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Challenges of food allergies and managing day to day life

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Food allergies are on the rise and are increasing in both developed and developing countries, especially among children. A food allergy is a serious auto immune disease. Symptoms can vary from mild to severe. Globally, 220-250 million people may suffer from food allergies, which are the main and leading cause for anaphylaxis.

Challenges:

- A food allergy reaction can happen to anyone, anytime, anyplace.
- There is no cure for food allergies yet.
- Even a trace amount of allergen can be fatal.
- All food can cause an allergic reaction. More than 170 foods are documented to have caused an allergic reaction.
- Many countries have reported a lack of reliable data and the need for more studies and resources.
- The unavailability of life-saving medications such as epinephrine (in Asia, South America, Middle East, Eastern Europe and Africa) poses a critical concern.
- Food allergy has a significant social, emotional, psychological, health physical and socio-economic impact; affecting the quality of life of people suffering from food allergies (mainly children).
- Large areas in the world lack legislation on food labeling.
- Misconception of medical terms-intolerances, allergies and sensitivities. And underestimating the seriousness of food allergies.

Recommendations and solutions:

- Spread awareness and offer food allergen training wherever food is served.
- Implement food allergy and anaphylaxis plans for food.
- Improve access to adrenaline autoinjectors in countries where it is limited.

Conclusion and Significance: Food is a social activity that has become one of the last remaining social rituals for humans. The disease of food allergy results in exclusion of children from various social activities, such as school canteens, birthdays and prevents their full participation in school life and society. Parents, caregivers and people with food allergies need the help of the whole society to stay healthy, safe and included.

Biography

Dana Al Salah is a certified Food Allergy Coach. AllerCoach (TM), is the first International food allergy management training and certification program for coaches and consultants. Her first-hand experience in the daily effort to keep her children safe and healthy is the reason she understands the struggles families go through with having one or more people with food allergies in the house. She takes each case personally and offers support wholeheartedly to the people and families she works with.

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