

PRESS RELEASE

Turkey needs more specialists to cope with allergy in children

Istanbul/Zurich, 10 June 2011 - More healthcare specialists in allergy and asthma are urgently needed in Turkey to provide care to the increasing numbers of children with allergic diseases. Nearly one quarter of children in Turkey suffer from allergy costing the Turkish healthcare system USD 1'597 per person per year.

The International Asthma and Allergies in Childhood (ISAAC) study involving 6963 children aged nine to 11 years revealed that 15.8% of children wheeze, 23.5% have rhinoconjunctivitis (runny eyes and nose) and just over eight per cent have eczema.

Speaking at the Congress of the European Academy of Allergy and Clinical Immunology (EAACI 2011) in Istanbul today, Professor Paolo Matricardi from the Charité Medical University in Berlin, Germany, said, "Allergic diseases are a major health problem in Turkey. The medical specialists are able to cope with the large numbers of children with allergy, although the number of allergy and clinical immunology specialists are limited and numbers of people with allergy are rising.

Diagnosis and treatment falls on 136 pediatric allergy and immunology specialists in 48 centres in Turkey. Although there are regional variations, the prevalence of children with at least one symptom of wheezing, rhinoconjunctivitis and eczema in the past year was as high 35%. In another study, of the 618 children with asthma aged six to 18 years old, 30% have required emergency care and 15% have been hospitalised.

The Turkish National Society of Allergy and Clinical Immunology (TNSACI) has organised awareness campaigns, such as World Asthma Day, to draw public attention to allergy and asthma. Since it was founded in 1989, TNSACI has established comprehensive training programmes in allergy and clinical immunology and has supported scientific research.

Commenting on a review published in the June issue of *Pediatric Allergy and Immunology*, Professor Matricardi, managing editor of the journal said, "Like most European countries, the rates of asthma and allergy are rising. More specialists are urgently needed in order to improve the diagnosis and care of people with allergy in Turkey."

NOTES TO EDITORS

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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.

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