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Diagnostic accuracy of patch test in children with food allergy

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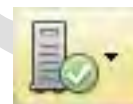
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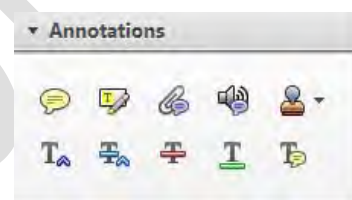


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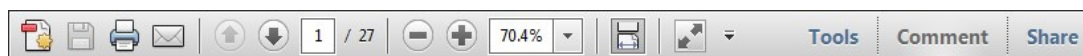


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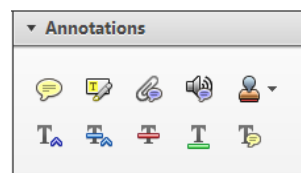
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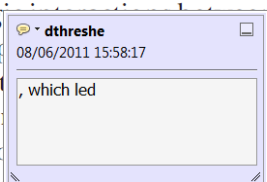


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standard framework for the analysis of microeconomic behavior. Nevertheless, it also led to the development of strategic form games. The number of competitors in the industry is that the structure of the game. The main components of the model, at the micro level, are exogenous variables and parameters. Important works on entry by firms (M. Henceforth) we open the 'black box'.



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there is no room for extra profits as mark-ups are zero and the number of firms (set) values are not determined by the market. Blanchard and Kiyotaki (1987), in a perfect competition in general equilibrium model of aggregate demand and supply, the classical framework assuming monopoly power between an exogenous number of firms.

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dynamic responses of mark-ups consistent with the VAR evidence.

sation of the economy. The number of competitors in the industry is that the structure of the sector. The main components of the model, at the micro level, are exogenous variables and parameters. Important works on entry by firms (M. Henceforth) we open the 'black box'.



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standard and supply shocks. Most of the standard framework for the analysis of microeconomic behavior. The number of competitors in the industry is that the structure of the sector. The main components of the model, at the micro level, are exogenous variables and parameters. Important works on entry by firms (M. Henceforth) we open the 'black box'.



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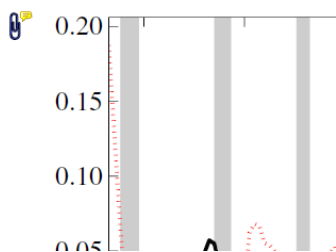


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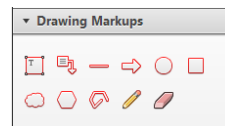
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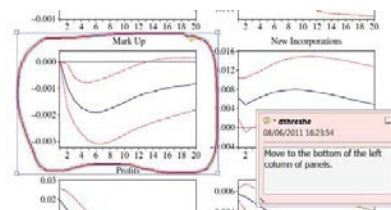


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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Diagnostic accuracy of patch test in children with food allergy

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Keywords

atopy patch test; skin prick test; food allergy; cow's milk allergy; egg allergy; child; oral food challenge; atopic eczema; anaphylaxis; gastrointestinal symptoms

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Abstract

Background: The gold standard test for confirming whether a child has clinical hypersensitivity reactions to foods is the oral food challenge. Therefore, there is increasing interest in simpler diagnostic markers of food allergy, especially in children, to avoid oral food challenge. The goal of this study was to assess the diagnostic accuracy of atopy patch test in comparison with oral food challenge.

Methods: We investigated 243 children (mean age, 51 months) referred for evaluation of suspected egg or cow's milk allergy. Skin prick test and atopy patch test were carried out, and after a 2 weeks elimination diet, oral food challenge was performed.

Results: Two hundred and forty-three children underwent OFC to the suspected food. We found clinically relevant food allergies in 40 (65%) children to egg and in 22 (35%) to cow's milk. The sensitivity of skin prick test for both milk and egg was 92%, specificity 91%, positive predictive value 35%, and negative predictive value of 93%. Sensitivity, specificity, positive predictive value, and negative predictive value of atopy patch test for both milk and egg were 21%, 73%, 20%, and 74%, respectively.

