



## Surgery

## TO STUDY THE LEVEL OF AWARENESS ABOUT THE DISEASE AND ITS COMPLICATIONS IN ALLERGIC RHINITIS PATIENTS

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**(ABSTRACT)** **Introduction:** Allergy is an ever growing health problem that greatly impacts the day-to-day life of patients, as well as their families, school, professional, and social life. Allergy affects all age groups, from infancy to childhood, from adolescent to adulthood up to the elderly. Moreover, patients often need assistance in understanding their condition.  
**Aim:** To evaluate the level of awareness about the disease and its complications among these patients  
**Methods:** Detailed information was collected including age, gender, occupation, level of education, the presence of allergic symptoms, were assessed. This was used to obtain information about perception on allergy and the ways of coping.  
**Results:** Of the 50 returned questionnaires, Participants' age ranged from 12 to 40 years with no significant difference between the genders. The majority (n=30) of subjects were female. More than half of the subjects had received more than 8 years of education (n=32). Sneezing was the leading symptom, whereas loss of smell was the least one related to allergic conditions.  
**Conclusion:** The results of our survey highlight the need to conduct education to raise the awareness on allergy and to mitigate the effects of the disease.

**KEYWORDS :** Allergic rhinitis, Awareness, Allergens

### INTRODUCTION

Allergic rhinitis (AR) is a common and recurrent disease in the developed world and its incidence is increasing in the developing country. Around 600 million people worldwide suffer from AR; 200 million of them have concomitant bronchial asthma. The prevalence varies in different regions and affects up to 50% of the population in some countries. It affects the daily functioning (school and work) and quality of life. The disease is a burden to the patients as well as their families.<sup>1,2</sup> Allergic rhinitis is an IgE mediated allergic disease, characterized by bouts of sneezing, watery nasal discharge, post nasal drip, itchy nose and bilateral nasal obstruction. The disease burden and its consequences are often underestimated by clinicians and patients. Many a times patients and clinicians trivialize the symptoms, underdiagnose it and miss or under treat it leading to uncontrolled symptoms affecting quality of life at work and home as well as having an impact on social life.<sup>[1,3]</sup> Allergic rhinitis is classified into the mild or moderate to severe groups according to the severity of symptoms. It is also classified into the intermittent or persistent groups according to the duration of symptoms.<sup>[4]</sup>

### AIM

To evaluate the level of awareness about the disease and its complications among these patients

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

This employed the study pattern of the standard questionnaire method. Detailed information was collected including age, gender, occupation, level of education, the presence of allergic symptoms, were assessed. Education level was classified as uneducated, elementary school (5-8 years), high school (11 years), and university, and/or master degree (more than 15 years), according to the standards of the state. Participants gave written informed consent. Before the beginning of the session, participants were asked to fill out a self-administered questionnaire that consisted of 10 multiple-choice questions, related to allergic symptoms and the possible specialties that could be an option in the management of allergy. This was used to obtain information about perception on allergy and the ways of coping.

### RESULTS

Of the 50 returned questionnaires, Participants' age ranged from 12 to 40 years with no significant difference between the genders. The majority (n=30) of subjects were female. Almost it comprised housewives (n=18), and the rest comprised students (n=12). More than half of the subjects had received more than 8 years of education (n=32), and the rest had elementary school education only (n=10) or uneducated (n=8). Of the 50 subjects with allergic symptoms, 10 was skin tested (previously) and 40 was diagnosed as "allergic" by a health care professional. Among the 10 symptoms evaluated, were marked as related to allergy, with no significant difference between the genders. Nasal and skin complaints were more prominently identified as the

symptoms of allergy. Sneezing was the leading symptom, whereas loss of smell was the least one related to allergic conditions.

Moreover, participants with the physician-diagnosed skin allergy, as well as drug, food or insect allergy, significantly recognized symptoms/ reactions as possibly allergic more than the other participants.

