

Non-IgE-Mediated gastrointestinal food allergies in children: An update

Lee Way Seah

Department of Paediatrics, Faculty of Medicine, University Malaya, Kuala Lumpur

ABSTRACT

Food allergy refers to immune-mediated adverse food reactions and can either be mediated via IgE or immune mechanisms other than IgE (non-IgE-mediated). Non-IgE-mediated food allergy refers to a symptom complex usually characterized by severe vomiting and diarrhoea caused by non-IgE-mediated allergy. It is fairly common in infants and young children. Allergy to cow's milk and/or other food protein (e.g., soy) are the commonest form of non-IgE-mediated food allergies. Its onset ranges from 1st day to 12 months of life. In addition to cow's milk and soy proteins, hypersensitivities to other food proteins may also be seen. Approximately 40 - 70% of children had atopic background or a positive family history of atopy. Presenting symptoms include severe vomiting, diarrhoea or bloody stools. Other features include oedema, shock and growth faltering. Laboratory features include moderate anaemia, low plasma albumin level, and metabolic acidosis. Serum food allergen IgE and food skin prick tests are both negatives. Treatment include abstaining from offending protein in the diet. Approximately ~ 80% will respond to extensively hydrolysed formula (eHF) while another 20% may require amino acid formula or a brief period of parenteral nutrition.