

Alternative treatment approaches may be needed for some children with asthma

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A new study by Henry Ford Health System in collaboration with eight other health systems in large U.S. cities, has identified a group of children with asthma that may require a different treatment approach.

Researchers found that the group experienced few allergies but suffered from frequent asthma symptoms, despite receiving high doses of preventive medication. This contrasted with the four other groups where increasingly difficult asthma was linked to higher numbers of allergies.

Edward Zoratti, M.D., division head of Allergy and Immunology at Henry Ford and the study's lead author, suggests the finding could mean that "guidelines for managing asthma may not be best suited for this particular group of young asthma sufferers."

"More study is needed to determine appropriate interventions tailored to this group of children," Dr. Zoratti says. "It may represent a gap in our understanding of asthma among children experiencing a particular type of the disease."

The study is among three studies from the Inner City Asthma Consortium to be published in the *Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology*. The other two studies focus on identifying major factors associated with "difficult to control" asthma and how a variety of patient and environmental factors contribute to asthma severity in [inner city children](#) and adolescents.

Henry Ford is part of the Inner City Asthma Consortium, which comprises nine health care systems that are investigating how to prevent and reduce asthma severity among inner city children. Researchers analyzed data collected from 717 children ages six to 17 at birth and every two months thereafter for one year.

Using a computer "clustering" program,

researchers identified five separate groups of children with asthma based on the characteristics of this disease. They were most distinguished by asthma severity, presence of allergy, associated nasal symptoms and lung function test abnormalities.

More than 7 million children have [asthma](#) in the United States, and the number continues to increase every year, according to the American College of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology. Asthma, a chronic inflammation of the lungs, causes coughing, chest tightness, wheezing or shortness of breath.

Provided by Henry Ford Health System

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