



Asthma and Allergy
Foundation of America

New Survey Suggests Patients Want Fast, Long Relief of Allergy Symptoms

Six out of 10 allergy patients indicate interest in finding a new prescription medication

WASHINGTON, D.C., March 20, 2006 – Nearly one-third of allergy patients¹ (31%) are not fully satisfied² with their current prescription allergy medication, according to a new survey from the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA). Sixty percent of allergy patients also agree³ they are very interested in finding a new prescription allergy medication.

Symptom relief may be among the top factors contributing to patient dissatisfaction with prescription allergy medication, according to the survey of 1,214 allergy patients conducted by Harris Interactive[®]. Among allergy patients who are not fully satisfied² with their current prescription allergy medication, more than half (55%) say they are not satisfied because their allergy medication does not relieve their symptoms for a long enough period of time, and nearly half (44%) are not satisfied because their allergy medication does not provide symptom relief quickly enough.

“Patients are taking two, three, sometimes four different medications at a time to relieve their symptoms quickly and effectively because they are increasingly unsatisfied with their allergy medications,” said Alpen Patel, MD, assistant professor, otolaryngology, George Washington University Medical Center, Washington, D.C., member of AAFA’s Medical-Scientific Council. “This can be a very costly, dangerous and frequently ineffective solution to treating bothersome symptoms,” added Dr. Patel.

¹ Allergy patients defined as U.S. adults aged 18 and over who have been diagnosed with seasonal allergies and are currently using prescription allergy medication to treat their allergies.

² Patients who are not fully satisfied with their current prescription allergy medication are defined as those who say they are somewhat or not at all satisfied with their current prescription allergy medication.

³ Agree is defined as somewhat or strongly agree.

Nearly half (47%) of allergy patients say they are taking multiple allergy prescription medications and over one-third (36%) of allergy patients who take prescription allergy medication also say they are using over-the-counter or non-prescription allergy medications.

While showing the desire among a majority of allergy patients for new prescription allergy treatments, the survey also reveals what patients consider to be important aspects of an allergy prescription medication, including:

- **Long-lasting:** Eighty-eight percent of allergy patients believe it is important for prescription allergy medications to provide long-lasting relief of symptoms.
- **Fast-acting:** Eighty-five percent of allergy patients believe it is important prescription allergy medications work quickly to relieve symptoms. (Eighty-three percent of allergy patients consider quick allergy symptom relief to be within 30 minutes.)
- **Steroid-free:** About half of allergy patients (51%) believe it is important for allergy medications to be steroid-free.

Oral medications are the most commonly used form of prescription allergy medication (67%); however, about four out of five allergy patients (81%) say they would try a nasal spray to treat their allergy symptoms.

When it comes to choosing a new medication, many patients may be confused by all the options. About half (51%) of those who say they are interested in switching to another prescription allergy medication agree⁴ they are confused by all of the different options available today, and six out of 10 patients (59%) agree they wish they knew more about the different types of prescription allergy medications available.

“Nearly 30 percent of patients admit they don’t even know what type of allergy medication they are taking, whether it is an antihistamine or an anti-inflammatory steroid drug,” said Dr. Patel. “The survey findings suggest the need for patients to have open dialogues with their doctors about the allergy medications they are taking and available treatment options out there.”

⁴ Agree is defined as somewhat or strongly agree.

Survey Methodology

Harris Interactive conducted the online survey on behalf of AAFA from October 10 to 17, 2005, among a national sample of 1,214 U.S. adults aged 18 and older who have been diagnosed with seasonal allergies and are currently using prescription allergy medication to treat their allergies.

Data are weighted to be representative of all U.S. adults 18 and older who have been diagnosed with seasonal allergies and are currently using prescription allergy medication. Weighting was based on age within gender, education, race/ethnicity, region, income and propensity to be online. In theory, with probability samples of this size, one can say with 95 percent certainty that the overall results have a sampling error of +/- 4.3 percentage points.

Sampling error for the sub-samples of, patients who are somewhat or not at all satisfied with their current prescription allergy medication (348), patients who somewhat or strongly agree that they are interested in finding a new prescription allergy medication (480), and patients who say they are interested in switching to a another prescription allergy medication (600) is higher and varies. This online sample is not a probability sample.

About Allergic Rhinitis

Allergic rhinitis, commonly referred to as hay fever or allergies, affects as many as 50 million Americans each year. Allergies reflect an overreaction of the immune system to substances that usually cause no reaction in most individuals, such as pollens, mold, dust or animal dander. These substances can trigger sneezing, itchy, watery eyes, nasal congestion, runny nose, itchy nose, throat and palate and sinus headaches.

Allergies are not only bothersome, but many have been linked to a variety of common and serious chronic respiratory illnesses (such as sinusitis and asthma). Additionally, allergic reactions can be severe and even fatal. However, with proper management and patient education, allergic diseases can be controlled, and people with allergies can lead normal and productive lives.

Appropriate allergy treatment is based on the results of allergy tests, medical history and the severity of your symptoms. Treatment can include avoidance of allergens, medication options and/or immunotherapy (allergy shots).

About AAFA

The Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA) is the leading non-profit consumer and patient organization fighting asthma and allergic disease. AAFA provides free information to the public, offers educational programs to consumers and health professionals, leads advocacy efforts to improve patient care and supports research to find cures. To learn more about AAFA, visit www.aafa.org.

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