

## **A Pilot Investigation into the use of ALLIMAX for the treatment of HAY FEVER (SEASONAL ALLERGIC RHINITIS)**

**S. Steadman\* and P. Josling Herbal Health Centre Battle UK**

**\*College of Phytotherapy, Hailsham UK**

### **ABSTRACT**

Our survey was designed to determine whether a unique garlic supplement that contains only stabilized allicin could prevent the classic Hay fever attack from occurring amongst volunteers who have suffered for some years. The supplement Allimax (also found as Weissin and Garcin in Europe) was chosen for study as it is the only product that actually contains allicin as a starting material. Using a simple 5 point scoring system to grade the severity of any hay fever attacks we found that the overall AVERAGE SCORE was 3.95 indicating that ALLIMAX was able to control hay fever very well. Over 80% of volunteers reported a significant reduction in the number of challenges throughout the study period, Only 2 volunteers needed to resort to drug treatment for an attack

### **INTRODUCTION**

There are approximately 12 million sufferers of hay fever in the UK. Symptoms vary from mild discomfort to those that are so severe that the sufferer cannot even go outdoors.

### **CAUSES AND SYMPTOMS.**

An allergic reaction is caused when the immune system mistakenly identifies a normally harmless substance as a threat. The reason why some people are allergic to substances such as pollen is unknown but it is thought that the cause is genetic.

The body's allergic response is triggered by the immune system reacting with mast cells that are found in or near a variety of organs and tissues including the nose, lungs, skin, eyes and blood vessels. These mast cells contain high concentrations of histamine which is released when stimulated by the body's immune defences.

Histamine when released in the body induces many responses. These responses are known as hay fever when the cause is pollen released by plants. Symptoms of hay fever are mainly:

- a congested and itchy nose
- a constantly running nose.
- the eyes become very itchy and watery
- the eyelids become swollen and itchy
- breathing can become difficult
- there may be loss of taste and hearing
- dry cough
- headache

The symptoms vary in severity from person to person and response to high or low pollen counts which vary at various time of the day and according to weather conditions.

### **TREATMENT**

Antihistamines are used to prevent the release of histamine from mast cells or to diminish the effect after the histamine has been released. oral antihistamines are probably the most convenient treatment for most people. There are two main types.

The older types which cause drowsiness because they cross the blood brain barrier, and examples of this type include Piriton, Phenergan, and Haymine.

The newer types or non-sedating antihistamines are better tolerated and include Clarityn, Benadryl and Zirtek.

Antihistamines differ in their duration of action and in side effects. Generally the newer non-sedating products are longer acting and have fewer side effects than the older drugs and all products noted above

are available for sale without prescription from pharmacies.

There are also antihistamines available only on prescription for example Telfast, Neoclarityn which are non-sedating and Vallergran and Atarax which are sedating antihistamines.

### **TOPICAL TREATMENTS.**

Eye drops and nasal sprays are also available. These are preferred by some patients because they perceive that these products are more efficacious because of the direct application. However for effective treatment the products have to be used frequently. Examples of eye drops (the most widely used drug is sodium cromoglycate) include Opticrom and Optrex which contain sodium cromoglycate and work by preventing release of histamine. Users must be reminded not to use this type of product when wearing contact lenses. Patients suffering from conditions such as glaucoma should also avoid this type of product.

Nasal sprays, such as beclomethasone, are also available for sale through pharmacies and work by reducing inflammation and mucous production. It should not be used in cases of nasal infection and the product is not licensed for sale over the counter for patients under 18 years old.

The allergy market is worth about 17.3 million sterling to independent Pharmacy and is growing by about 12.6 % year on year in the UK.

So against this backdrop of increased use of pharmaceutical chemical antihistamines we decided to look at natural alternatives for the symptomatic relief of Hay fever.

