

# Despite climate change, kids with asthma in Los Angeles didn't have an increase in allergy diagnoses

November 5 2021

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Studies have shown that climate change has been partly responsible for longer growing seasons and larger pollen loads, leading to speculation of

an increase in sensitizations to environmental allergens. A new study being presented at this year's American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology (ACAAI) Annual Scientific Meeting followed 5874 kids with asthma in Los Angeles for 15 years and found no increase in allergic sensitizations. When your immune system becomes sensitized to an allergen (an otherwise harmless substance), you will likely develop symptoms of an allergy each time you are exposed to that same allergen.

"We were somewhat surprised at the results as we expected there would be an increase in the number of kids with asthma who were sensitized to pollen and other allergens," said Kenny Kwong MD, principal investigator of the study. "Between 80-90% of children with asthma have allergy triggers, which is why it's important for children with asthma to be tested for allergies. Allergy triggers can cause asthma flares in children."

A total of 123,209 tests were performed on the more than 5,000 patients. All patients received skin prick tests to dust mites, cat, dog, cockroach, tree pollen, grass pollen, and weed pollen. In addition, all patients had been diagnosed with asthma and [allergic rhinitis](#) by an asthma specialist using history, [physical examination](#), and spirometry when age appropriate.

"Although temperatures have been rising and pollen loads increasing, if someone is not genetically predisposed to allergies, they are not likely to be sensitized to more allergens," said allergist Lyne Scott, MD, ACAAI member and co-author of the study. "The growing season is year-round in LA and people with allergies who are already sensitized to pollens suffer more intensely when the [growing season](#) is longer, or the air quality isn't good. It is important to remember that sensitization does not equate to severity so those with allergies may have worse symptoms."

High pollen counts don't necessarily mean that individual sufferers will

be affected. There are many types of pollen—from various kinds of trees, from grass and from a variety of weeds. As a result, a high overall pollen count doesn't always indicate a strong concentration of the specific pollen to which individuals are allergic.

**More information: Abstract Title:** No increase in inhalant allergen sensitization among Los Angeles asthmatic children over 15 years.

Provided by American College of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology

Citation: Despite climate change, kids with asthma in Los Angeles didn't have an increase in allergy diagnoses (2021, November 5) retrieved 9 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2021-11-climate-kids-asthma-los-angeles.html>

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