

Press Release

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**5 leading indoor allergens of working population unveiled:
Bed sheet/ office ventilation system/ chemicals/ dust/ curtain**
Eye allergy disrupts over half patients' daily life & work, survey finds
**Ophthalmologist urges usage of therapy which can relieve
symptoms and tackle the root cause at one shot**

In Europe and the U.S., eye allergy is a common eye disease resulted from exposure to allergens such as pollen, fungal spore, dust, animal hair, dandruff, or dust mite. To doctors, treating eye allergy is rarely a challenge. Yet in Hong Kong, eye allergy is an underestimated disease with scanty data of prevailing eye allergens. Until lately, a survey has first unveiled the prevailing indoor allergens such as bed sheet, ventilation system, chemicals, dust and curtains that are unknown to patients before. The survey also reveals that over half of the respondents' daily life and work are affected by eye allergy and considered avoidance of indoor allergens a challenge. An ophthalmologist advised eye allergy patients to choose a treatment that can relieve symptoms and tackle the root cause at one shot, so as to improve their quality of life.

More than 70 per cent respondents had itchy eyes or eye ache

Spotting out the allergens is always the first step for eye allergy prevention. Eye care company Alcon (HK), Ltd. has commissioned The Hong Kong University Public Opinion Programme (HKUPOP) to conduct a phone survey in March 2008. The survey findings of 511 eye allergy patients were presented by Dr. Robert Ting-Yiu Chung, Director of HKUPOP at today's press conference.

According to the survey, over 70 per cent of respondents had symptoms of itchy eyes or eye pain whereas 32 per cent of them had symptoms for at least once a week. Average years for suffering from eye allergy are 4.7 (amongst which 20 per cent had the disease for at least six years). It is vital to note that close to 40 per cent of respondents and 48 per cent of their family members also had rhinitis. Ophthalmologist Dr. Y. W. Kenneth Kwan said, "Some patients with both eye allergy and rhinitis are using rhinitis therapy for treating eye allergy, which is improper, as the treatment is not targeted enough."

55 per cent respondents' daily life and work interrupted

Close to 60 per cent of respondents regarded having to rub their itchy eyes constantly was of utmost inconvenience, whereas 55 per cent of respondents' daily life and work were interrupted: mainly stopping them from reading/watching television/working on computer for a long time. 57 per cent of those who were working said their work performance affected.

5 foremost indoor allergens unveiled

According to the survey, top 5 allergens that respondents were constantly in contact with at home included: bed sheet, dust, cooking smoke, curtain and chemicals, whereas top 3 allergens at the office included: office ventilation system, chemicals and carpet. To summarize the indoor allergens of the working population, the top 5 allergens are: bed sheet, office ventilation system, chemicals, dust and curtain. 64 per cent of respondents admitted that avoidance of indoor allergens was never easy.

72pc respondents desire for therapy with international health organization's approval

The survey also reveals that 39 per cent of respondents used eye drops to manage their eye allergy symptoms. Close to 60 per cent were not aware that the common mono anti-allergy drugs were not targeted enough for treating eye allergy whereas 13 per cent wrongfully thought those drugs were targeted enough. Yet, as high as 83 per cent of respondents were aware the high risks in association with the long term use of corticosteroid therapies, whereas 79 per cent knew that the common decongestant eye drops could not relieve the symptoms and cure eye allergy at the same time. It is interesting to find out that 72 per cent of respondents preferred treatment with approval from international health organizations such as FDA in the U.S.

Targeted therapy which can relieve symptoms and tackle root cause are more effective

According to Dr. Kwan, it is essential to spot out & avoid the allergens causing eye allergy in order to control the disease progression. Yet as revealed by the survey, 64 per cent of respondents said they had difficulties in avoiding allergens at home or in office. Because of that, it is important to have a treatment that is targeted and efficacious so as to relieve the symptoms and tackle the root cause of eye allergy at the same time.

Effective treatment must target the mast cell of eyes

Traditional therapies for eye allergy are mainly using decongestant eye drops & anti-histamine which can only relieve the itchy symptom temporarily. However, as these therapies do not inhibit the release of the preformed mediators from mast cell, they cannot prevent eye allergy. As such, patients have to worry when the next incidence of eye allergy would happen.

Dr. Kwan said that the most effective therapy that helps to improve the patient's quality of life should be a treatment that is "targeted", that can inhibit the H1-receptor and stabilize the human conjunctival mast cell concurrently.

New therapy with dual actions - treatment and prevention of eye allergy

The breakthrough of the new generation of eye allergy therapy, Olopatadine, lies in its unique functions: It **inhibits the H1-receptor and stabilizes the human conjunctival mast cell** at the same time. With those functions, Olopatadine can relieve the eye allergy symptoms promptly and enduringly. It can prevent eye allergy and improve patients' quality of life.

Study showed Olopatadine lower the frequency of eye allergy by 43%

Efficacy of Olopatadine in relieving eye allergy symptoms is confirmed by a clinical study in the US. Olopatadine has been given to 200 patients who are treated with prescribed nasal or systemic medications (among which 90% are also eye allergy patients), afterwards, to evaluate the benefit gained in quality of life (QoL) & the frequency of reporting of allergic symptoms when Olopatadine was added to their regimens. The study revealed that before using Olopatadine, average days of reported eye allergic symptoms of the patients is 3.92 per week, after using Olopatadine for 2 weeks, frequency of reporting symptoms of eye allergy had been reduced by 43%, while overall eye allergy QoL improved by 56% on average, and allergic eye symptoms relieved by 59%. Overall improvement in QoL of eye allergy and rhinitis patients by 49% has been recorded.

Dr. Kwan said, “Allergens are everywhere and literally unavoidable. Patients should choose a treatment that is both targeted and efficacious, so as to improve their quality of life.”

About Olopatadine

Olopatadine is a FDA approved eye drop indicated for treating eye allergic signs & symptoms. Through the selective inhibition of H1-receptor and stabilization of the human conjunctival mast cell from releasing histamine, it can stop the eye allergy symptoms promptly. A clinical study of 2,587 patients has revealed that, Olopatadine can control the seasonal allergy symptoms effectively. It provides fast and lasting symptoms relief, better efficacy and a higher level of comfort than other eye allergy therapies. Olopatadine is proven safe for patients aged 3 or above.