Food Allergy Knowledge, Attitudes, & Beliefs of Primary Care Physicians

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Rationale
- Childhood food allergy is a growing problem in the U.S.
- Pediatricians & family physicians are often the first and sometimes only line of defense against childhood FA

Objectives: Characterize food allergy knowledge & perceptions among primary care physicians in the U.S

Methods
- National sample of pediatricians/family physicians was recruited from April-July 2008 to complete web-based survey
- Findings were analyzed to provide composite/ itemized knowledge scores, describe attitudes/beliefs, & examine effects of participant characteristics on response

Results
- Survey completed by 407 participants (339 Ped/83 FP)
- 99% of participants cared for food-allergic patients
- Overall knowledge score was 61% (range, 23%-87%)

Strengths: Knowledge of items assessing food allergy triggers/environmental risks, susceptibility/prevalence & treatment/utilization of healthcare

Weaknesses: Knowledge of items assessing food allergy triggers/environmental risks, definition/diagnosis & symptoms/severity

Perceptions regarding food allergy were well distributed, with a few exceptions:
- Few felt comfortable interpreting laboratory test results to diagnose food allergy
- Few felt adequately prepared by their medical training to care for food-allergic children
- Few were confident in their ability to care for food-allergic children

Conclusions
- Knowledge of food allergy was fair, with strengths & weaknesses in each content domain
- Opportunities for improvement exist as acknowledged by respondents’ perceptions of their FA clinical abilities