Allergy Shots Reduce Children’s Health Care Costs by One-Third

ARLINGTON HEIGHTS, Ill. – Allergy immunotherapy, generally referred to as allergy vaccinations or shots, reduce total health care costs in children with allergic rhinitis (hay fever) by one-third, and prescription costs by 16 percent, according to a study published this month in Annals of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology, the scientific journal of the American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology (ACAAI).

"This large-scale, comparative effectiveness study of health outcomes clearly demonstrates the benefits of allergen immunotherapy for children with allergic rhinitis," said Cheryl Hankin, Ph.D., president and chief scientific officer of BioMedEcon, and lead author of the study. "Findings are even more impressive, considering the results were based on 'real world' healthcare delivery, rather than on treatment provided within a tightly controlled clinical trial."

The 10-year U.S. retrospective study is the first to show significant health care cost reductions in as early as three months and continued decreases over an 18-month period. The study compared Florida Medicaid claims data of 2,770 children with allergic rhinitis who received allergen immunotherapy to a matched control group of over 11,000 affected children who did not receive such treatment.

"This is great news, not only for families who will experience fewer out-of-pocket expenses for allergy medications, but also for the ever increasing national health care crisis," said Linda S. Cox, M.D., immediate past chair of the ACAAI Immunotherapy and Diagnostic Committee and study co-author. "Because of the serious medical and economic consequences of childhood allergic rhinitis, early diagnosis and aggressive treatment need to be our priority."

Allergic rhinitis is the third most common chronic disease in U.S. children, affecting up to 40 percent of the population. Each year, allergic rhinitis accounts for two million missed school days and $2.3 million in health care costs for children younger than 12 years.

Allergen immunotherapy is the only treatment shown to decrease the risk of allergic rhinitis developing into asthma or other allergies.

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