

Determination of the Prevalence
and Awareness of Allergic
Rhinitis in the Rural Population
of Sycamore, IL

Purpose

- Center for Disease Control estimates prevalence of asthma in Illinois is 5.7%
- It's been shown that all atopic diseases are closely linked, but little research has been done about allergic rhinitis in particular, especially in rural populations
- With advances in treatments, it is helpful to determine prevalence of allergies and also the public's perception of the disease

Methods

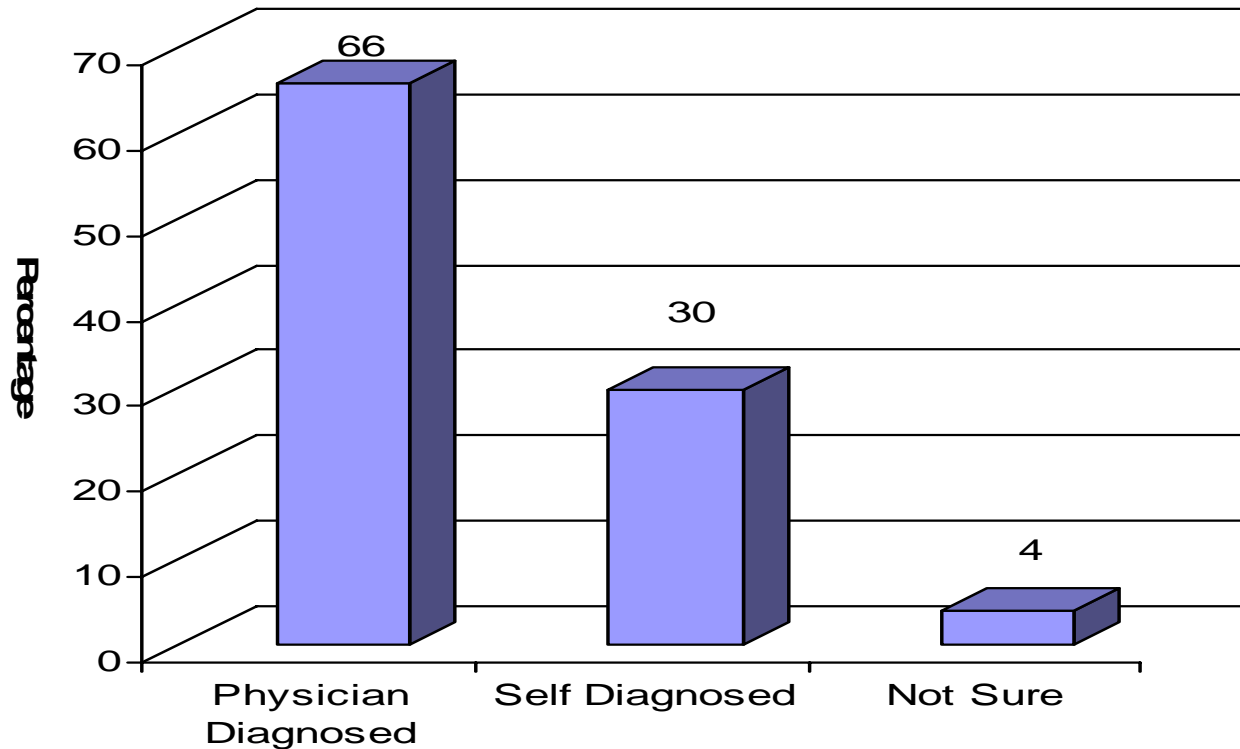
- Questionnaires were distributed to patients in a family practice clinic in Sycamore (n=60) asking about allergies and individuals feelings about the disease
- Questionnaires were also distributed to individuals at a Farm Economics meeting sponsored by the U of Illinois Extension (n=56)
- Answers were anonymous and evaluated at the aggregate level. Attention was also paid to a subset population of local farmers

Results

- Average perception of overall health on scale from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent)- 3.6
- Percentage of individuals who were or are smokers- 28%
- Prevalence of individuals with allergies:
 - Those taking the survey- 36%
 - At least one family member- 27%

Results

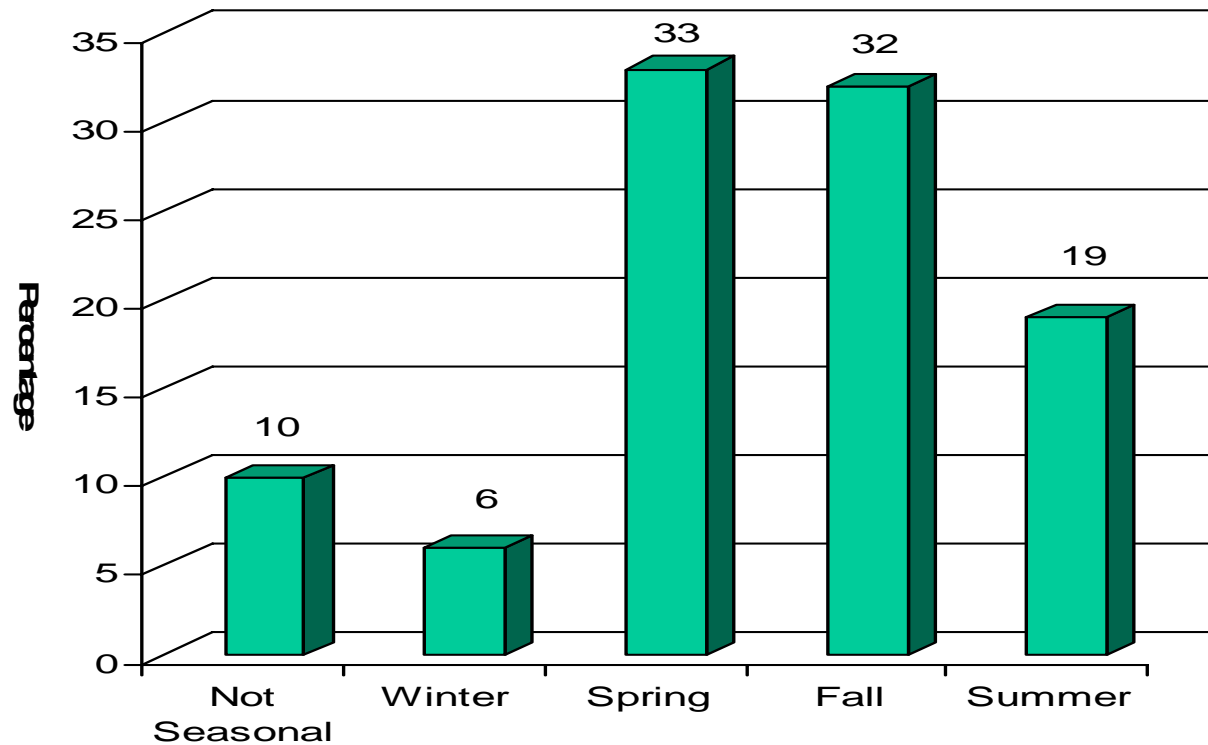
Diagnosis of Allergies



- Percentage of sufferers who take daily medication-
59%

Results

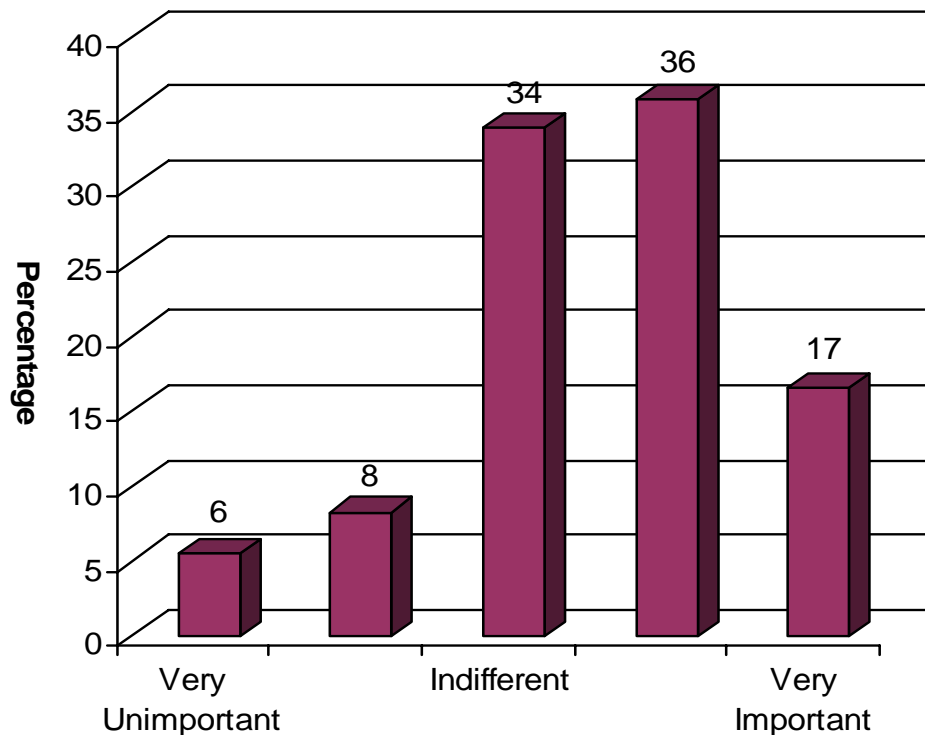
Seasonal Severity



- Are symptoms related to a rise in the pollen count?
Yes- 50% No- 36% Not Sure 14%

Results

Perception of Importance of Allergies



- How are physicians doing on diagnosis of seasonal allergies?
 - Over-diagnosed- 11%
 - Under-diagnosed- 23%
 - Not Sure- 66%

Results

Population Subset- Farmers (n=32)

- Average perception of overall health- 3.8
- Percentage of people who smokes or did smoke at one time- 75%
- Percentage of individuals with allergies- 44%
- Percentage who take daily medication- 72%
- Average view of importance of allergies as a disease on scale from 1 (very unimportant) to 5 (very important)- 3.8

Conclusion

- Though this is a very small population, it appears that subjectively (not based on any diagnostic criteria only on the patient's word) there is a high percentage of allergy sufferers in rural communities
- The perception of individuals is that seasonal allergies is a disease worthy of targeted attention by physicians, especially with such effective treatments available

Conclusion

- In the case of farmers, it appears that there may even be higher prevalence of seasonal allergies, perhaps due to the constant exposure of noxious elements
- This may be worthy of further evaluation with objective diagnostic criteria or possible chart reviews to obtain further data
- In general, it appears that physicians are doing an adequate job of diagnosis and treatment of allergies