

L'asthme: une épidémie sur le déclin ?

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The International Study of Asthma and Allergies in Childhood (ISAAC) Phase One found large variations in the worldwide prevalence of symptoms. The study was repeated after at least 5 years to assess time trends in prevalence of symptoms of asthma, allergic rhinoconjunctivitis and eczema. ISAAC Phase Three was a cross-sectional questionnaire survey of 2 age groups of school children chosen from a random sample of schools in a defined geographical area. ISAAC Phase Three (2002-2003) was completed a mean of 7 years after Phase One in 193,436 children aged 6-7 years from 66 centres in 37 countries and in 304,811 children aged 13-14 years from 106 centres in 56 countries. Most centres showed a change ≥ 1 standard error (SE) in prevalence of at least one condition, with increases being twice as common as decreases, and increases more common in the younger age group than the older age group. More centres showed increases in all three conditions more frequently than decreases in all three conditions, but most centres had mixed changes. In centres where asthma symptom prevalence was initially low, it mostly increased, and where it was high it mostly decreased (older age group) or did not change (younger age group). The rise in prevalence of symptoms in many centres is of concern, but the absence of increases in prevalence for high prevalence centres is reassuring. The divergent time trends in prevalence of symptoms of allergic diseases form the basis for further aetiological research.