Parents Report Better Health-Related Quality of Life for Their Food-Allergic Children Than Children Themselves

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY. To analyze health-related quality of life (HRQoL) in food-allergic children, compared with parental-proxy reports of the child’s HRQoL.

STUDY POPULATION. Dutch children aged 8 to 12 years with at least 1 physician-diagnosed food allergy and their parents were recruited from a Dutch pediatric allergy clinic over a 2 year-period.

METHODS. Children and their parents completed 2 forms, the Food Allergy Quality of Life Questionnaire (FAQLQ)—Child Form and FAQLQ—Parent Form. Both questionnaires address risk of accidental exposure, emotional impact, allergen avoidance, and dietary restriction. These are both scored on a 7-point scale, with 7 being the maximal impact on quality of life.

RESULTS. Seventy-four child-parent pairs were analyzed: 73% of children had peanut/tree nut allergy, and 84% of children had a history of anaphylaxis. Ninety-one percent of the parents surveyed were mothers. The total FAQLQ–Child Form score was significantly higher than the total FAQLQ–Parent Form score, 3.74 vs 2.68 ($P < .001$). This indicates a more severe impact on HRQoL for children compared with their parental perceptions. Additionally, the mean difference between child- and parent-reported HRQoL was higher in younger children (8–10 years) than older children (11–12 years).

CONCLUSIONS. Children reported a significantly greater impact of their food allergies on quality of life compared with their parental-proxy reports. This demonstrates a difference in perspective between children and their parents, and it is important to recognize this potential discordance in the clinical setting.

REVIEWER COMMENTS. This study represents the first published comparison of child and parent-proxy reported HRQoL by using validated measures. There may be cultural differences influencing quality-of-life perceptions in the Netherlands that are not similar in other countries. It would be interesting, however, to conduct larger-scale, multicenter, multinational studies.

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The Ability of Adults and Children to Visually Identify Peanuts and Tree Nuts

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY. To determine the ability of children and adults to visually identify and differentiate peanuts and tree nuts by displaying the nuts in commonly purchased and used forms.

STUDY POPULATION. One thousand one hundred five self-selected adults and children (456 children aged 6–18 years) visiting an interactive children’s science center.

METHODS. Participants were recruited to a nut display consisting of 19 numbered compartments displaying peanuts and 9 tree nuts in commonly purchased and used forms. Data on demographics, personal or family history of peanut or nut allergy, current or previous roles in child care, teaching, food preparation or serving, or patient care were collected. Participants were then asked to identify each nut in the display.

RESULTS. There was a wide distribution of correct answers. The mean number of correct answers was 8.4 of 19; the responses of adults (11.1) were better than those of the children (4.6). The most common identifications included peanut in the shell 94.7% of the time, peanuts out of the shell 80.5% of the time, and cashews 76.7% of the time. The least common was hazelnut at 16.1%. Twenty-seven (2.4%) self-reported peanut or tree nut allergy; no differences in correct answers were seen between allergic and nonallergic participants or parents. Twenty of the 27 were able to name the nut to which they were allergic, but only 50% correctly identified all forms of those nuts. Fifteen of 20 parents of children with allergies were able to name the nut to which their children were allergic and 73.7% correctly identified the nuts. Those involved in some aspect of child care or health care did significantly better than those who were not, but those in the food...
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Caroline Hobbs and Wesley Burks

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