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17TH ANNUAL CHILD HEALTH RESEARCH DAYS

Nutrition for a Changing World

The Science of Nourishing the Next Generation

CHRD 2021: Abstract & Poster Submission Form

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Research Category:

- Basic Science
- Clinical
- Community Health / Policy

What was your role in the project?

- Design
- Perform Experiments
- Analyze Data
- Write Abstract
- First author of finished manuscript

Presenter Status:

- Undergraduate Students
- Masters Student
- PhD Student
- Post-Doctoral Fellows
- Residents
- Non-Trainee

Title

Pediatric food allergy in schools: Learning with children and school staff to share knowledge

Background

Rates of food allergy amongst school-aged children are at an all-time high, at 6-8%, or an average of 2 children in a typical-sized classroom. Strict allergen avoidance is currently the only means of effectively preventing food-triggered anaphylaxis. The school environment, where multiple children eat with often limited supervision, poses additional risks for accidental exposure from cross contamination.

Objective

Little is known about children's preferences for evidence-based communication on anaphylaxis risk reduction methods. Herein, we aimed to understand the perceptions of students, with and without food allergies, so to inform the development of a school-based, food allergy education program.

Methods

Using purposive sampling, we recruited two groups of Manitoban children in Kindergarten through Grade 8, via social media and word-of-mouth: with and without parent-reported, physician-diagnosed food allergies. Children 7+ years provided assent to participate in our study, and parents of all children provided written consent. Individual telephone interviews were conducted, recorded, and transcribed. Thematic analysis was used identify main themes.

Results

A total of N=16 children, ages 6-13 years, with (n=7) and without (n=9) food allergies, participated in our study. Data were independently read, coded, and evaluated by three research assistants using thematic analysis. Three themes were identified among the transcripts. Themes included: Reliance vs. uncertainty on peers and school staff to assist with food allergy management (unique to children with food allergies), Limited food allergy knowledge (unique to children without food allergies), and Recommended food allergy curricula: complementary perspectives.

Conclusion

Our qualitative study revealed a dynamic and mutual relationship between school-children with food allergies and those without, not only for safety but also as a source of food allergy information. The knowledge gleaned from this study will go on to inform the development of a school-based, food allergy education program.

Authors

- For each author, please click "[+] Add Item" and provide the author's information

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