

Food Allergy and Food Intolerance

Network Meeting, Bewley's Hotel, Dublin Airport, Friday 21st March 2014

Food Allergy Prevalence and Oral immunotherapy

The prevalence of diagnosed food allergy is generally said to be around 1-2% of adults and 5-8% of children and appears to be increasing but data for the island of Ireland are currently sparse.

Professor Jonathan Hourihane, Head of Department, Paediatrics & Child Health University College Cork will discuss food allergy generally and prevalence issues in particular.

Dr Andrew Clark, Head of Paediatric Allergy Services, Addenbrookes Hospital Cambridge, recently reported a successful study of oral immunotherapy, OIT, for peanut allergy and will describe the study and its implications for future clinical care.

Lorraine & Mary-Kate Mooney, a mother and daughter team who will give some personal reflections on the OIT process.

To give maximum opportunities to attend two sessions are planned, the first in the afternoon may appeal to professionals working in the field of food allergy with more general discussion in the evening.

These meetings are open to current and prospective members of the **safefood** Food Allergy & Food Intolerance Network – Contact fai-network@hotmail.co.uk to register.

Afternoon meeting

1:30	Registration		
2:00	Introduction	Michael Walker	Food Allergy Food Intolerance Network
2:15	Prevalence of Food Allergy in Ireland	Professor Jonathan Hourihane	Professor of Paediatrics and Child Health University College Cork
2:45	Oral Immunotherapy	Dr Andrew Clark	Consultant in Paediatric Allergy Department of Allergy Addenbrooke's Hospital Cambridge
3:15	Personal reflections	Lorraine Mooney	
3:30	Q & A		
3:45	Close		

Evening Meeting

5:30	Registration		
6:00	Introduction	Michael Walker	Food Allergy Food Intolerance Network
6:05	Prevalence of Food Allergy in Ireland	Professor Jonathan Hourihane	Professor of Paediatrics and Child Health University College Cork
6:35	Oral Immunotherapy	Dr Andrew Clark	Consultant in Paediatric Allergy Department of Allergy Addenbrooke's Hospital Cambridge
7:05	Personal reflections	Lorraine Mooney	
7:15	Q & A		
7:45	Close		

Prof Jonathan O'B Hourihane, Head of Department, Paediatrics & Child Health University College Cork, is a well-known expert in paediatric food allergy and anaphylaxis with ongoing research in clinical and proteomic characterisation of emerging food allergy syndromes, exploration of the link between skin barrier dysfunction and systemic allergic disorders, threshold doses of food allergens, immunomodulation of established allergic responses, prevention of allergic sensitisation, including use of pre-and probiotic-enhanced infant formulae and evaluation of quality of life in food allergic children.

Dr Andrew Clark, Consultant and Head of Paediatric Allergy Services, Addenbrookes Hospital, and Associate lecturer, Department of Medicine, University of Cambridge, has been at Addenbrooke's Hospital since 2003, having obtained his MD by thesis in Allergy in the same year. He now runs the paediatric allergy service at Addenbrooke's and this work is complemented by a broad UK Government-funded research portfolio. His report¹ of a successful study of oral immunotherapy for peanut allergy is highly significant, promising and very welcome.

The OIT study involved 99 participants aged 7 – 16 years, all with peanut allergy which was clinically proven by objective tests. In the first phase 62 % (24 of 39 participants) in the treated arm of the study were desensitised to peanut, while the entire control group retained their peanut allergy unchanged. The control group practised avoidance of peanut, the only currently available therapy. Moreover, at the end of the therapy 84 % of the treated group were able to tolerate daily ingestion of 800 mg peanut protein (equivalent to roughly five peanuts), and there was a massive overall increase in their threshold to peanut and a corresponding betterment of their quality of life. In all fairness, the children in the control arm of the study were subsequently offered oral immunotherapy and 91 % could eat at least five peanuts a day at the end of the therapy.

Is this a cure for food allergy? The simple answer is no, because it is not known if the desensitisation is permanent without regular maintenance doses of peanut. Were there adverse reactions in the treated children? Yes – but these were mild and easily dealt with, although it remains the case that if this therapy is offered it must only be begun in a specialist centre with appropriate experience of the approach. The longer term implications are that more research is needed. But how far should caution extend? Food allergy causes avoidable deaths of young people, thankfully rare, but each a tragedy of monumental proportions to the family involved. It is a burden on those with allergies, but also to food businesses and the medical services. This careful research shows that there is light at the end of an expensive, burdensome and potentially fatal tunnel.

Who should attend this meeting?

Anyone interested in, or with, a food allergy or food intolerance who are current or prospective members of the **safefood** Food Allergy & Food Intolerance Network including, but not limited to, food industry personnel, retailers, public analysts, environmental health officers, government, consumer groups, food scientists, academics and the research community, health care professionals, etc.

For any further details of the meeting please contact Michael Walker 0044 7738 179 985.

Organisers reserve the right to make changes to the programme.

¹ Assessing the efficacy of oral immunotherapy for the desensitisation of peanut allergy in children (STOP II): a phase 2 randomised controlled trial, Katherine Anagnostou, Sabita Islam, Yvonne King, Loraine Foley, Laura Pasea, Simon Bond, Chris Palmer, John Deighton, Pamela Ewan, Andrew Clark, Lancet January 30th 2014