Conclusion: Our study suggests that there is insufficient evidence for the routine use of atopy patch test for the evaluation of egg and cow's milk allergy. OFC remains gold standard for the diagnosis of egg and milk allergy even in the presence of high costs in terms of both time and risks during application.

Food allergy has emerged as an increasing medical problem with main burden occurring in childhood and refers to an abnormal immunologic response directed toward food (1). Cow's milk and egg allergy are the most common food allergies in younger age group (1).

Careful diagnosis is important because overdiagnosis by parents and even medical professionals results in a restrictive and inadequate diet which can impair both growth and limit participation in social activities (2, 3). Diagnosis of food allergies in children starts with a careful dietary history to define the potential food triggers (4). Skin prick test (SPT) results and measurement of serum-specific IgE antibodies (sIgE) can be helpful in identifying offending foods (5). The oral food challenge (OFC) test is the definitive mean to ascertain clinical reactions to food (6). There is increasing interest in easier diagnostic markers of food allergy, especially in children, to avoid OFC. Atopy patch test (APT) is a useful

tool for the diagnosis of contact dermatitis (7), and it has been proposed as a non-invasive test for diagnosing food allergy in children. However, in populations with delayed onset symptoms such as atopic eczema and gastrointestinal symptoms, previous studies have provided contrasting results on APT usefulness in identifying children with food allergies (8–12). Furthermore, APT has not yet been standardized for routine use in the diagnosis of food allergy (13).

The objective of the current study was to examine the diagnostic reliability of APT compared to OFC to identify individuals with allergy to cow's milk and hen's egg.

Materials and method

Children referred with a suspicion of cow's milk or egg allergies to a hospital-based outpatient center were consecutively enrolled in the study. Patients were subjected to an allergological

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work-up consisting of a detailed history, focusing on clinical signs of food allergy, combined with the SPT, APT, and OFC. All children followed diet without the suspected food for a period of at least 2 weeks before OFC.

Skin prick test

All children underwent SPTs with commercial extracts of egg yolk, egg white (ALK-Abello), cow's milk, alpha-lactalbumin, beta-lactoglobulin, and casein (Lofarma). Furthermore, patients were skin prick tested with 1 mg/ml histamine and control solution. The wheal reactions were read after 15 min. Tests were considered positive when the wheal size was ≥ 3 mm in diameter in comparison with the negative control. The parents were asked to withhold antihistamine medications at least 72 hrs before, and 2–3 weeks before the skin test and topical steroid (14).

Atopy patch test

The ATP was carried out using lyophilized food in white vaseline as excipient (Lofarma, Milano, Italy). The concentration of egg was 5%, casein 5%, and cow's milk 10%. The allergen concentration has been changed to 10% for egg and casein and to 20% for milk from January 2007. The extract was put on an 8-mm aluminum cup on adhesive tape (Finn Chambers; Epitest Ltd. Oy) that was applied to the intact skin on the back and covered with a hypoallergenic tape. Application sites were checked after 20 min for immediate reactions. APT was evaluated 48 hrs after application, and results were read 20 min after removal of the hypoallergenic tape with cup. The second reading was made 24 hrs after the first reading (72 hrs) in case of an unclear response (15). APT was graded as follows (13): – negative; only erythema, questionable; + erythema, infiltration; ++ erythema, few papules; +++ erythema, many or spreading papules; ++++ erythema, vesicles.

Oral food challenge

An investigation about possible intake of drugs within the days before OFC was carried out. Children had to stop antihistamines 10 days before, steroids 3 days before, theophylline, beta2-agonists, and leukotriene modifiers 24 hrs before

