



australasian society of clinical immunology and allergy inc.

PRESS RELEASE

New allergy treatments – a bit of a mouthful!

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Allergies appear to be increasing, particularly in young children.

Discussing the problem at in this week's conference of the Australasian Society for Clinical Immunology and Allergy (ASCIA), **Dr Robert Puy (Melbourne)** described allergy in children as a major medical problem.

"Australian studies show that 1 in 5 little kids wheeze, 1 in 7 scratch from eczema and while you might not expect it, 1 in 8 have hay fever. It's not just inconvenient; it lasts for years and some kids are miserable".

"Sometimes, wearing sunglasses, turning on the air-conditioning and drying the bedding inside during springtime can help. When that's not good enough, effective medicines are available and these help most people".

Speaking at the same forum, **Assoc Prof Pete Smith (Queensland)** stated that "Unfortunately, drugs don't cure allergy but immunotherapy (also known as desensitization) has been shown to be very effective at dramatically helping those with seasonal as well as all-year long allergies. Immunotherapy re-trains the immune system to behave in a non-allergic manner."

"New methods for immunotherapy, such as sublingual/oral immunotherapy (SLIT) which does not involve injections offer the promise of being able to treat younger sufferers who don't like needles! This treatment has been studied most extensively in Europe, where SLIT accounts for around two thirds of immunotherapy prescriptions".

So which is better; needles or drops?

"Immunotherapy doesn't work in everyone, and I think the jury is still out on whether traditional injections or SLIT is better, but we do know that both work" said **Dr Puy**. "If I see an adult with a severe allergic nose, I would recommend injections. But for a child, we now have another treatment to offer".

For more information, refer to the ASCIA website www.allergy.org.au or phone:

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