

Hay fever sufferers prefer prescription medication, but use over-the-counter relief

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Anyone suffering with seasonal allergies knows the local pharmacy carries shelves full of over-the-counter medications to help manage symptoms. Unfortunately, most seasonal allergy sufferers take over-the-counter (OTC) products rather than the treatments they actually prefer - prescription medications.

A new study presented at the American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology (ACAAI) Annual Scientific Meeting, shows that many seasonal allergy sufferers don't seek the proper treatment or medication for symptoms, and those who take OTC medication aren't satisfied with the results they get.

The study authors interviewed 501 children ages 12-17 and 500 [adults](#), all of whom had seasonal allergic rhinitis, also known as hay fever. Of those surveyed, most reported moderate (45 percent) to severe (38 percent) symptoms in the spring and moderate (60 percent) to severe (21 percent) symptoms in the fall. Of the adults surveyed, 62 percent said they generally managed [seasonal allergies](#) with OTC oral medications.

"Even though the majority of adults and children we surveyed said they took OTC oral medications for allergies, only one third were very or extremely satisfied with the treatment," said [allergist](#) and study author Eli Meltzer, MD, ACAAI fellow. "In contrast, we found that about 50 percent of adults and children surveyed were very or extremely satisfied with prescription treatment, but the majority of those sufferers aren't necessarily obtaining prescriptions. Health plans tend to encourage patients to seek OTC medications first, which can delay allergist involvement."

The survey found children were significantly more likely than adults to be getting care from an allergist - 24 percent for [children](#) vs. 14 percent for adults. Children were also more likely to be receiving immunotherapy (14 percent) than adults

(10 percent.) Immunotherapy is commonly called allergy injection treatments, or allergy shots

"The combination of less frequent care by allergists and more frequent use of OTC medications has not translated into patient satisfaction," said allergist Bryan Martin, DO, ACAAI president-elect. "In general, patients who see an allergist and who are on prescription medication are more satisfied with their [allergy](#) treatment."

More information: Abstract Title: Majority of Patients With Seasonal Allergies Use Non-prescription Medications but are More Satisfied with Prescription Treatments

Provided by American College of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology

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