challenge. Before OFC, each child was visited, height and weight were measured, and an intravenous access was obtained. The test was performed only when the child was asymptomatic and had completely normal physical examination. Emergency medications and equipment were immediately available for the control of adverse reactions. Challenge to egg consisted of increasing increments every 20 min of 25 mg lyophilized white egg protein, 400 mg, 800 mg, 1.6 g, 3.2 g, and 6.4 g of egg protein given as boiled egg. OFC with pasteurized cow's milk (or formula milk in infants) was performed by administering increasing doses (0.25, 0.5, 1, 3 ml, and then doubled until 100 ml) at 20-min intervals. Patients were observed for at least 2 hrs. During the OFC, children were subjected to blood pressure monitoring. Challenge was discontinued when the patients developed clinical symptoms (16, 17). Adverse reactions were considered immediate when they appeared within 2 hrs and late if after 2 hrs. When the challenge result was negative, children received the food at home for 4 days. At the end of the challenge period, children were checked for the onset of adverse reactions. When OFC resulted in subjective or unclear symptoms, a double-blind placebo-controlled OFC was performed using the same titration steps as the open ones (18). The local Ethical Committee approved the study. Parents gave their written informed consent.

Statistical analysis

Student's *t*-test and analysis of variance were used to analyze differences between groups in continuous variables. Comparison of categorical variables was made by means of chi-square test. All analyses were two-tailed. Sensitivity, specificity, and negative and positive predictive accuracy for APT and SPT results were calculated. Spearman's correlation analysis was used to evaluate correlation between OFCs and ages of patients. The statistical analysis was performed using SPSS 15.0 version.

Results

Two hundred and eighty-seven children were eligible for the study. We experienced 44 dropouts. Parents did not agree to perform APTs due to the fact that it took such a long time.

Table 1 Comparison of the dropout group against participants to the study

	Dropout Group	Study Group	p value
No.	44	243	0.09
Age, mean (months)	42.8	51.6	
Male, no. (%)	23 (52)	131 (54)	0.32
Cow's milk allergy, no. (%)	23 (52)	105 (43)	0.84
Egg allergy	21 (48)	138 (57)	0.32
Skin symptoms after egg ingestion, no. (%)	33 (77)	194 (80)	0.54
Non-cutaneous symptoms after egg ingestion, no. (%)	11 (23)	49 (20)	0.54
SPT, positive, no. (%)	32 (73)	175 (72)	1.00
OFC, positive, no. (%)	17 (39)	62 (25)	0.09
	(41% to egg and 59% to milk)	(65% to egg and 35% to milk)	

Table 2 Comparison of children with positive atopy patch test (APT) against those with negative APT to cow's milk and egg

	Suspicion of egg or cow's milk allergy			Suspicion of egg allergy			Suspicion of cow's milk allergy		
	Positive APT	Negative APT	p value	Positive APT	Negative APT	p value	Positive APT	Negative APT	p value
No.	56	187		37	101		19	86	
Age, mean (months)	52.7	48.1	0.59	58.2	52.5	0.97	42.2	42.9	0.54
Male, no. (%)	32 (57)	99 (52)	0.58	18 (48)	55 (54)	0.54	14 (73)	44 (51)	0.07
SPT, positive, no. (%)	38 (67)	131 (70)	0.75	28 (75)	77 (76)	0.94	10 (52)	54 (62)	0.41
OFC, positive, no. (%)	10 (17)	52 (27)	0.13	9 (24)	31 (30)	0.46	1 (5)	21 (24)	0.07
Skin symptoms after OFC, no. (%)	7 (12)	41 (21)	0.12	6 (16)	27 (26)	0.20	1 (5)	14 (16)	0.29
Non-cutaneous symptoms after OFC, no. (%)	3 (5)	1 (5)	0.88	34 (91)	97 (96)	0.32	0 (0)	7 (8)	0.34
Gastrointestinal symptoms after OFC, no. (%)	0 (0)	4 (2)	0.57	0 (0)	2 (2)	0.38	0 (0)	2 (2)	1.00

Table 3 Sensitivity, specificity, positive predictive value (PPV), and negative predictive value (NPV) of skin prick test (SPT) and atopy patch test (APT) to cow's milk and egg, compared with OFC in 243 children with suspected cow's milk or egg allergy, in 138 patients with suspected egg allergy and in 105 patients with suspected milk allergy

