



養和醫院

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For Immediate Release

Hong Kong Sanatorium Hospital Launches Research to Cure Peanut Allergy

(22 January, 2013 – Hong Kong) Up to 2% of young children are affected by peanut allergy in the United Kingdom and the incidence is increasing world wide. In 2009 it was reported that 4 to 8% of children in Hong Kong had food allergies. The exact prevalence of peanut allergy in Hong Kong and China is unknown although it has been estimated that as high as 35% of Taiwanese children with atopic eczema had peanut allergy.

Peanut allergy is one of the most common food allergies and it is different from some other forms of food allergy, e.g. milk and egg allergy, because spontaneous resolution is uncommon. It is the commonest cause of food induced fatal or near fatal allergic reactions. There is no treatment for peanut allergy at present in routine use, so sufferers and families of peanut allergic children live in constant fear of accidental ingestion causing death. One parent has described it as "sitting on a time bomb".

Dr. Lee Tak Hong, Director of the Allergy Centre of the Hong Kong Sanatorium & Hospital (HKSH) said, 'It is estimated that 40% of patients with peanut allergy will go on to develop asthma and 60% will have nasal allergies. Up to 70% of patients have multiple allergies to tree nuts. Thus, successful treatment and prevention of peanut allergy may have far reaching benefits for allergic disease in a wider context.'

In order to try and find a cure for peanut allergy, the Allergy Centre has launched a pioneering research programme to develop a new treatment plan that will target patients of 8 years or above with peanut allergy. A new customized desensitization treatment will be developed for each patient involving the use of a combination of anti-IgE and peanut desensitization. The intention of using this new procedure is to allow desensitization to peanut protein while minimizing side effects from the treatment.

Dr Lee explained, 'It is already known that peanut allergy can be helped by oral desensitization, but the treatment is risky and is often abandoned because of allergic reactions during treatment. By first using anti-IgE to lower the levels of the IgE antibody which causes peanut allergy, it is hoped that side effects during peanut desensitization will be substantially reduced, allowing successful treatment and cure of this life threatening allergy.'

For further details, please call HKSH Allergy Centre at 2835 8430.

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About Hong Kong Sanatorium & Hospital

Hong Kong Sanatorium & Hospital is one of the leading private hospitals in Hong Kong. With the motto "Quality in Service Excellence in Care", the Hospital is committed to serving the public as well as promoting medical education and research.

Allergy Centre

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