

Correspondence

Risk factors for peanut allergy

To the Editor:

We are concerned that the conclusions drawn in the study by Fox et al¹ regarding the relationship of peanut allergy to household peanut exposure may be distorted by the study's choice of cases, given that their selection criteria are related to their variable of interest. Specifically, the authors excluded children with suspected peanut allergy at the time of presentation to their clinic. In doing so, they created a group that is unlikely to be representative of the majority of children with peanut allergy in terms of peanut exposure. In previous studies, the median age of first reaction to peanut was 14 months, and about three quarters of children reacted at their first known exposure.^{2,3} The authors do not specify the ages of their cases, but do state that the majority are between 2 and 4 years old. A child who likely has peanut allergy but has not yet reacted by this age most likely has a very different peanut exposure history than the typical child with peanut allergy.

The bias introduced by selecting this group of cases will affect all results reported in this study, but especially calls into question the protective effect of peanut consumption at a young age. A

prospective study is the only way to determine the true relationship between peanut exposure and peanut allergy.

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