	Sensitivity (CI 95%)	Specificity (CI 95%)	PPV (CI 95%)	NPV (CI 95%)
Patients with suspected cow's milk or egg allergy (n = 243)				
At least a positive APT to egg* or milk†	21 (13–64)	73 (66–79)	20 (12–33)	74 (67–80)
At least a positive SPT to egg‡ or milk§	92 (83–96)	39 (33–46)	35 (29–43)	93 (85–97)
SPT plus APT	89 (79–95)	29 (23–37)	30 (24–38)	89 (78–95)
Patients with suspected egg allergy (n = 138)				
Positive APT to egg*	24 (13–40)	72 (62–80)	24 (13–39)	72 (63–80)
Positive SPT to egg yolk or egg white	95 (85–99)	31 (24–41)	33 (26–43)	95 (84–99)
Positive SPT to egg white	91 (79–96)	32 (24–41)	33 (25–42)	91 (78–96)
Positive SPT to egg yolk	67 (53–80)	50 (41–58)	32 (23–42)	81 (71–88)
SPT‡ plus APT*	94 (85–99)	19 (7–27)	29 (20–37)	91 (85–96)
Patients with suspected cow's milk allergy (n = 105)				
At least a positive APT to milk†	15 (6–38)	75 (64–84)	15 (5–36)	76 (66–85)
At least a positive SPT to milk extracts§	86 (69–95)	51 (40–62)	39 (28–51)	91 (79–96)
Positive SPT to whole milk	75 (57–87)	69 (58–78)	47 (33–61)	88 (78–94)
Positive SPT to casein	33 (19–52)	89 (80–94)	50 (29–71)	80 (71–87)
Positive SPT to alpha-lactalbumin	55 (37–72)	74 (63–82)	43 (28–59)	82 (72–90)
Positive SPT to beta-lactoglobulin	62 (44–77)	79 (66–87)	53 (37–69)	85 (74–91)
SPT§ plus APT†	81 (74–88)	46 (37–55)	33 (24–40)	88 (80–96)

*Extracts: egg. †Extracts: cow's milk, casein. ‡Extracts: egg yolk, egg white. §Extracts: whole cow's milk, alpha-lactalbumin, beta-lactoglobulin, casein.

This is the reason why there were some dropouts. There was no significant difference between the dropout group and the study participants in clinical characteristics (Table 1). The remaining 243 children participated in the study, 151 (62%) male and 92 (38%) female, aged between 12 months and 16 years, mean age 51.6 months. One hundred and thirty-eight of them were with a clinical suspicion of egg allergy and 105 of them with a clinical suspicion of milk allergy. Patients referred the following symptoms occurred when they ingested egg or cow's milk: skin symptoms (50% eczema, 46% urticaria or angioedema, 4% rash) in 194 cases, gastrointes-

tinal symptoms (63% vomiting, 23% proctocolitis, 9% enterocolitis, 5% diarrhea) in 22 cases, respiratory symptoms (67% bronchospasm, 33% dyspnea) in 9 cases; anaphylaxis in 10 (4%) cases, and oral allergy syndrome in 8 (3%) cases. The outcome of OFCs was positive in 62 (25%) of 243 instances; 40 of 138 to egg, and 22 of 105 to milk. There was no need to perform double-blind placebo-controlled OFC. Cutaneous reactions (eczema, urticaria, rash) occurred in 48 (78%) of positive challenges, gastrointestinal symptoms (vomiting, diarrhea, proctocolitis) in 4 (6%), oral allergy syndrome in 4 (6%), respiratory symptoms in 3 (5%), and anaphylaxis in 3

Table 4 Sensitivity, specificity, positive predictive value (PPV), and negative predictive value (NPV) of atopy patch test (APT) at different concentrations of egg, cow's milk, and casein compared with OFC

	Sensitivity (CI 95%)	Specificity (CI 95%)	PPV (CI 95%)	NPV (CI 95%)
APT†	24 (12–43)	80 (66–90)	43 (21–67)*	0.63 (50–75)*
APT‡	19 (0.9–36)	71 (63–78)	14 (0.6–27)*	0.79 (71–85)*
APT (cow's milk plus casein)†	15 (0.4–42)	80 (58–92)	33 (10–70)	0.59 (41–75)
APT (cow's milk plus casein)‡	17 (0.3–56)	74 (60–84)	0.07 (0.1–31)	0.88 (75–95)
APT (egg)†	33 (14–81)	81 (60–92)	0.50 (22–78)	0.68 (48–83)
APT (egg)‡	20 (0.7–39)	70 (59–78)	0.17 (0.7–34)	0.74 (63–83)

Concentration of egg was 5%† or 10%‡, of casein was 5%† or 10%‡, of cow's milk was 10%† or 20%‡

* $p \leq 0.05$.

