

Identifying the main concerns about allergic rhinitis (hay fever) to set research priorities that matter to people with hay fever

Key messages

- This project focused on capturing views of people with allergic rhinitis, often called hay fever.
- Survey responses related to topics about allergic rhinitis risk factors and causes; triggers and symptom impacts; access to healthcare; prevention and management; and system challenges.
- People living with, or caring for someone with allergic rhinitis, considered topics about doctor training, factors causing allergic rhinitis, best types of treatments, influence of diet and gut health, cost or other barriers for individuals to seeing a doctor, effects of pollen, house dust mites and pollutants, and getting allergy blood tests, were priorities for future research on allergic rhinitis.

Project summary

Why we did this:

Allergic rhinitis (hay fever triggered by pollen and dust mite allergies) affects around 300-400 million globally, with over 6.4 million cases in Australia (one in four Australians). There has been a clear global rise in the prevalence of allergic rhinitis over recent decades, often referred to as an "allergy epidemic". Specifically, the number of people affected in Australia has gone up by 50% since 2001. Allergic rhinitis is expected to become even more common in the future because of climate change and longer pollen seasons. Although it is a common condition, allergic rhinitis can have significant impacts on the health and quality of life of those affected, as well as on their families.

This project aimed to identify priorities for future research from the viewpoint of people living with allergic rhinitis to improve care, health and wellbeing. The views of people living with allergic rhinitis were a key focus to help identify priorities for research that has not been done before.

What we did:

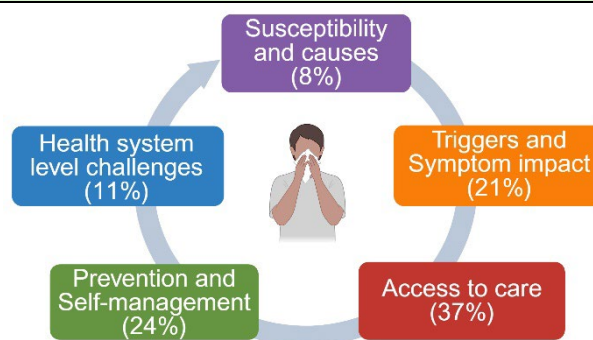
An online survey of teenagers and adults living with, or caring for someone with, allergic rhinitis asked about the main concerns and topics for future research. We analysed survey responses to find the common concerns and key questions asked about allergic rhinitis. Each question about allergic rhinitis was checked against lists of current or past related research to avoid overlap.

Online focus groups considered and rated groups of questions, and then ranked all 25 questions in order of priority. This was followed by a workshop with stakeholders (advocacy groups or clinicians), and individuals with allergic rhinitis, which reviewed and refined the highly ranked questions. The ranking done by stakeholders and consumers during the

final workshop prioritised four more key questions about allergic rhinitis that need further research.

What we found:

From 210 survey responses, 693 phrases mentioning 120 topics were mapped to five stages of the journey of a person living with allergic rhinitis;



The top 10 consumer priorities for allergic rhinitis research:

Two focus groups with a total of 21 people living with allergic rhinitis prioritised these 10 research questions.



Key considerations:

Actively involving consumers in research is important since many people living with allergic rhinitis feel they are often not well supported by the healthcare system. People living with allergic rhinitis are often left to bear the disease cost themselves, and this places them at risk of other allergic conditions, such as asthma.

Four additional research questions from amongst the final 19 questions were highly ranked during the final stakeholders and consumer workshop. These extra questions were about how many people with allergic rhinitis use a management plan, which lifestyle factors can influence allergic rhinitis severity, whether pollen information helps people

control allergic rhinitis symptoms, and role of having prior allergies for migrants to Australia. All people involved favoured questions about things that could be done to improve health outcomes.

What this means:

This project highlighted the value of including the voices of people living with allergic rhinitis in planning future research. Consumers involved in this priority setting project identified a wide range of priorities that will help set the direction of future research towards topics that matter to them, to improve the lives of people living with allergic rhinitis.

Please visit [A&AA to find information and support](#) for people living with allergic rhinitis.

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