

An Epidemiological Study of Allergy to Laboratory Animals

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Summary: Allergy to laboratory animals is one of the most annoyed occupational diseases in individuals in contact with these animals. Type I hypersensitivity reactions are predominant in allergy to laboratory animals. The main allergens in laboratory animals are specific urinary proteins that are present in most urine contaminated organic waste materials from the animals. Diagnosis of allergy to animals was based on history and clinical findings. In this study we inspected high risk individuals who were exposed to laboratory animals during 1992-93 in Iran. Among affected people were veterinarians, pharmacologists, physicians, dentists, researchers and technicians. They were contacted with hair, skin, urine, faeces, saliva and serum of mice, rats, rabbits, hamsters and guinea pigs. They were exposed to these animals in many ways such as injection, sampling, operation, management and handling. We found also a prevalence of allergy to laboratory animals about 23%. Our study indicated an apparently greater prevalence among technicians who were contacted with animals more than others did in the all ways. The most of allergic reactions were observed in persons who exposed to mice. Our data also indicated 3% of affected persons showed all symptoms of disease including of eye and nose symptoms, skin symptoms and asthma, 44% only eye and nose symptoms and 11% only skin symptoms. Type of job, smoking and atopy are the risk factors.

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