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MILESTONES MARKING THE KNOWLEDGE OF ADVERSE REACTIONS TO FOOD IN THE DECADE OF THE 1980s

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Purpose of the Study. This study outlines the significant advances made to our understanding of adverse reactions to foods and food additives in the last decade.

The *milestones* are listed in order of overall importance and are discussed in depth in the review.

1. Establishing double-blind, placebo-controlled food challenge (DBPCFC) as the "gold-standard" for defining specific patient population to be used in scientific studies. (VanMetre, May, Bock)

2. Recognition of the key role food allergy plays in the pathogenesis of atopic dermatitis. (Sampson, May)

3. Identifying the group of foods most likely to be associated with true allergic reactions.

Analysis of DBPCFC in children has shown that 93% of allergic reactions occurred to eight foods (in order of frequency): egg, peanut, milk, soy, tree nuts, crustacean-type shellfish, fish, and wheat. Corn and chocolate allergy was rarely found. (Bock, Sampson, Atkins)

4. Food allergy has a natural history.

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In a prospective study of 501 children, Bock found that, of 15 cases of allergy proven by DBPCFC in the first year of life, none of the 15 cases was reactive beyond 24 months of age. In contrast, long-term follow-up of patients who have experienced peanut anaphylaxis revealed that clinical sensitivity lasts for at least 14 years. (Bock, Atkins)

5. Food allergy cross-sensitivity (clinical reactivity) does not extend equally to all members of a biologic food family.

Although immunologic cross-reactivity between peanut, soy, and other peas/beans could be regularly found in allergic patients, clinically important cross-reactions demonstrated by DBPCFC were rare. (Bernhisel -Broadbent, Sampson)



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