

Prevalence of food allergy at a single tertiary care centre in Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

Background: Food allergy is increasing worldwide, and Southeast Asian region is no exception. Despite the increasing rates in children, data on the burden of the disease in Malaysia is still lacking. We aimed to determine the prevalence and different types of food allergies at a tertiary care Immunology Clinic in Selangor, Malaysia. **Methods:** A comprehensive chart review was performed on all patients (aged 0-18 years old) referred for allergic diseases to the Pediatric Immunology Clinic from January 2017 to December 2020. **Results:** A total number of 298 patients were referred to our Immunology Clinic from year 2017 to 2020 for allergies. Of these 298 patients, 157 were diagnosed with different types of food allergies. Males to female ratio was 1.2:1. The median age of these patients was 18 months. Most patients have multiple food allergies (%). The most common food allergens that patients were reacted and sensitized to were cow's milk (35.6%) and hen's egg (35.6%), followed by peanut (21.7%), fish (10.2%), soy (8.3%), wheat 7.6%, shellfish 7.6%, and tree nut (1.9%). Other types of foods 16.5% and non-IgE mediated food allergy being 3.2%. **Conclusion:** Food allergy is an important and growing public health problem. Prevalence has increased over the past years. It is important to investigate food allergies among food allergy sufferers as this may help sufferers to identify and to avoid foods that trigger allergic reactions.