

Letter to Editor

Childhood immunization and atopic disease

Editor

With great interest, we read the paper by Martignon *et al.* (1). The long-lasting discussion on the possible role of childhood immunization in the development of asthma and allergy can greatly benefit from well-conducted studies in large numbers of patients.

France apparently has a good vaccination coverage. The drawback is that only a small proportion of patients (3% of the sample) were found to have received none of the vaccinations.

Regrettably, the authors do not present data on the reasons for abstaining from vaccination. Although they report that the non-vaccinated adolescents did not have records of diagnoses that could have been a contraindication, they only checked for acute infections. Beside contraindications used by doctors, we also should be aware of reasons why parents refuse vaccination. Among these reasons could be chronic wheeze of

the child or presence of allergy in older siblings or the parents themselves. This could result in confounding by indication and could possibly explain both the similarity in findings for diphtheria-tetanus-poliomyelitis, pertussis and bacillus Calmette-Guerin and the association between immunization and atopic disease presented here.

J. C. van der Wouden and
R. M. D. Bernsen

Erasmus MC – University Medical Center Rotterdam,
Department of General Practice, Room Ff304,
PO Box 1738, 3000 DR Rotterdam, The Netherlands

Reference

1. MARTIGNON G, ORYSZCZYN M-P, ANNESI-MAESANO I. Does childhood immunization against infectious diseases protect from the development of atopic disease? *Pediatr Allergy and Immunol* 2005; 16: 193–200.