Reviewer’s report

Title: An epidemiological investigation of food allergy among children aged 3 to 6 in an urban area of Wenzhou, China

Version: 0 Date: 22 Jan 2020

Reviewer: Sandy Sun

Reviewer's report:

While I commend the authors for tackling this project and the amount of work that went into completing this cross-sectional study, I have extensive questions about the methodology and some suggestions for the discussion/conclusion of the paper.

1. Introduction
   - In the first sentence, the definition of food allergy is incorrect. Please refer to the 2006 practice parameters for food allergy: https://www.aaaai.org/Aaaai/media/MediaLibrary/PDF%20Documents/Practice%20and%20Parameters/food-allergy-2006.pdf. Food allergy is defined as an IgE mediated reaction to food. Adverse reactions to food are NOT food allergy. Also given the reports of reactions to gelatin, FA doesn't have to be always due to reaction to a food protein.
   - The introduction should also include information on how food allergy is diagnosed.

2. Methods
   - Include reference for EuroPrevall FA questionnaire
   - Include cutoff ranges for SPTs and sIgE measurements that you were using to diagnose concern for IgE mediated food sensitivity
   - Please define what you mean by diagnostic criteria for FA (Is this simply the cutoff values for SPT and sIgE?). What pieces of the history did you use to determine that patient had FA?
   - Statistical methods: I only found 1 mention of a P value in your paper. This is incorrect use of Chi-Squared test. Chi-squared test looks at whether there is a significant relationship between two nominal (categorical) variables and typically involves a contingency table. If you want to compare proportions, you should be using the Z test.

3. Results
   - Where were 352 children excluded?
   - Your methods should detail what you do for the 36 patients who dropped out. Other studies often look at best and worst case scenarios. You could provide a range for prevalence of FA if all 36 had FA or all 36 did not.
   - What is mixed food group? (mentioned under SPT and sIgE measurement). Please define what you mean by positive. What did you do with patients who were negative? Did you tell the patients to eat the food and say they did not have FA?
   - Why did you assume that all 10 children who refused OFC did NOT have FA?

4. Discussion
   - The first part of the discussion is a long list of prevalence rates from the literature and is difficult to read. I have difficulty figuring out what the authors are trying to conclude. The entire discussion needs to be revised so that each paragraph drives home the point of the paper:
     - Prevalence of food allergy among preschoolers in Asia could be 1 point - provide examples of this
- Overestimate of FA - this is well-known and highlights the importance of OFC and allergist referrals. You can provide papers evaluating why this is the case.
- Discussion of why the main prevalence is egg. You mentioned dietary differences. Expand on this topic.
- I would only believe a child truly has a FA if he/she reacts to food on OFC. I disagree that you can diagnose with SPT or sIgE alone. Refer to the practice parameters for further details.
- For limitations - you should definitely talk about selection bias, which is unavoidable in population based studies. I don't think lack of basophil activation testing or component resolved diagnosis are that important.

Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

No

Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Unable to assess

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

I am able to assess the statistics

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Needs some language corrections before being published

Declaration of competing interests
Please complete a declaration of competing interests, considering the following questions:

1. Have you in the past five years received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?
2. Do you hold any stocks or shares in an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?
3. Do you hold or are you currently applying for any patents relating to the content of the
4. Have you received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organization that holds or has applied for patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

5. Do you have any other financial competing interests?

6. Do you have any non-financial competing interests in relation to this paper?

If you can answer no to all of the above, write 'I declare that I have no competing interests' below. If your reply is yes to any, please give details below.

I declare that I have no competing interests.

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal. I understand that my name will be included on my report to the authors and, if the manuscript is accepted for publication, my named report including any attachments I upload will be posted on the website along with the authors' responses. I agree for my report to be made available under an Open Access Creative Commons CC-BY license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/). I understand that any comments which I do not wish to be included in my named report can be included as confidential comments to the editors, which will not be published.

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal