

Food allergy and intolerance research programme review 2012

Area of research interest: [Food hypersensitivity](#)

Study duration: 2012-11-19

Project status: Completed

Summary

Our organisation has a large food allergy and intolerance research programme, which was originally set up in 1994 by, what was then, the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, to investigate the causes and mechanisms of severe food allergy, with emphasis on peanut allergy, in order to reduce the incidence and severity.

Since that time, the programme has evolved, informed by programme reviews in 2003 and 2008, to incorporate funding of research projects in other areas of relevance, our policy needs on food allergy and intolerance. This includes the prevalence of food allergy in the UK, identifying risk factors associated with the development of food allergy, and research to review evidence on thresholds for sensitivity to gluten in the context of coeliac disease.

The purpose of the review in November 2012 was to evaluate the projects that have together made up the programme since 2008, in terms of their scientific quality, relevance to our policy needs, and value for money, and to determine whether these projects have addressed the aims and objectives of the programme.

An additional aim of the review was to consider the future direction of the programme and priority areas for our research in food allergy and intolerance for the next five years, in order to support policy needs in the future.

The review

The review consisted of presentations and discussions on the relevant projects in the context of the research questions and our policy needs that they were commissioned to address. The event was structured around seven different research themes with a total of 19 research projects being presented.

An independent expert panel of reviewers, with expertise in the subject areas of relevance to the programme, convened to assist the us in evaluating the research programme.

Outcomes

It was considered by the review panel that the research programme had been successful in addressing the majority of its aims. Collectively the projects funded within the programme over the past five years have contributed significantly to understanding of sensitisation and allergy to foods in a number of important areas. It was considered by the panel that not only had the research generally been conducted very well, but it had also delivered a large number of important outputs. The panel also concluded that those outputs had been of direct relevance to our policy, and had translated into sound consumer advice. Of particular importance in that context were advances in understanding of the prevalence of food allergy, the impact of skin

exposure on allergic sensitisation to food proteins, and consumer perceptions of current food allergen labelling and their value and limitations.

The full report of the review can be viewed or downloaded in Adobe Acrobat (PDF) format via the relevant link below.

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