

# PEDIATRIC FOOD ALLERGY IN SCHOOLS: LEARNING WITH CHILDREN TO SHARE KNOWLEDGE



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## 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 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.
- Food allergy education may minimize these risks through increased knowledge
- Little is known about children's preferences for evidence-based communication on anaphylaxis risk reduction

## AIM

- 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

- Purposive recruitment of two groups of Manitoban children in Kindergarten - Grade 8, via social media and word-of-mouth: with and without parent-reported, physician-diagnosed food allergies.
- Children 7+ years and parents provided assent and consent, respectively. Individual telephone interviews were conducted, recorded, and transcribed. Thematic analysis was used identify main themes.

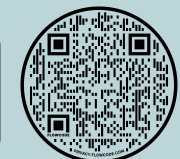
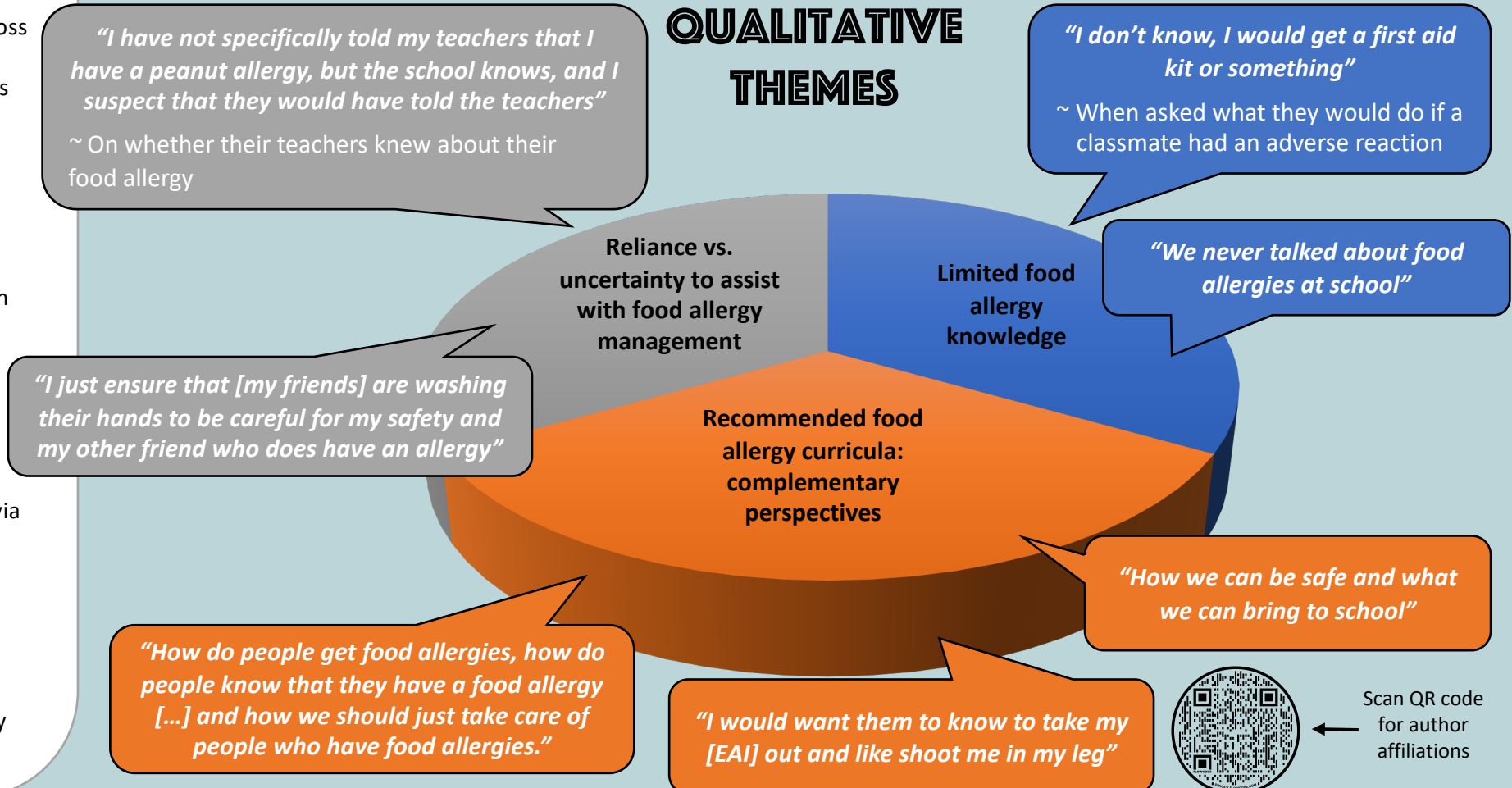
## RESULTS

- A total of N=16 children, ages 6-13 years, with (n=7) and without (n=9) food allergies, participated.
- Data were independently read, coded, and evaluated by three research assistants using thematic analysis. Three themes were identified among the transcripts.

## CONCLUSION

- Amongst school-aged children with and without food allergies, we identified substantial food allergy-related knowledge gaps and limited knowledge exchange, buffered against a desire to learn.
- Further pilot studies are needed to assess efficacy of in-school, food allergy educational programs on anaphylaxis risk reduction.

## QUALITATIVE THEMES



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