

Transcript Details

This is a transcript of an educational program. Details about the program and additional media formats for the program are accessible by visiting: <https://reachmd.com/programs/peanutallergies/a-look-at-the-increasing-prevalence-of-food-allergies-in-the-eu/11178/>

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A Look at the Increasing Prevalence of Food Allergies in the EU

Announcer:

Welcome to Cracking the Code on Peanut Allergies on ReachMD. The following episode is brought to you through an independent educational grant from Aimmune Therapeutics.

On this episode, Increasing Prevalence of Food Allergies in the EU, you will hear from Dr. Maria Pasioti, an allergist at "Panagiotis & Aglaia Kyriakou" Children's Hospital in Athens, Greece.

Dr. Pasioti:

Tree nut and peanut allergies show a geographical variation in prevalence and causative nut across Europe.

In the Euro Prevall Study, the most commonly self-reported causative nuts were hazelnut, walnut, and peanut. Among children with peanut and tree nut allergy, peanut was the most common allergy in London, cashew in Geneva and walnut in Valencia.

Although based largely on estimations and low-quality data, it is a common belief that the prevalence of food allergy has almost doubled during the last decade. Peanut and tree nuts allergies are no exception. In United Kingdom data from the Clinical Practice Research Datalink, CPRD, shows that peanut point prevalence has increased from 31.3 cases per 100,000 people in 2000 to 202.3 cases per 100,000 people in 2015.

Food allergy's rise follows the general rise of atopy in the westernized world. According to the hygiene hypothesis, the urban environment, the small households, the antibiotic use and the minimal exposure to farm animals lead to microbiome disturbance which drives the immune system to a more allergic response. Deficiency of vitamin D due to less time outdoors might also contribute to immune dysregulation, while processed foods and obesity promote tissue inflammation.

Particularly for peanut and tree nuts, it appears that the previous practice of delayed introduction to high-risk infants might have actually increased the likelihood of developing allergy. According to LEAP-study exposure through the skin seems to increase the risk of sensitization whereas early oral exposure may lead to tolerance.

It is important to bear in mind that peanut and tree nut allergies are usually lifelong and can cause severe allergic reactions. Although strictly avoidance does not lead to any nutritional deficiencies, accidental exposure due to cross-contamination and hidden sources are often. That imposes a personal and public health burden and impacts the quality of life of patients.

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