

Pediatric allergies: understanding, acting, preventing

With great pleasure, we welcome you to this special edition of the Belgian Journal of Paediatrics (BJP), dedicated to pediatric allergic diseases. We are delighted to see that the field of pediatric allergy is generating increasing interest within the Belgian pediatric community. This issue aims to serve as an open window into the latest developments, current challenges, and future opportunities in the treatment of food allergies and focusses also on eczema, rhinitis, asthma, drug and hymenoptera allergy in children

Almost 10 years ago, at the same time the White Book on Allergy was published by the WorldAllergyOrganization, a theme issue of the Belgian Journal of Paediatrics was dedicated to food allergy. In both publications it was stressed that the prevalence of allergic diseases was continuously increasing worldwide over the last decades.

Current statistics cannot go unnoticed: allergies are still rising and have reached alarming pandemic proportions globally, children bearing the greatest disease burden.

Food allergies, continue to increase in number, intensity, complexity and early onset. This observation underscores an urgent need to understand, treat, and prevent these conditions that profoundly impact the quality of life for children and their families.

In place of the simplistic paradigm of non-protective avoidance, a shift to a new concept has gradually taken hold: one that focuses on the induction of tolerance. In this edition, this transformative concept and its potential to reshape the landscape of pediatric food allergy management is explored.

In the face of the rising prevalence of pediatric allergies, prevention becomes essential. The age-old adage 'prevention is better than cure' holds true not in the least in the context of food allergies. This issue explores preventive strategies, highlighting the importance of early identification of risk factors, sensitization pathways, and parental education.

Adequate management of fast evolving, complex, difficult-to-treat or unmet age-specific allergic diseases requires allergy subspecialty care, in close collaboration with primary specialists and first-line generalists.

Recently, in response to the growing need for better structured specialized care in pediatric allergology in Belgium, the Belgian Association of Pediatric Allergologists (BAPALL) was created, under the auspices of the Belgian Society of Pediatrics and the Belgian Academy of Paediatrics. In harmony with other non-pediatric allergology societies and in collaboration with other pediatric specialties, BAPALL aims to advocate for the specific needs and challenges faced by pediatric allergists, their patients and their families.

On one hand, our country, although a leader in many medical fields, remains one of the last in Europe to not recognize allergology as a separate medical specialty. On the other hand, the rapid evolution of complex diagnostic analysis and management strategies and procedures underscore the imperative need for specific training in pediatric allergology.

The current lack of well-documented, good-organized and officially recognized training programs for this constantly evolving pathogenesis-based subspecialty without clear identification of the accredited pediatric allergologist, does not only lead to patient confusion in finding the right experts but also induces a risk of over- and under-diagnoses with potential errors in the differential diagnosis and treatment.

Through the BAPALL, we aspire to contribute to the advocacy of interests and the overall improvement of pediatric allergology care in Belgium, waiting for an official recognition.

(Info: bapall.secretary@gmail.com)

In conclusion, we would like to express our great gratitude to all the authors who generously spent their time sharing us their expertise in this issue. We also want to thank Mark Wojciechowski for his professional and detailed editorial check-up of all the manuscripts

May these articles spark discussions

We wish you a stimulating and informative read.

Kamal El Abd

Marc Raes

**Uw vragen of commentaar
Vos questions ou commentaires**



BELGISCHE VERENIGING
VOOR KINDERGENEESKUNDE
SOCIÉTÉ BELGE DE PÉDIATRIE

**Comité de rédaction - Redactieraad
M. Raes - C. Chantrain**

Gasthuisberg - Kindergeneeskunde

Herestraat 49 - 3000 Leuven

E-mail BJ-Ped@hotmail.com