(5%). There was no correlation between patient's age and OFC results. We performed 243 APTs and SPTs. APT-positive results to at least one of the cow's milk allergen or egg allergens were observed in 56 (23%) children and SPT in 169 (69%) children. There was no significant difference between children with positive APT results and those with negative APT results in age, gender, positive SPT results, positive OFC outcome, and symptoms occurring during OFC (Table 2). A positive APT result to at least one cow's milk allergen (whole cow's milk, casein) or egg had lower sensitivity and PPV than specificity and NPV (Table 3). SPT revealed a higher sensitivity, PPV and NPV than APT (Table 3). The combination of SPT and APT results did not improve sensitivity, specificity, and predictive values of SPT (Table 3).

One hundred and thirty-eight patients, age range 14 months to 14 years, mean age 55 months, had a history of allergic reactions to egg. The majority of patients experienced cutaneous symptoms: 123 (49% eczema, 46% urticaria or angioedema, 5% rash). Other clinical manifestations were gastrointestinal symptoms in 7 cases (86% vomiting, 14% enterocolitis), respiratory symptoms in 4 cases (50% dyspnea, 50% bronchospasm), oral allergy syndrome in 2 cases, and anaphylaxis in 2 cases. Forty OFCs to egg had positive outcome. Skin symptoms occurred in 33 (82%) children, oral allergy syndrome in 2 (5%), gastrointestinal symptoms in 2 (5%), respiratory symptoms in 2 (5%), and anaphylaxis in 1 (3%). Thirty-seven (27%) of APT results were positive to egg. Sensitivity, specificity, and predictive values of APT results were low (Table 3). Seventy-seven (56%), 25 (18%), and 3 (2%) SPT reactions were positive for both egg yolk and egg white, only egg white, and only egg yolk, respectively. The sensitivity and the NPV of SPT to combined egg yolk and egg white were higher than those of single allergens (Table 3). SPT results showed a higher sensitivity and predictive values than APT results (Table 3). The combination of SPT and APT results did not increase sensitivity, specificity, and predictive values of SPT alone (Table 3).

One hundred and five patients, age range 12 months and 16 years, mean 47 months, had a history of allergic reaction to milk. Skin symptoms occurred in 69 (25% urticaria, 25% eczema, 6% rash) cases, gastrointestinal in 15 cases (53% vomiting, 33% proctocolitis, 7% enterocolitis, 7% diarrhea), respiratory in 7 cases (57% bronchospasm, 43% dyspnea), oral

allergy syndrome in 6 cases, and anaphylaxis in 8 cases. Twenty-two OFCs to milk had a positive outcome. Skin symptoms were elicited in 15 (68%) cases, oral allergy syndrome in 2 (9%) cases, gastrointestinal symptoms in 2 (9%) cases, anaphylaxis in 2 (9%) cases, and respiratory symptoms in 1 (3%) cases. APT reactions were positive to at least one extract in 19 children. APT results were positive to whole milk in 18 (69%) children and in 8 (31%) to casein. APTs were often false positive or false negative, which resulted in low positive predictive values (Table 3). Forty-one patients had negative SPT results. There were 109 positive SPT reactions to four cow's milk allergens; 39 (36%) cow's milk, 31 (28%) beta-lactoglobulin, 27 (25%) alpha-lactalbumin, and 12 (11%) casein. SPT results revealed a higher sensitivity and NPV than APT results (Table 3). Sensitivity and NPV were higher when we used four allergens for SPT than a single allergen (Table 3). ~~The accuracy of the four allergens.~~ SPTs together with APTs, did not improve sensitivity, specificity, and predictive values of SPT alone (Table 3).

