

ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL: THE BASIS OF ALLERGY MANAGEMENT

Environmental control as a means of achieving symptom improvement in established disease has been advocated to generations of patients. However, the ever-increasing burden of allergic disease to patients and healthcare systems alike has driven a change in thinking and research efforts over the past 20 years. Environmental modification has been reconfigured as a potential tool for achieving allergy prevention on a broad scale that encompasses primary, secondary and tertiary prevention.^{1,2}



There are many candidate exposures and many conflicting studies, and this editorial attempts to sift through the literature to simplify the current evidence. Each of the avoidance strategies should be evaluated against *each tier* of prevention, because the efficacy of each may vary widely depending on the chosen intervention, the population and the required outcome.³ The timing of interventions has also come under the spotlight because the complex nature of the interactions between early-life genes and the environment has become increasingly evident.¹

The article on indoor allergens in this issue begins with a review of the literature on primary prevention; this is followed by a systematic discussion of some relevant allergens, avoidance strategies and their effects.

Prof Riaz Seedat, the Head of the Department of Otorhinolaryngology at the University of the Free State's clinical and research interests include paediatric otorhinolaryngology and allergy. He has contributed an article on the dominant outdoor allergens and their role in atopic disease. He also discusses the topical issue of air pollution and how these two diverse outdoor exposures – outdoor allergens and air pollution – can amplify respiratory symptoms.

Dr Tamara Kerbelker is an allergist and consultant in the Ambulatory and Emergency Services at the Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital. She has contributed an article on moulds, a ubiquitous allergen that can cause a variety of adverse effects not limited to IgE-mediated events. She responds to some of the concerns in the lay press about fungal-mediated conditions and discusses clinical presentation of and therapeutic options for conditions such as ABPA and allergic fungal rhinosinusitis.

Dr Pieter de Waal is currently the Allergy Fellow at the Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital, and he takes us back to basics with a case report of a young girl referred with 'difficult-to-control asthma'. The case report continues with an overview

of cockroach allergy and the literature on eradication studies; it also considers primary prevention of and immunomodulation for cockroach allergy.

Prof Claudia Gray is a paediatric allergist in private practice at the Vincent Pallotti Hospital, and consultant in the allergy clinic at the Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital. Her research interests lie in atopic dermatitis, food allergy and the epidemiology of allergy. Her article focuses on the secondary prevention of asthma via pharmacotherapy and immunotherapy. She also discusses the very topical issues of eczema and transcutaneous sensitisation, and allergic sequelae.

Dr Tanusha Singh discusses a case of platinum-salt-induced asthma in an unusual exposure setting. This article includes an overview of the industrial uses of platinum and the diagnostic criteria for occupational allergy. The case report concludes with some thoughts on the need for vigilance about the development of platinum-related disease; this echoes the multi-tiered approach to allergy prevention that is evident in the previous articles.

This edition is rounded off by contributions by some of our regular contributors:

- Prof Sharon Kling has stayed within the theme of Environmental Control – from an ethical perspective – in her article, 'Ethics, the law and smoke-free work environments.' Prof Jonny Peter has contributed an article on chronic mucocutaneous candidiasis to the PID series.
- We include a fascinating article from Maria Karsas, Greg Lamb and Prof Robin Green on 'The immunology of mind control: Exploring the relationship between the microbiome and the brain'.

It has been a pleasure to be involved as guest editor in this edition of the *Current Allergy and Clinical Immunology Journal*, and I owe a debt of gratitude to the wonderful team for their guidance and assistance: Prof Weinberg, Dr Di Hawarden and Ms Robyn Marais. My thanks are also due to our contributing authors who have sacrificed their time to give us an edition containing insightful and thought-provoking content. To our audience of ALLSA members and fellow clinicians, I must say that I hope you will find this issue to be an interesting and informative read!

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