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Title: Changes in the prevalence of asthma, rhinitis and eczema in different age groups in Chinese schoolchildren

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Body: Introduction: Little is known about the prevalence of allergic diseases in children of different ages. This study aimed to investigate the prevalence of allergic diseases in children over a wide age range in Chinese schoolchildren in Shijiazhuang city in Hebei Province in China. Body: In a cross-sectional study, we studied 10824 Chinese schoolchildren, aged 6-18 years, using ISAAC questionnaire. We classified children into three age groups; 6-8 years, 9-12 years, and 13-18 years. Asthma symptoms had significantly decreased with age from 6-8 year age group to 13-18 year age group (ever wheeze from 7.1% to 3.9%, $P<0.001$, current wheeze from 2.2% to 1.4 %, cough from 11.6% to 10.6%, and ever asthma from 1.3% to 0.5%, $P<0.001$, respectively). Rhinitis symptoms had significantly increased with age from 6-8 year age group to 13-18 year age group (ever rhinitis from 11.2% to 16.4%, $P<0.001$, current rhinitis from 8.2% to 11.6%, rhinoconjunctivitis from 1.9% to 3.5%, $P<0.05$, and hay fever from 3.3% to 4.8%, $P<0.05$, respectively). Rash and eczema symptoms had significantly decreased with age from 6-8 year age group to 13-18 year age group (rash ever from 2.7% to 2.0%, current rash from 1.8% to 1.0%, $P<0.001$ and eczema from 15.4% to 7.2%, $P<0.001$, respectively). The study shows that symptoms of asthma and eczema had significantly decreased with age in these children while rhinitis symptoms had significantly increased indicating that rhinitis symptoms are major public health problem in Chinese children. The study will help to implement intervention strategies to control symptoms of rhinitis in this population.