

Correspondence

Higher evidence for specific immunotherapy than reported in the ARIA update

To the Editor:

The Allergic Rhinitis and its Impact on Asthma (ARIA) update on immunotherapy by Passalacqua and Durham, recently published in the *Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology*,¹ is an excellent update on the evidence and recommendations for the use of allergen immunotherapy, and both the authors and the ARIA panel should be congratulated. However, when reading the update, we found that some of the evidence levels reported in Table III were downgraded, with Shekelle's criteria used to classify the strength of evidence.

1. The experimental evidence for subcutaneous immunotherapy in rhinitis is not Ib but Ia because a meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials has been recently published by Calderon et al.² This could be an understandable mistake because the Cochrane review was published online on January 24, 2007, and the ARIA document was sent for publication on November 24, 2006, but the authors already knew about the meta-analysis of subcutaneous immunotherapy for rhinitis (see the Efficacy paragraph on page 883 and reference 50).
2. The experimental evidence for sublingual immunotherapy in preventing new sensitizations is not IIa, as indicated in the table, but Ib (evidence from at least 1 randomized controlled trial). The study by Marogna et al³ is a randomized

trial of patients with grass pollen allergy showing that sublingual immunotherapy prevents the onset of new atopic sensitizations, as indicated by Passalacqua and Durham¹ (see the "Additional effects" paragraph on page 886).

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Disclosure of potential conflict of interest: J.-L. Justicia is employed by Stallergenes. J. Mullol has consulting arrangements with UCB Pharchim, Uriach SA, Schering-Plough, GlaxoSmithKline, and Zambon; has received grant support from Schering-Plough, Uriach SA, UCB Pharchim, and MSD; is on the speakers' bureau for UCB Pharchim, Uriach SA, Schering-Plough, and Zambon; and has served as an expert witness for Schering-Plough.

REFERENCES

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3. Marogna M, Spadolini I, Massolo A, Canonica GW, Passalacqua G. Randomized controlled open study of SLIT for respiratory allergy in real life: clinical efficacy and more. *Allergy* 2004;59:1205-10.

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