**Specific allergy immunotherapy for the treatment of atopic eczema**

**Background**

At least one in seven children and one in 50 adults suffer from atopic eczema, a skin condition characterised by an itchy red rash. People with atopic eczema are allergic to things in the environment, such as house dust mites, and exposure to what they are allergic to may make their eczema worse. Specific allergen immunotherapy is a treatment that involves a course of injections or drops under the tongue containing the substance to which a person is allergic. The treatment can reduce the severity of a person's allergy and may therefore be able to reduce symptoms of atopic eczema. We evaluated whether specific allergen immunotherapy was better or worse than a standard treatment or placebo at improving disease severity and symptoms as assessed by participants, parents, or investigators.

**Review question**

Is specific allergen immunotherapy an effective treatment for people with atopic eczema?

**Study characteristics**

The evidence is current to July 2015. We found 12 studies, with 733 participants, which included both children and adults. Studies were conducted in specialist allergy centres in nine countries. The duration of trials ranged from four months to three years. Immunotherapy was administered to the participants in four different ways. Allergen manufacturers funded seven of the 12 studies.

**Key results**

We found no evidence from the studies in our review that SIT may be an effective treatment for atopic eczema, as rated by participants or parents for disease severity and symptoms. We found limited evidence that SIT may improve investigator-rated disease severity. Immunotherapy did not cause any more harm than a standard treatment or placebo.

**Quality of the evidence**

Overall, the quality of the evidence was low. We downgraded quality mainly due to the differing results between studies, lack of blinding in some studies, and that relatively few studies reported outcomes relevant to patients. Future studies should use high quality allergen formulations with a proven track record in other allergic conditions and should include participant-reported outcome measures.

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