Historically many types of garlic preparation, varying from fresh crushed raw garlic to heavily processed powder products have been used to treat diseases of respiratory origin including asthma, bronchitis, allergies and inflammation. Interestingly it has been shown that garlic extracts are capable of inhibiting histamine release from basophils and mast cells as well as inhibiting lipoxygenase in neutrophils<sup>1</sup> Dorsch 1986  
For many years garlic has been used extensively in Third World Countries as a simple modestly effective treatment for a wide range of respiratory disease<sup>2</sup> Krishnamurthy & Sreenivasamurthy 1956

Recently, an allicin-containing supplement (Allimax™ Liquid and Capsules \* ) has demonstrated significant antibacterial, antifungal and antiviral properties<sup>3</sup> Mirelman and Ankril  
Microbes and Infection 1999 including the prevention of the Common Cold<sup>4</sup>  
Advances In Therapy July/August 2001

The many garlic supplements marketed in the United Kingdom, United States, and Europe vary widely by type and definition of active constituents. Increasing evidence has shown that certain forms of supplement may have significant beneficial properties, provided that the universally

recognized active constituent (allicin) is made available to the body.

Our survey was designed to determine whether a unique garlic supplement that contains only stabilized allicin could prevent the classic Hay fever attack from occurring amongst volunteers who have suffered for some years. The supplement Allimax (also found as Weissin and Garcin in Europe) was chosen for study as it is the only product that claims to contain allicin as a starting material.

## METHODS

Following recruitment through a local Radio Station (BBC Southern Counties Radio) 29 volunteers were enrolled in the late Spring of 2001. A diary was designed in which each volunteer recorded general well-being for the study period of 35 days. A five-point scale was used:

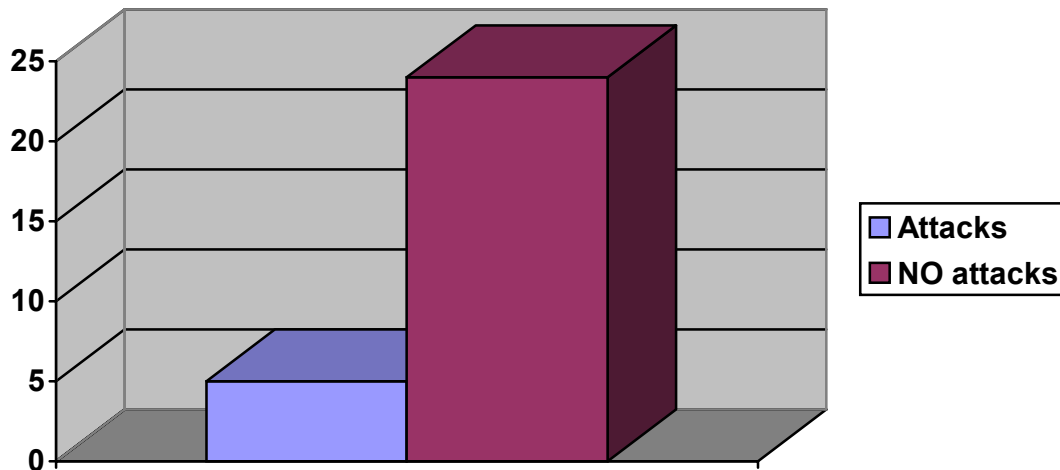
- 5 = Well, no problems**
- 4 = Quite well with occasional sneeze**
- 3 = Can feel an attack coming on some minor symptoms**
- 2 = Feeling low and definitely suffering**
- 1 = Full hay fever attack with symptoms listed**

Volunteers were instructed to record the number and variety of symptoms, the day recovery began, and the day they felt completely better.

They were asked to take 2 capsules of Allimax each day with food in accordance with the manufacturers recommendations.

Volunteers were also told that if a full hay fever attack occurred then they could revert to drug treatment if necessary. This was recorded in the diary.

The Pollen Count was monitored and recorded every day throughout the study period using both local and national information sources.



