

## "Three Shots And They're Out" - Allergy Immunotherapy Study Sheds New Light On When Patients Stop Treatment

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New research presented at the 2009 American Academy of Allergy Asthma & Immunology Annual Meeting (AAAAI), highlighted poor compliance among allergy immunotherapy candidates. The research project, supported by Greer, was conducted by Allergy Partners, P.A., a large, single-specialty allergy practice, and is the first to evaluate patterns of allergy immunotherapy care in a "real world" allergy practice setting.

The goal of the study was to evaluate patterns of care among patients who received allergy testing and subsequent allergy immunotherapy, commonly known as allergy shots. The study also sought to identify aspects of compliance with allergy immunotherapy, including average duration of treatment. The study reviewed computerized HIPAA-compliant claims data for more than 42,000 patients who received care at the Winston-Salem, N.C. and Greenville, S.C. Allergy Partners clinics from 2002 to 2008.

"We are proud to support the first large-scale, multi-year study to examine adherence to allergy immunotherapy among patients," said John Roby, Chief Executive Officer of Greer. "By better understanding patient behavior toward allergy immunotherapy, we will be able to better address the barriers to immunotherapy that currently exist and analyze techniques that can be implemented to improve compliance."

Investigators found that 71 percent of patients (29,987) who visited the two facilities during the six-year period received allergy testing. Following allergy testing and determination of patients' appropriateness for treatment, patients' agreement to initiate treatment, and scheduling and confirmation of their appointments, the clinics subsequently prepared antigen (i.e. immunotherapy prescription) for approximately 25 percent (7,452) of the patients. Researchers were surprised to find that 11 percent of patients for whom an immunotherapy prescription was prepared never showed up for their first allergy immunotherapy appointment. An additional 13 percent discontinued treatment within the first three sessions of allergy immunotherapy.

"Allergy immunotherapy is the only known treatment for allergy sufferers that modifies the course of the disease, but we still have a lot of work to do," said Dr. David Brown, President at Allergy Partners, P.A. "The findings from this research demonstrate the importance of our specialty in educating our patients about the treatment they are receiving and the value of staying on the recommended treatment regimen."

According to researchers, the majority of patients who were initially compliant with treatment eventually discontinued immunotherapy. They also noted that females were significantly more likely to stop immunotherapy within the first two years than men.

"We were surprised to find such poor adherence to treatment," said Dr. Cheryl Hankin, co-author of the study and President and Chief Scientific Officer of BioMedEcon. "Sixty percent of patients in our study did not complete the recommended three year course of treatment and less than a quarter of them completed two years of immunotherapy."

Greer plans to use the data from the study to assist allergy specialists in their efforts to educate patients.

### About Greer

Greer is a leading developer and provider of allergy immunotherapy products and services for treating humans and animals. Greer's expert scientists provide technical support for customers by continuing to focus on improving the

lives of allergic patients. Greer's clinical development programs are focused on expanding the use of immunotherapy through oral administration of allergy immunotherapy. Greer's goal is to establish the efficacy of standardized products for oral administration through clinical trials. The company was founded in 1904 and is located in Lenoir, N. C.

Source

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