

PREVALENCE AND CORRELATES OF ALLERGIC DISEASES AMONG CHILDREN

R. Pawlińska-Chmara¹, I. Wronka², and M. Muc²

¹Departament of Biotechnology and Molecular Biology, Opole University, Opole, Poland, roma@uni.opole.pl and ²Departament of Anthropology, Jagiellonian University, Krakow, Poland

The occurrence frequency of allergic diseases conspicuously grows, particularly in the countries with high average living standards. It is, to a large extent, attributed to the changes in lifestyle. The purpose of this paper was to determine the correlation between the factors that are indirectly (socio-economic status) and directly (passive smoking, nutrition habits) connected with the style and condition of living and the occurrence frequency of allergic diseases in children. It was also checked whether there were any differences in the biological development rate between the children with allergies and their peers. The material consisted of the data obtained during the cross-sectional surveys carried out in the towns and villages of Southern Poland in the years 2007-2008. 301 children aged from 4 to 9 year were examined. The height and body weight were measured in each of them, which served as a foundation for the evaluation of their development progress. The information on their social-economic status, the child's exposure to tobacco smoke and the way of feeding them during the first months of their lives was obtained by means of a questionnaire. The frequency of allergic diseases was determined from the responses given by the parents to the question of whether the doctor diagnosed the occurrence of such diseases in their children. The number of children with allergies found as declared by their parents was 51 (19,3%). The number of allergic children in the villages was by far lower than that in towns and cities (12.8% vs. 27.2%). The more frequent occurrence of allergies in children also depended on the level of their parents' education, good economic conditions, artificial feeding during the first months of their lives, and attending nurseries. The children with diagnosed allergies did not differ from their peers by height, but had a higher body weight, which can be a consequence of the medicines they took.