

Research and insights on severe asthma in children

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A subset of children with asthma suffers from severe, treatment-resistant disease associated with more illness and greater allergic hypersensitivity, according to the results of the National Heart, Blood, and Lung Institute's Severe Asthma Research Program (SARP), presented in a recently published article in *Pediatric Allergy, Immunology, and Pulmonology*.

Asthma is the most common [chronic lung disease](#) of [children](#), with more than 6.6 million affected in the U.S. Although relatively few children have severe asthma, they account for almost half of asthma related expenditures.

SARP compared severe, therapy-resistant asthma in children and adults and identified age-specific characteristics of the disease. The results suggest that there are distinguishable clinical features of severe asthma that can be identified early in life. Authors Anne Fitzpatrick, PhD from Emory University (Atlanta, GA) and William Gerald Teague, MD from the University of Virginia (Charlottesville) review the highlights of the SARP findings in an article entitled "Severe Asthma in Children: Insights from the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute's Severe Asthma Research Program". They conclude that children with severe, therapy-resistant asthma are more likely to have poorer [lung function](#) and higher levels of allergic sensitization and to be of African American or mixed ancestry. Their findings suggest that children as young as 6 years with severe asthma may already have structural airway changes.

"Identifying the features associated with severe, treatment-resistant [asthma](#) in children will allow us to better understand this illness and develop better treatments for these children who spend so much time struggling to breathe," says Harold Farber, MD, MSPH, Editor of *Pediatric [Allergy, Immunology, and Pulmonology](#)*, and Associate Professor of Pediatrics, Section of Pulmonology, Baylor College of Medicine, Houston, TX.

More information: The article is available free online at www.liebertpub.com/pai

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