

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### ***No party time for children with allergies***

**Istanbul/Zurich, 14 June 2011 - Even at a very young age, children with allergies are afraid to try new foods, and many do not go to parties, according to the latest results of an international study. The parents' own fears can have a profound influence on children.**

Dr Audrey Dunn-Galvin from Cork University, Ireland, has been looking at the quality of life of parents, children, teenagers, and adults, living with food allergy. Speaking today at the Congress of the European Academy and Clinical Immunology, she explained, "The research is important because children increasingly have rights over medical decisions that affect them."

Dr Dunn-Galvin's Cork Research Group brought together information from 250 questionnaires and qualitative interviews overall completed by children and adults living in Europe, Asia, Australia and the US. Topics included food anxiety, social and dietary restrictions, general emotional impact, food labelling and coping strategies. Her study was part of EuroPrevall, an EU-funded multidisciplinary project looking at the prevalence cost and basis of food allergy in Europe.

Food allergy is a challenge for patients and their families. "It is remarkable that there are many similarities in the impact of food allergy in families across the different countries and cultures," said Dr Dunn-Galvin.

A study in Italy found that over 75% of children (5-11years) claimed to have a monotonous diet and that they were significantly less interested in tasting new foods than younger children. Because of their allergies 18% of children never attended parties.

The majority - 74% - of parents reported that they were concerned by poor food labelling and that their child was afraid to try new foods. Allergy generates social limitations too, for example, there are few restaurants that families can safely go to. Children with allergy were generally more anxious than other children of the same age, and feel different from other children who do not have allergies. This feeling increases, particularly in teenagers. Older children and teenagers emphasised the uncertainty of living with food allergy and the consequent feeling of a loss of control. A 12 year old girl from Ireland described what it is like: 'Sometimes you can't find the cause [of a reaction] - it just happens. Not knowing makes you worried and unsure of yourself. When I have a first bite, if I'm not at home, I think is this it? Will I die? What can you do?'

Parents from Italy, Germany, Netherlands, UK, Iceland and Spain indicated the influence of a diagnosis of food allergy in their infants. One mother of a 10 year old boy said, "I get confused and anxious trying to get him not to worry too much about it - and then I worry that he's not worried enough." They struggle with how to support children's independence while controlling their own anxiety and genuine fears of risk. For example, a mother of a young teenager said, "I made up reasons for him not to be out. I was very,

very protective of him and wouldn't let him have the freedom. I was so paranoid that something was going to happen to him."

"A better understanding of children and young peoples' views on the impact of a disease on their experiences and relationships will allow us, as health professionals, to respond more appropriately,"

### **Symposium 32**

#### **NOTES TO EDITORS**

Professor Sergio Bonini, Institute of Neurobiology and Molecular Medicine, Rome, Italy  
[se.bonini@gmail.com](mailto:se.bonini@gmail.com)

**Publications:** DunnGalvin A, de Blok, B.M.J. Dubois, A., Hourihane, J.O'B (2008). **Development and Validation of the Food Allergy Quality of Life – Parent Administered Questionnaire (FAQLQ-PF) for food allergic children aged 0-12 years.** *Clinical and Experimental Allergy*, 38; 977-986

DunnGalvin, A Cullinane, C Daly, D Flokstra-de Blok BMJ Dubois AEJ, Hourihane JO'B. **ongitudinal validity and responsiveness of the Food Allergy Quality of Life Questionnaire – Parent Form (FAQLQ-PF) in children 0-12 years following positive and negative food challenges.** CEA, 2010

#### **About EAACI:**

EAACI - The European Academy of Allergy and Clinical Immunology is a non-profit organisation active in the field of allergic and immunologic diseases such as asthma, rhinitis, eczema, occupational allergy, food and drug allergy and anaphylaxis. EAACI was founded in 1956 in Florence and has become the largest medical association in Europe in the field of allergy and clinical immunology. It includes 6'500 members from 107 countries, as well as 41 National Allergy Societies.

Throughout 2011, EAACI will develop different activities to celebrate the 100th anniversary of immunotherapy in Allergy, which will aim at increasing the knowledge in this field among healthcare professionals, increase awareness in the general population, and finally, promote the availability of immunotherapy for allergic patients.

#### **For further information:**

##### **EAACI 2011 Press Center**

Elaine Snell (English)  
Tel.: +44 (0)20 7738 0424, Mobile: +44 (0)7973 953 794  
[elaine@snell-communications.net](mailto:elaine@snell-communications.net)  
Snell Communications Ltd, UK [www.snell-communications.net](http://www.snell-communications.net)

Eren Akyurt (Turkish)  
Tel Mobile +90 (0)544 344 5800  
[ernakyurt@gmail.com](mailto:ernakyurt@gmail.com)  
Gülçin Yılmaz İzel (Turkish)  
Tel +90 (0)212 356 09 09 or Mobile +90 (0)532 244 46 29  
[gulcinyilmaz@3diletisim.com](mailto:gulcinyilmaz@3diletisim.com)  
3D Communication Services, Turkey [www.3diletisim.com](http://www.3diletisim.com)

Direct Tel: EAACI Press Office *from 11-15 June 2010 only*: +90 212 373 99 15



**EAACI Headquarters**

Head of Communications

Panthea Sayah

Genferstrasse 21

8002 Zurich

Switzerland

Tel.: +41 44 205 55 33

Fax: +41 44 205 55 39

Mobile: +41 79 551 99 48

E-mail: [panthea.sayah@eaaci.org](mailto:panthea.sayah@eaaci.org)

Internet: [www.eaaci.org](http://www.eaaci.org)