Center for Food Allergy & Asthma Research

March 2020 Newsletter

Remembering Chitra Dinakar, MD
In loving memory of Dr. Chitra Dinakar, MD - our dear colleague and friend.

Dr. Dinakar was a prominent member and advocate for the allergy and immunology community serving as a Clinical Professor of Medicine at Stanford University and the Clinical Chief of Allergy, Asthma and Immunodeficiency, Stanford Health Care. Dr. Dinakar has left an invaluable mark in research and medicine, but also in the hearts of family, friends, patients, colleagues, and mentees. She wrote children's book *Will You Play with Me?* with her son Akshay which depicts a series of heartwarming scenarios to model empathy and inclusivity of young children exposed to individuals with disabilities. Her brilliant insight, immense kindness, and inspirational strength will truly be missed. We have had the absolute pleasure of collaborating with Dr. Dinakar for a number of years. We would like to highlight our most recent work with her, our study of *Food allergy among Asian Indian immigrants in the United States*, currently in press.

In an online survey of 549 South Asian Indian children and adults with food allergy in the United States, tree nut was the most commonly reported food allergen (51%). Interestingly, non-peanut/soy legumes were the sixth most commonly reported food allergen. Among those with a legume allergy, 52.5% reported a chickpea allergy and 32.8% reported a lentil allergy. Additionally, this study demonstrated that older generations of Indians reported lower rates of atopy (asthma, eczema, and allergic rhinitis) compared with younger generation.

Founder/CEO of Food Equality Initiative (FEI), Emily Brown, posted a beautiful reflection of Dr. Dinakar's legacy on the FEI blog. Please click below to view the post.
New Research Publications

We are excited to share descriptions of our new publications this month! Congratulations to the authors for all of their hard work! To read the full results, click on the title below. If you have any trouble accessing them, please email cfaar@northwestern.edu and we can share with you directly.

Pediatric Food Allergy: A Clinical Guide focuses on emerging food allergy topics that are relevant to children/adolescents. This comprehensive book,
edited by Ruchi Gupta, MD, MPH, features 19 chapters written by a range of experts in the field of Pediatrics and Allergy/Immunology. Each chapter summarizes current practices and literature on unique topics including food allergy epidemiology, diagnosis, atopic diseases, prevention, management, therapies, etc. We hope this resource will help aid physicians and families of food allergic children in better understanding food allergy.

See below for the titles of the chapters:

1. **Epidemiology and Racial/Ethnic Differences in Food Allergy**
   Authors: Jialing Jiang, Christopher Warren, Ruchi Gupta

2. **Pathophysiology and Symptoms of Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis**
   Authors: Alicia T. Widge and Hemant P. Sharma

3. **Diagnosis and Differential Diagnosis of Food Allergy**
   Authors: Efren Rael, Vanita Sampath and Kari Christine Nadeau

4. **Quality of Life in Children with Food Allergy**
   Authors: Ashley Dyer, Madeleine Kanaley, Lisa Lombard, Chris Warren, Ruchi Gupta

5. **Environmental Allergies and Pollen Food Syndrome (PFS)**
   Authors: Susan Fox and Mary C. Tobin

6. **Asthma**
   Authors: Amy A. Eapen and Amal Assa’ad

7. **Eczema**
   Authors: Peter Capucilli and Terri Brown-Whitehorn

8. **Eosinophilic Esophagitis**
   Authors: Carla Perez, Anthony Olive, and Carla M. Davis

9. **Food-Protein-Induced Enterocolitis Syndrome: A Pediatric Gastrointestinal Food Allergy**
   Authors: Amanda Agyemang and Anna Nowak-Wegrzyn

10. **Potential Factors Related to Food Allergy Development**
11. The Microbiome in Food Allergy and Eosinophilic Esophagitis
   Authors: Alyson L. Lee, Mary M. Buschmann, Christina E. Ciaccio, and Jack A. Gilbert

12. Breastfeeding and Food Allergy
   Authors: Scott P. Commins

13. Prevention of Food Allergy: Early Introduction of Allergenic Foods
   Authors: Waheeda Samady, Lauren Kao, Jialing Jiang, Emily Campbell, Ruchi Gupta, Lucy Bilaver

14. Clinical Management of Food Allergy
   Authors: Melanie M. Makhija

15. Management of Food Allergy in the School Setting: The Clinician’s Role
   Authors: Michael Pistiner and Julie Wang

16. Oral Tolerance and Prognosis in Food Allergy
   Authors: David R. Stukus

17. Oral Immunotherapy (OIT)
   Authors: Jay A. Lieberman and Julie Wang

18. Epicutaneous Immunotherapy
   Authors: Allison G. Hicks and David M. Fleischer

19. Emerging Food Allergy Therapies
   Authors: Luana Yang and Edwin H. Kim

Text available for purchase online as well as Amazon. If you are interested in specific chapters, please contact cfaar@northwestern.edu

Prevalence and Correlates of Food Allergy Among Medicaid-Enrolled Children in the U.S.
Bilaver L, Kanaley M, Fierstein J, Gupta RS.
About 8% of US children have food allergies. Managing food allergies can be challenging for families due to missed school days, high risk for emergency department visits, and hospitalizations. All of these factors can create emotional and financial burden on families. Based on previous research, we know that food allergy diagnosis and treatment also differs for low-income children and those insured through the Medicaid program. However, research on this population is lacking. Therefore, this study aimed to better understand how many children enrolled in the Medicaid program have food allergy claims. Surprisingly, the number of Medicaid enrolled children (0.6%) with food allergy is substantially lower than the general population with a convincing food allergy (7.6%). These findings signal a need to better understand reasons for these differences including awareness, access to care and services used in this population.

