The relation between paracetamol use and asthma: a GA2LEN European case-control study

S Shaheen, J Potts, L Gnatiuc, J Makowska, M L Kowalski, G Joos, T Van Zele, Y Van Durme, I De Rudder, S Wöhrl, J Godnic-Cvar, L Skadhauge, G Thomsen, T Zuberbier, K C Bergmann, Lucie Heinzerling, M Gjomarkaj, A Bruno, E Pace, S Bonini, W Fokkens, E J M Weersink, C Loureiro, A Todo-Bom, C M Villanueva, C Sanjuas, J-P Zock, C Janson, P Burney, Selenium And Asthma Research Integration Project & GA2LEN

Studies from the UK and USA suggest that frequent use of paracetamol (acetaminophen) may increase the risk of asthma, but data across Europe are lacking. As part of a multicentric case-control study organised by the Global Allergy and Asthma European Network (GA(2)LEN), it was examined whether or not frequent paracetamol use is associated with adult asthma across Europe. The network compared 521 cases with a diagnosis of asthma and reporting of asthma symptoms within the last 12 months with 507 controls with no diagnosis of asthma and no asthmatic symptoms within the last 12 months across 12 European centres. All cases and controls were selected from the same population, defined by age (20-45 yrs) and place of residence. In a random effects meta-analysis, weekly use of paracetamol, compared with less frequent use, was strongly positively associated with asthma after controlling for confounders. There was no evidence for heterogeneity across centres. No association was seen between use of other analgesics and asthma. These data add to the increasing and consistent epidemiological evidence implicating frequent paracetamol use in asthma in diverse populations.

type journal paper/review (English)
date of publishing 11-2008
journal title The European respiratory journal : official journal of the European Society for Clinical Respiratory Physiology (32/5)
ISSN electronic 1399-3003
pages 1231-6