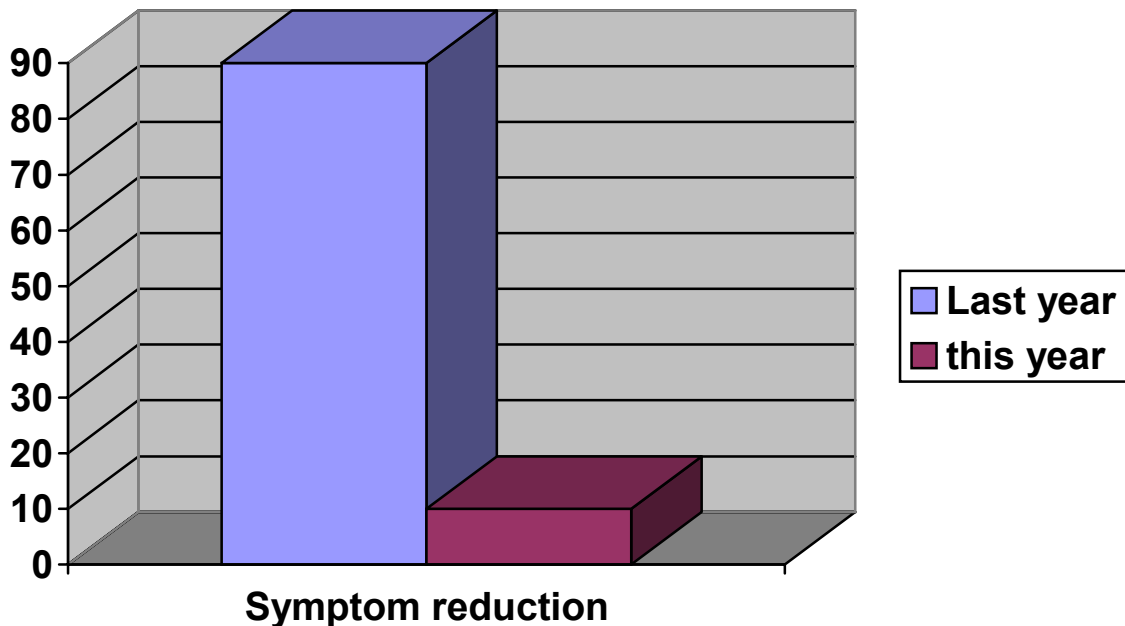
## RESULTS

- The overall AVERAGE SCORE was 3.95 indicating that ALLIMAX was able to control hay fever very well
- Over 80% of volunteers reported a significant reduction in the number of challenges throughout the study period
- Only 2 volunteers needed to resort to drug treatment for an attack
- Most volunteers were impressed with the treatment and claimed that their hay fever was "much better" controlled with ALLIMAX
- Volunteers reported far fewer symptoms than they expected with big reductions in "sore eyes" "runny nose" "itching at the back of the throat" "sneezing" and "tiredness"
- Everyone found ALLIMAX easy to take and did not report any side effects. There were no reports of smell whilst taking this product

## DISCUSSION

Generally the volunteers reported that Allimax was easy to take and actually rather effective. Although the treatment did not work for everyone and some comments indicated that the "season" was finishing most volunteers were extremely positive and included observations that previous drug treatment had never really removed all symptoms whereas Allimax did. People were more able to go about their normal daily routine without interruption from troublesome symptoms.

One gentleman reported being able to play golf 3 times a week without any problems - apart



from the golf! Another young lady was able to sit out on fresh mown lawn for the first time since her hay fever symptoms developed in her teens. Other unsolicited comments included volunteers being able to mix and socialise without worrying about running nose and streaming eyes.

So our pilot investigation shows clearly that allixin based supplements do show an ability to prevent allergic reaction to pollen and may indeed offer a safe and natural alternative to pharmaceutical preparations, Clearly the treatment should be started as early as possible and continued throughout the season. Further work should be done to ascertain the exact degree of efficacy and how Allimax compares with a chemical alternative. But for many people this represents a real chance to reduce the number of compromises that hay fever sufferers have to make each year.