

For the Patient

The full report is titled: "Parental perception of efficacy of antihistamines for pruritus in pediatric atopic dermatitis." It is in the March-April 2016 issue of *Allergy Asthma Proceedings* (volume 37, pages 157 to 163). The authors are Chawla V, Hogan MB, Moonie S, Fenwick GL, Hooft A, and Wilson NW.

For the Patient is provided to physicians so that the patients can better understand the language of modern medicine.

For the Patient is written by the editors (Bellanti JA, and Settignano RA) and provided to practitioners so that patients can better understand the usefulness of new information resulting from medical research.

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Are antihistamines useful in treating childhood eczema?

Atopic dermatitis (AD) (often called "eczema"), is a chronic (long-lasting) inflammatory skin disease that, in the United States, affects nearly 11% of children and often occurs in families with other allergic diseases, such as asthma and/or allergic rhinitis ("hay fever"). Because of the skin irritation, the condition is often associated with severe itching that causes sleep interruption and significantly affects quality of life for both the patient and the family. Although oral antihistamines are commonly prescribed to decrease itching, studies of parental perception of antihistamine usefulness have not been previously reported. In a recent study, Dr. Wilson and associates from the Section of Allergy and Immunology, Department of Pediatrics, University of Nevada School of Medicine, Las Vegas, Nevada, evaluated parents' perception of the usefulness of antihistamines in reducing their child's itch due to AD.

Who or What was Proposed To Be Studied?

A 12-question survey was mailed to 523 parents of patients with AD who had a clinic visit in the past 3 years. Questions included the following: time since AD was diagnosed, itching frequency, impact on sleep, frequency and relief provided from using antihistamines, and comparison of antihistamines to other anti-itching treatments. Of the 124 surveys returned, itching due to AD was reported to be an occasional-to-constant problem by 107 parents (86.3%).

How was the Study Done?

Analysis of the study results showed that 63% of the parents thought that antihistamines were an important help to control itching, 25% reported little-to-slight relief, and 5% noted that antihistamines provided no relief from their use.

What are the Limitations of the Proposed Study?

One of the limitations of the study was that 23.7% of participants responded to the surveys, which indicated the possibility of nonresponse bias.

What are the Implications of the Study?

The results of the study indicate that parents of children with AD found that antihistamines were an important part of AD management. The investigators also demonstrated that, the more parents perceived antihistamines to help with the itch, the more likely they were to use the medication. □