Table 1: Age Distribution

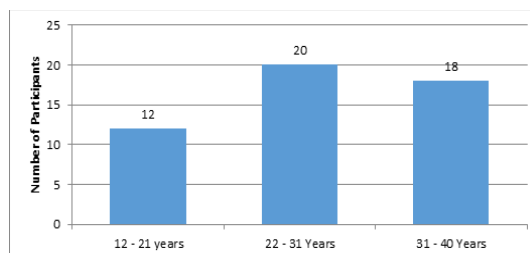


Table 2: Sex Distribution:

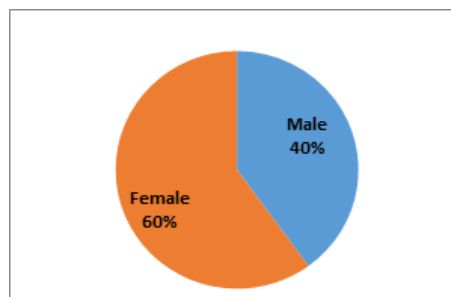


Table 3: Literacy Rate:

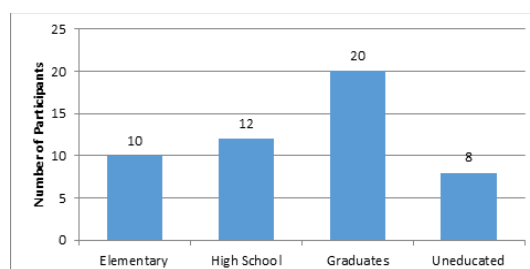
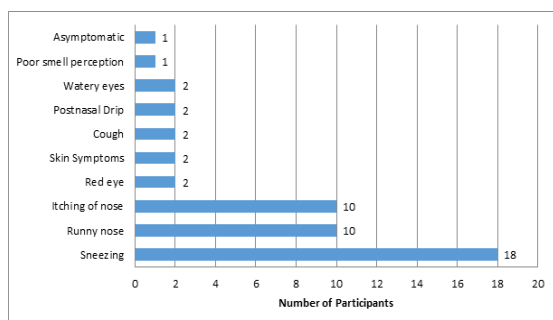


Table 4: Symptoms Distribution:



Around 38% of the patients knew the common allergens which are triggering factors for allergic rhinitis. 25% said they know it requires regular treatment over a prolonged period. Only 20% said they knew that if it is not treated appropriately, it may result in the development of complications. 5% of the patients said, if untreated they may develop Bronchial Asthma.

## DISCUSSION

This study has shown that awareness of allergy was usually underestimated among the population, as approximately half of the allergic symptoms were recognized. Although our results cannot be generalized due to relatively small size and biased toward women and non-professionals, the awareness in this group of participants increased significantly in compliance with the education level but not with the diagnosed allergy. Mainly, the nasal and skin symptoms were evaluated as "allergic," probably because that they are the most common sites of allergic diseases. However, the symptoms related with nasal and/or chest were not found to be significantly recognized more as allergic in subjects with symptoms compared with the ones without symptoms. These results showed us the degree of ignorance about the subjects' own possibly allergic symptoms. Despite the intense research worldwide within allergy, the allergic patient's knowledge and perception of their own condition is scarce. In the United States, the knowledge was found to be poor, and the respondents tended to minimize the stigma associated with food allergy. In this present survey, the allergic patients' perception of their own disease was found to be inadequate, in consistent with the literature. Education seems an essential part of treatment and disease control. Therefore, it may be recommended not only to raise public awareness to promote a greater understanding but also to educate and support the health care needs of individuals with allergy. Health care professionals taking into consideration the patient's attitudes, beliefs, expectations, and their Needs must ensure that their patients understand the nature of the disease. Patients must be informed correctly about their disease, its causes, treatment, and capabilities of prevention and environmental control. Knowledge and health seeking behaviour for allergy diseases are thought to be different in various communities.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the results of our survey highlight the need to conduct education to raise the awareness on allergy and to mitigate the effects of the disease among the affected individuals, as well as in the society.

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