

Dissemination of EAACI food allergy guidelines using a flexible, practical, Whole School allergy awareness toolkit

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Abstract

Background Essential training for emergency adrenaline auto-injector administration alone provides inadequate safeguard in school environments. Recent UK deaths have reinforced the urgency for embedding whole school (WS) allergy awareness to minimise risk. We document development of a practical, flexible WS Food Allergy Awareness Toolkit for UK secondary schools. **Methods** We used a multidisciplinary participatory action research methodology, involving successive modification and retesting of a pragmatic toolkit in 3 case study schools. A School Allergy Action Group drives WS risk assessment, helping schools gradually implement best practice policy in line with their particular needs. Additional schools self-piloted the resulting toolkit with only remote monitoring. School surveys, based on EAACI guidelines were developed to identify priorities and assess change. **Results** Effectiveness of the resulting process toolkit, now available online, was independently demonstrated via pre/post intervention questionnaires from 24/10 pupils with food allergy (FA) and 97/6 pupils without FA, respectively. Pearson correlational analysis showed strong negative relationships between Food Allergy Quality of Life Questionnaire (FAQLQ) at T0 and School Support (SS) at T0 ($r=-0.8$, $p<0.01$), and between SS and Self-Efficacy (SE) ($r=0.73$, $p<0.05$). Mean FAQLQ scores improved between T0 (3.3) and T1 (2.5). SE improved for those with FA (mean difference =1.0). In those without FA, SE (mean difference =0.9) and Attitudes and Knowledge (mean difference =0.7) also improved. **Conclusions** Full stakeholder involvement in toolkit development encourages usage and therefore improves WS community awareness; reduces risk of reactions; fosters a more accepting societal attitude; and empowers pupils with/without allergies to self-manage effectively.

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