



Effective Health Care

Extended Allergy Skin Testing Nomination Summary Document

Results of Topic Selection Process & Next Steps

- Extended allergy skin testing is not feasible for a full systematic review due to the limited data available for a review at this time.

Topic Description

Nominator: Public payer

Nomination Summary: The nomination expresses interest in “extended allergy skin testing.” Although we did not find the phrase “extended allergy skin testing” verbatim in the literature, it was inferred that the nominator is referring to utilization of a large number of allergens and tests per patient. The nominator may also be concerned with multiple and repeat testing and the use of multiple diagnostic strategies such as in vitro and in vivo tests.

Key Questions from Nominator: None

Considerations

- Topic meets Effective Healthcare Program (EHC) Program appropriateness and importance criteria. (For more information, see <http://effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov/index.cfm/submit-a-suggestion-for-research/how-are-research-topics-chosen/>.)
- The nominator’s concern about which patients are most appropriate for testing and what tests should be used remains an important and clinically relevant question. However, this question may not be answerable by a comparative effectiveness review.
 - The nominator is interested in issues such as number of allergens, number of tests per patient, and the use of test panels. Allergy professional society guidelines conclude that specifying a standard number of tests may not be appropriate as it is heavily dependent upon the individual’s unique attributes including age, history, environment and living conditions (e.g., geographic location), occupation, and activities.
 - A literature scan was conducted on ‘extended’ allergy skin testing, including prevalence, utilization, trends, and/or practice patterns in the use of allergy testing. The scan found a lack of population-based studies that provide data on allergy testing across subgroups. Given that allergy diagnostics

and treatment are very patient specific, it is unlikely that existing literature could answer the nominator's questions. Therefore, the topic of extended allergy skin testing is not feasible for a full systematic review due to the limited data available for a review.

- However, a related topic, sublingual and subcutaneous immunotherapy, is going forward for a comparative effectiveness review or effectiveness review by the EHC Program. The scope of this topic, including populations, interventions, comparators, and outcomes, will be further developed in the refinement phase.
 - When key questions for sublingual and subcutaneous immunotherapy have been drafted, they will be posted on the AHRQ Web site and open for public comment. To sign up for notification when this and other Effective Health Care (EHC) Program topics are posted for public comment, please go to <http://effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov/index.cfm/join-the-email-list1/>.