As mentioned previously, from January 2007, the allergen concentrations in APT commercial extract were increased from 5% to 10%. Before 2007, 73 APTs (37 for milk and 36 for egg) were performed and 12 (16%), 7 for egg and 5 for milk, were positive. After 2007, 170 (68 for milk and 102 for egg) APTs were performed and 44 (26%), 14 for milk and 30 for egg, were positive ($p > 0.05$).

When we compared data of patch test results before and after 2007, there was a statistically significant difference between low and high concentrations used for APT only in NPV and PPV ($p < 0.05$) (Table 4).

Discussion

We found that APT to egg and cow's milk was not useful for diagnosing clinical hypersensitivity in children. Our results show low specificity, sensitivity, PPV, and NPV both to cow's milk and egg. Moreover, we did not demonstrate APTs results improve diagnostic accuracy of SPT to egg and cow's milk allergy.

There were conflicting results in the previous literature regarding the use of APT for the diagnosis of food allergies (Table 5).

Table 5 Studies on diagnostic accuracy of APT to cow's milk and/or egg compared with OFC results in studies with at least 50 patients in the last 10 years

Study (year)	Study population	Food-Chamber	APT			
			Egg			Cow's milk
Breuer et al. (2004)	41 out of 64 children with AE, aged 1–10 years	- Fresh cow's milk, hen's egg powder - 12 mm	PPV:30 (Results of late eczematous reactions (n = 22))		PPV:32 (Results of late eczematous reactions (n = 22))	
Osterballe et al. (2004)	22 children with suspected cow's milk and egg allergy of a cohort of 396 children, aged 3 years.	- Fresh food - 8 mm	SE:40% SP:99% PPV:57% NPV:89%		SE:0% SP:99% PPV:0% NPV:99%	
Mehl et al. (2006)	437 children (90% with AE), aged 3 months to 14 years	- Fresh food - 12 mm	SE:41% SP:95% PPV:86% NPV:85%		SE:41% SP:87% PPV:86% NPV:43%	
Canani et al. (2007)	60 children with G-I symptoms, aged 3–48 months	- Fresh food and commercial extracts - 12 mm	Fresh food SE:84% SP:100% PPV:100% NPV:75%	Commercial extract SE:5% SP:100% PPV:100% NPV:33%	Fresh food SE:64% SP:95% PPV:95% NPV:67%	Commercial extract SE:6% SP:95% PPV:66% NPV:43%
Devillers et al. (2009)	135 children with AE, aged 0–3 years	- Fresh cow's milk and boiled egg - 12 mm	Odd's ratio:9.61 (0.99–99.52)		Odd's ratio:1.05 (0.02–11.60)	
Chung et al. (2010)	101 children with AE, under the age of 6 years	- Fresh cow's milk and boiled egg - 8 mm	SE:50% SP:91% PPV:57% NPV:89%		SE:67% SP:92% PPV:50% NPV:86%	
Canani et al. (2011)	119 children with G-I symptoms, aged 3–48 months	- Fresh food - 12 mm			SE:66% SP:84% PPV:78% NPV:74%	
Costa et al. (2011)	192 children with G-I symptoms, aged 1–5 years	- Fresh food - Filter paper of 1 cm ² in area			SE:25% SP:82% PPV:46% NPV:64%	
Nocerino et al. (2013)	172 children with non IgE mediated G-I symptoms, aged 2–12 months	- Fresh food - 12 mm			SE:67% SP:88% PPV:82% NPV:76%	
Mowszet et al. (2014)	61 children with G-I symptoms, aged 3–6 months	- Fresh food - 8 mm			SE:21% SP:91% PPV:80% NPV:39%	
Yang et al. (2014)	150 children with atopic eczema, aged <2 years	- Cow's milk powder and fresh egg - 12-mm	Result of (+) APT SE:53% SP:91% PPV:89%		Result of (+) APT SE:35% SP:88% PPV:77%	

AE, atopic eczema; G-I, gastrointestinal; SP, specificity; SE, sensitivity; PPV, positive predictive value; NPV, negative predictive value.

