Data analysis of UK PIFA birth cohort to understand the incidence and risk factors for food allergy in children aged 0-2 years

Research programme Food allergy and intolerance research --
Study duration February 2013 to July 2014
Project code FS305010
Conducted by University of Southampton

Background

The FSA funded PIFA study (Project T07046) formed the UK-part of the EuroPrevall birth cohort work package. This examined the prevalence and pattern of food allergy in the first two years of life, including whether specific complementary feeding patterns were associated with allergy. EuroPrevall was a large-scale European Union funded project setup to explore the causes of food allergy in infancy across Europe, with the overall aim of improving the quality of life of those with food allergy. A total of 12,049 babies and their families were recruited as part of EuroPrevall, including 1,170 in the UK birth cohort.

There is currently a lack of reliable published data on the actual, as opposed to reported, prevalence of food allergy in the UK, especially among young children. In addition, there is a real need to understand the risks associated with the development of food allergy. Unlike other studies, the PIFA study aimed to establish the prevalence of food allergy in a representative sample of the population, using the same end points and diagnostic criteria in young children.

Research Approach

Additional analyses will be undertaken on the PIFA study dataset which will be used to determine the incidence and risk factors associated with the development of food allergy in UK infants. These data will also be used to generate a UK peer reviewed publication to ensure maximum dissemination of the work funded by the FSA. In addition, the results and publications from this project will contribute to work being undertaken by the Committee of Toxicology (COT) to provide advice to the FSA on the risks arising from the diet that are related to the development of atopic disease (including food allergy) and autoimmune disease in infants and young children.