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Patients with Alpha-Gal Allergy May be Five Times More Likely to Be Allergic to Insects

Research being presented at the 2018 AAAAI/WAO Joint Congress demonstrates that patients with alpha-gal allergy are five times more likely to be allergic to other insects.

Orlando, FL - With tick population expanding, alpha-gal allergy, also known as red meat allergy or mammalian meat allergy, is becoming more prominent. Researchers know there is an association between tick bites and red meat allergy but have now found that patients with red meat allergy are also five times more likely to be allergic to stinging insects compared to patients without red meat allergy.

“We think that there are shared immunologic factors that make these patients more susceptible to insect allergy,” said author Maya R. Jerath, MD, PhD, FAAAAI.

Researchers interviewed and tested 109 patients with alpha-gal allergy for allergy antibodies (sIgE) to alpha-gal, mammalian antigens and insect venom. There were also 26 control subjects enrolled for comparison.

Patients with alpha-gal allergy reported a higher rate of allergic reactions following insect stings and were five times more likely to be sensitized to honey bee, white-faced hornet, common wasp, paper wasp or fire ant than patients without the allergy.

The most common venom sensitization among alpha-gal allergic patients was to common wasp, to which 30.3% of patients were found to be sensitized. About 15% of control patients were sensitized to fire ant, making it the most common sensitization in that group.

Patients with alpha-gal were also 3.6 times more likely to have multiple venom sensitizations than controls.

“There appears to be an association between alpha-gal and insect allergy,” said Jerath. “Given that both conditions are influenced by environmental exposures, ongoing climate change is likely to make these allergic conditions more common and healthcare professionals should be mindful of the association.”

To read more about [insect allergy](#) or alpha-gal allergy, [visit aaaai.org](#). Research presented at the AAAAI/WAO Joint Congress is published in an [online supplement to *The Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology*, an official journal of the AAAAI](#).

The American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology ([AAAAI](#)) represents allergists, asthma specialists, clinical immunologists, allied health professionals and others with a special interest in the research and treatment of allergic and immunologic diseases. Established in 1943,

the AAAAI has more than 7,000 members in the United States, Canada and 72 other countries. The AAAAI's [Find an Allergist/Immunologist](#) service is a trusted resource to help you find a specialist close to home.

The World Allergy Organization ([WAO](#)) is an international alliance of 97 regional and national allergy, asthma, and immunology societies. Through collaboration with its Member Societies WAO provides a wide range of educational and outreach programs, symposia and lectureships to allergists/immunologists around the world and conducts initiatives related to clinical practice, service provision, and physical training in order to better understand and address the challenges facing allergists/immunologists worldwide.

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