

Omalizumab decreases colds in inner-city children with asthma, study reports

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Treatment with omalizumab significantly decreases the number of colds in inner-city children with allergic asthma, researchers reported at a press conference today at the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology (AAAAI) 2016 Annual Meeting in Los Angeles. Omalizumab, sold under the brand name Xolair, is an injectable antibody that can be used to treat asthma cases not controlled by inhaled corticosteroids.

These findings are a secondary result from the Preventative Omalizumab or Step-up Therapy for Severe Fall Exacerbations (PROSE) study conducted through the Inner-City Asthma Consortium (ICAC). ICAC is an asthma research program supported by the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), part of the National Institutes of Health.

In this randomized trial, researchers gave 478 children living in cities throughout the United States three types of [asthma treatment](#) during the fall, a season when colds are common and [asthma symptoms](#) tend to worsen. The control group received guidelines-based asthma care, while two additional groups received this care with additional treatment of either fluticasone or omalizumab. Fluticasone is an inhaled corticosteroid sold under the brand name Flovent. The children's caregivers then monitored them for cold symptoms, such as runny nose, cough and sore throat. Based on these reports, researchers identified a total of 1,034 symptomatic colds and found that children who received omalizumab experienced a 27 percent decrease in cold incidence compared to children receiving only guidelines-based asthma care. Children who received fluticasone did not experience a significant change in cold incidence.

This study builds upon previous ICAC studies that showed that [long-](#) and [short-](#)term treatment with omalizumab decreases seasonal [asthma](#) attacks in inner-city [children](#) 6 to 17 years of age. Researchers do not yet know

how omalizumab decreases colds in this specific population. However, research shows that omalizumab targets and reduces levels of an antibody known as immunoglobulin E, or IgE. Data from previous studies indicate that lower IgE levels are associated with higher interferon responses, which are known to be important in protecting against viruses, such as those that cause cold symptoms.

Provided by NIH/National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases

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