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## ORIGINAL ARTICLES

## Management of stinging insect hypersensitivity: a 5-year retrospective medical record review

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## Background

The Joint Task Force on Practice Parameters for Allergy and Immunology recommends that patients with a history of a systemic reaction to an insect sting be educated on ways to avoid insect stings, carry injectable epinephrine for emergency self-treatment, undergo specific IgE testing for stinging insect sensitivity, and be considered for immunotherapy.

## Objectives

To review frontline providers' documented care and recommendations for imported fire ant and flying insect hypersensitivity reactions.

## Methods

A retrospective medical record review was performed of emergency department and primary care clinic visits between November 1, 1999, and November 30, 2004. Using *International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision*, codes, medical records were selected for review to identify patients with potential insect hypersensitivity.

## Results

A total of 769 medical records from patients who experienced an insect sting were reviewed. Of 120 patients with a systemic reaction, 66 (55.0%) received a prescription for injectable epinephrine, and 14 (11.7%) were given information regarding avoidance of the offending insect. Forty-seven patients with systemic reactions (39.2%) were referred to an allergist. Of 28 patients who kept their appointments and underwent skin testing, 3 had negative results and 25 (89%) had positive results and were advised to start immunotherapy.

## Conclusions

Adherence to the stinging insect hypersensitivity practice parameter recommendations is poor. Many patients who have experienced a systemic reaction after an insect sting and have sought medical care are not afforded an opportunity for potentially lifesaving therapy.

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