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Eosinophilic Esophagitis: Reflux, protein allergy or both?

Eosinophilic Esophagitis (EoE) is a disease characterized by a localized inflammatory condition of the esophagus with symptoms of esophageal dysfunction and eosinophil infiltration of the esophageal mucosa. The incidence and prevalence of EoE has increased during the last decade. The symptoms of EoE are age related. In infants and young children common symptoms are failure to thrive, feeding difficulties, and classic symptoms of gastroesophageal reflux. School age children can present with vomiting, abdominal pain, and regurgitation and adolescents with dysphagia and esophageal food impaction. Patients with EoE have higher atopic comorbidities such as asthma, food allergies, allergic rhinitis, and atopic dermatitis. The diagnosis of EoE is completed with upper endoscopy and the finding of more than 15 eosinophils per high-powered microscopic field within esophageal mucosal biopsies. EoE could be treated with medications or diet modification. Oral steroid (e.g. budesonide and fluticasone) therapy is effective in up to 80% of patients with EoE. These medications are swallowed with the goal of topical application to the esophageal mucosa. An elemental diet using a formula lacking antigenic capacity is effective in up to 90% of patients. A specific six-food (milk, egg, wheat, soy, peanut/tree nuts, and fish) elimination diet has a success of 72%, but is difficult for patients. Recently, specific four-food elimination diets have been shown to be effective with better patient acceptance. Allergy-test driven diets are effective only in 45% of patients. A subclass of EoE responds to proton pump inhibitor therapy.

Biography

Virginia Baez Socorro has studied her Medicine at the Luis Razetti School of Medicine in the Universidad Central de Venezuela. She has worked as a General Physician in Venezuela before completing her Pediatric Residency at Albert Einstein Medical Center in Philadelphia, PA, USA. She then completed a Fellowship in Pediatric Gastroenterology at UH Rainbow Babies and Children's Hospital, Case Western Reserve School of Medicine in Cleveland, OH, USA. She is an Assistant Professor of Pediatrics and the Co-Director of the Eosinophilic Esophagitis program at UH Rainbow Babies and Children's Hospital. In addition to Eosinophilic Esophagitis, her interests include inflammatory bowel disease and celiac disease.

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