraindication.³

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