

Public release date: 10-Jan-2006

Contact: Karen Janka

kjanka@aaaai.org

414-272-6071

[American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology](#)

Anthroposophic lifestyle reduces risk of allergic disease in children

Certain features of the anthroposophic lifestyle, such as restrictive use of antibiotics and fever antipyretics, reduce the risk of allergic disease in children, according to a new study.

Allergic Disease and Sensitization in Steiner School Children is featured in the January 2006 issue of the Journal of Allergy & Clinical Immunology (JACI) and is currently available on the JACI's Web site at www.jacionline.org. The JACI is the peer-reviewed, scientific journal of the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology (AAAAI).

The study, which focused on more than 6,600 from five European countries ages 5 to 13, showed that children in the Steiner schools, which are similar to Waldorf schools, who are often raised in an anthroposophic lifestyle, have a lower risk of allergy. Austrian scientist and philosopher Rudolf Steiner developed the anthroposophic lifestyle in which health is a combination of mind, body and spiritual balance; his followers integrate both modern medicine with alternative, nature-based treatments. The study compared the Steiner school children with their non-Steiner counterparts who lived in the same region.

The purpose of the Prevention of Allergy--Risk Factors for Sensitization Related to Farming and Anthroposophic Lifestyle (PARSIFAL) study was to identify possible protective factors for allergy associated with the anthroposophic lifestyle. A previous Swedish study showed a reduced risk of atopy, but the specific reason behind that was not discovered.

Information about environmental exposure, history of infections, diet, animal contact, anthroposophic lifestyle and symptoms and diagnoses of allergic diseases was collected through a parental questionnaire. A blood sample was also collected from the children who resided in Austria, Germany, Sweden, Switzerland and The Netherlands.

Researchers observed a lower prevalence of current symptoms and doctor's diagnosis of rhinoconjunctivitis and atopic eczema and asthma and atopic sensitization in the Steiner school children compared to non-Steiner children. Early use of antibiotics and fever reducers, along with the measles, mumps and rubella vaccination were also associated with increased risks of several allergic symptoms and doctor's diagnoses.

###

To find an allergist/immunologist in your area, call the AAAAI Physician Referral and Information Line at 800-822-2762 or visit the AAAAI Web site at <http://www.aaaai.org/>.

The AAAAI is the largest professional medical specialty organization in the United States representing allergists, asthma specialists, clinical immunologists, allied health professionals and others with a special interest in the research and treatment of allergic disease. Allergy/immunology specialists are pediatric or internal medicine physicians who have elected an additional two years of training to become specialized in the treatment of asthma, allergy and immunologic disease. Established in 1943, the AAAAI has more than 6,000 members in the United States, Canada and 60 other countries. The AAAAI serves as an advocate to the public by providing educational information through its Web site at <http://www.aaaai.org/>.