In agreement with previous studies (8–12, 19–23), we found that sensitivity to egg and cow's milk was low. On the other hand, our results showed remarkably lower specificity (73%) for APT in comparison with the previous studies (8, 9, 11, 19, 20, 23). We found that PPV of patch test to egg and cow's milk

was low. This is compatible with many studies (9–11, 19, 20, 22, 23) with the exception of Canani's study (8). Canani et al. (8) found that PPV of patch test to fresh egg and cow's milk was over 90%. Differently from us, they selected only patients with gastrointestinal symptoms and used 12-mm aluminum

cups with fresh food. The study of Niggemann et al. (24) showed that 12-mm cups should be used for APT and demonstrated lower PPV to cow's milk with 6-mm aluminum cups. These can be an explanation for the different PPV results for APT. In contrast with their results, Canani et al. (21) in a second study found lower PPV to fresh cow's milk when they included 119 patients rather than 60 in the same age group. In accordance with previous studies (8–11, 20–22), we showed that NPV to egg and cow's milk was low. However, Osterballe (19) showed that NPV for fresh cow's milk was 99% in 22 children with possible food allergies.

Several further explanations may be offered for differences in our results and those of previous studies. Diagnostic accuracy of a given test depends on frequency of the disease in the studied population. So, the reliability of APT may vary in different populations. Moreover, our population consisted of children with suspected food allergies. Previous studies were conducted in children with atopic eczema (9, 12, 20, 23, 25) or gastrointestinal symptoms (8, 10, 17, 21, 22). Another explanation for our different findings may be that we use commercial extracts rather than fresh food. Finally, the age of children included in former studies differs from the age of our population. However, our results showed there was no association between age of the patient and OFC outcome, and we did not demonstrate any difference between patients with and without positive APT results in age and clinical findings (Table 2).

After epicutaneous application of allergens, APTs elicit a T-cell-mediated responses. Immunologic examination of biopsies from APT lesions showed initially a Th2 cytokine pattern, and after 48 hrs, it showed a Th1 pattern like in chronic lesions of AD (26). Circulant Th1 cells are involved in the IgE-mediated reaction to allergens. However, the cutaneous Th1 cells differ from those in other organs (27, 28). This may explain why we found that APT to egg and cow's milk had a low diagnostic accuracy.

This study has several strengths. Trained staff following standardized procedures performed APTs and OFCs. Another

strength is that the range of data allowed investigation for the effects of SPTs on the reliability of APT results. Our study may have several limitations. The trial was conducted in children referred to a tertiary allergy clinic because of possible allergy. To avoid selection bias, we should have examined each child in a large unselected population. This is unfeasible in practice. The diagnosis was not based on double-blind placebo-controlled OFC that is the 'gold standard' for diagnosing food allergy. We choose to perform open OFC as it is commonly used in daily practice in childhood. The procedure of APT to food allergens lacks of standardization in food preparation. It is usually proposed the use of fresh foods (15). We used commercial extracts to better standardize the material, enhance stability, and reduce the influence of *Staphylococcus aureus*-derived enterotoxins on patch test results (29). We believe that the use of a commercial extract may have enhanced the reproducibility of the outcome of the test.

We found that SPT to cow's milk had low sensitivity, specificity, and PPV. The NPV for SPT to whole cow's milk and cow's milk proteins was high. This concurs with the findings of Calvani et al. (27). We found an high sensitivity and NPV (95%) for hen's egg, and this was in line with previous investigations (30). Although SPT has high sensitivity and high NPV, its low specificity and poor PPV may result in mislabeling some patients as having food allergies. In agreement with previous studies (8, 9), our results showed that the combination of SPT and APT results did not improve the overall diagnostic accuracy.

In conclusion, performing the OFC to confirm the diagnosis of egg and milk allergies is necessary. The APT is not practical and accessible in daily clinical practice. The results of our study suggest that APT does not have an additional value in predicting outcomes of OFC.

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