Impact of Peanut Allergy on Quality of Life, Stress and Anxiety in the Family

King RM, Knibb RC, Hourihane JOB. Allergy. 2009; 64(3):461–468

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY. To determine the impact of peanut allergy (PA) on quality of life (QoL) and reported anxiety of children with PA, their parents, and their older siblings.

STUDY POPULATION. Participants included 46 families of children with clinical PA (history of acute allergic symptoms with positive skin-prick test results or specific immunoglobulin E). Inclusion required a non-food-allergic/intolerant older sibling ≤15 years of age and parents.

METHODS. Families completed QoL, anxiety, and perceived stress scales. In addition, parents and siblings completed QoL proxy questionnaires.

RESULTS. Mothers rated significantly poorer QoL (psychological and physical) and scored significantly higher on anxiety and stress than did fathers. Children with PA scored significantly lower for QoL (physical health-related, school, and general) and experienced significantly greater separation anxiety than did their siblings. Mothers reported statistically significantly greater impact on QoL of the children with PA, compared with the children themselves, their fathers, or their siblings.

CONCLUSIONS. Mothers reported significantly poorer QoL and suffer more anxiety and stress than fathers. Mothers may overestimate the impact of PA on QoL of children with PA. Children with PA have lower QoL and higher separation anxiety than their older siblings.

REVIEWERS COMMENTS. This work indicates not only that there is an impact of PA on QoL of the family as a unit but also that there are differences in impact on QoL and anxiety between family members. The differences in psychological impact could be related to the different roles played by each member of a family. Mothers may be more involved in meal preparation, care coordination, and health care for the child with PA. It may be helpful for health care providers to encourage shared responsibility when possible and to attempt to include many family members in food allergy-management education. Providing written educational material, encouraging participation in support groups, working on positive coping strategies, and potentially recommending appropriate psychological support may all be helpful interventions to help families cope as a unit.

Evaluation of a Group Intervention for Children With Food Allergy and Their Parents


PURPOSE OF THE STUDY. To assess whether a group intervention designed for children with food allergy and their parents could improve parent-perceived competence and decrease parent-perceived burden in coping with food allergy.

STUDY POPULATION. Food-allergic, English-speaking children 5 to 7 years of age, without developmental disabilities, and their parents were recruited if they visited an allergist through the Children’s Hospital Boston in the year before the study.

METHODS. After consent was obtained, questionnaires were completed by the parents before the workshop, immediately after the workshop, and 4 to 8 weeks after the workshop. Parents completed the Family Coping with Food Allergy Questionnaire, which assesses perceived competence, and the Food Allergy Quality of Life-Parental Burden Questionnaire, which assesses the perceived burden in having a child with food allergy. Parents and children completed evaluations of the workshop as well. The workshop was 3.5 hours in length, with parent groups run by a pediatric psychologist and a pediatric allergist or pediatric nurse practitioner. There were presentations regarding various topics related to...
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