Food Allergy in Schools: Strides to Improving Safety and Awareness
Gupta RS.

Dr. Gupta was recently featured in the 2020 edition of the Northwestern Public Health Review (NPHR). Celebrating the power of how knowledge drives change, the article, “Food Allergy in Schools: Strides to Improving Safety and Awareness,” explains the food allergy work of Ruchi Gupta, MD, MPH, and her team. Inspired after meeting a food allergy family 15 years ago, and her now food allergic child, Dr. Gupta’s passion was lit. Starting with studies validating the prevalence of food allergies, to understanding how stock emergency epinephrine benefits school communities. Each research led to the next piece of the puzzle. This work is not done, but much of today’s current laws, guidelines, school policy, and awareness education tools are in place thanks to the work of many. The dedication from Dr. Gupta’s team, other researchers, Northwestern Medicine, and generous donors are making a difference. Together, these passionate people are changing the face of food allergies at schools nationwide.

Assessing Allergies' Cost
Bilaver L.

Managing a child’s food allergy is complicated. But it comes at a cost. Northwestern's Dr. Lucy Bilaver, Ph.D. and Dr. Ruchi Gupta, MD, sought to learn more about these costs. Details of their work featured in "Accessing Allergy Costs," Drs. Bilaver and Gupta revealed the annual cost of food allergies is a whopping $25 billion. Some costs are direct to the health care
systems and to families. Family costs range from doctor visits and testing to buying medication and foods. Plus, emergency room (ER) visits and associated costs. Some families had extra costs of mental health care, changing schools, or daycares. Including the cost of lost work due to doctor visits, changing careers, or the need to move for safety reasons. The research found one-in-five children had annual ER visits. Curious about low-income families, Dr. Bilaver studied socioeconomic costs. Surprisingly, she learned that lower-income families spent more on emergencies than on prevention. These struggles show the need for more research to help create better public health strategies.

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**Research Opportunities**

There's Still Time to Complete Food Allergy Coping Survey!

We want to invite you to participate in an exciting study researchers from Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine are conducting to explore the thoughts, emotions, and coping strategies individuals and families have and use as they manage food allergies. I am the principal investigator on this study, and the goal of this research is to both identify the coping strategies those living with food allergy or caring for someone with food allergy currently use that work best for them, and to gauge any interest in new interventions to improve psychosocial outcomes. With this information, we hope to inform future clinical care so that patients living with food allergy are provided with methods of coping that meet their psycho-social concerns living with food allergy.

If you are living with a food allergy, or are a caregiver of someone who has a food allergy, we would greatly appreciate your participation! Please note, you
must be 18 years or older to participate in this survey.

To participate, we are asking you to complete a short and anonymous survey through the online service, REDCap. Being in this study is optional and voluntary. If you are interested in participating, click the appropriate survey link provided below and read through the consent form before proceeding. It should take you no more than 15 minutes to complete the survey.

If you’re interested in completing the survey, please click here or the button below to be taken to the survey.

If you are unable to click on the link or have any issues accessing the survey, please contact the research coordinator, Madeleine Kanaley, at madeleine.kanaley@northwestern.edu or (312)-503-5339.

Thank you for your participation,

Ruchi Gupta, MD, MPH
Professor of Pediatrics, Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine
Director, Center for Food Allergy & Asthma Research (CFAAR)
Clinical Attending, Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children’s Hospital of Chicago

This study is Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine IRB #STU00210953
Title: Understanding the Psychosocial Coping Strategies of Individuals and Families Affected By Food Allergy
Principal Investigator: Ruchi Gupta, MD, MPH
The content of this message has been approved by Northwestern University’s IRB.

Press

Please see below for coverage on our team’s latest COVID-19 coping tips

American Lung Association: Top Story: Top Tips for Coping During COVID-19 Crisis

"The first rule of thumb is referring to the “crisis” in less scary terms to encourage a sense of control and calm. “There’s productive and non-productive
anxiety right now. It can be helpful to remember that we’re trying to find a balance—to accept uncertainty and discomfort while staying healthy and kind within our communities.” - Lisa Lombard, PhD

Upcoming Events

Although the CPS/ Northwestern Health Leaders Program has been postponed until further notice, you can learn all about it through our new website!

Visit the link below!

CLICK HERE

Current Resources

COVID-19 RESOURCES from CFAAR

COVID-19 RESOURCES
FEI and their food coalition give guidance to policymakers on meeting the needs of food-insecure individuals during the pandemic

Food Insecure & Allergic
Adjusting to Meet Food Allergy Needs During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Click Here
MOCHA (Mothers of Children Having Allergies) is an invaluable resource for families with children who have life-threatening food allergies. Founded by Denise Bunning and Anne Thompson, both are mothers of food allergic children, this organization provides parents with information and support to better their child's life. Parents are able to share their coping mechanisms and discuss strategies which help support their children.

To learn more about MOCHA and all of the amazing resources they have to share, visit their beautiful website at [www.mochallergies.org](http://www.mochallergies.org)!

In addition, MOCHA has created their Spring 2020 ENews in hopes of continuing food allergy education, awareness and being inclusive. Check it out below!

[Read MOCHA’s Spring 2020 ENews](http://www.mochallergies.org)

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To learn more about the Center for Food Allergy & Asthma Research, visit [cfaar.northwestern.edu](http://cfaar.northwestern.edu) or follow us on social media!