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Title: The association between asthma, rhinitis and eczema among adults in west Sweden

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Body: Background: In contrast to studies of asthma and rhinitis, few studies among adults investigating the associations between asthma, rhinitis and eczema have been published. The objective was to investigate these associations including the impact of chronic rhinosinusitis. Methods: A large-scale postal questionnaire on asthma, rhinitis, respiratory symptoms and eczema, as well as possible risk factors was mailed to 30000 randomly selected subjects aged 16-75 years in Sweden. Current disease was defined as report disease in combination with current symptoms or medicine use. Results: The prevalence of current asthma, current rhinitis and current eczema was 8.0, 20.7 and 11.5%. The prevalence of those having either current asthma, rhinitis or eczema was 31.3%. Either current asthma or rhinitis was reported by 24.3%, current asthma or eczema by 17.8%, and current eczema or rhinitis by 28.3%. All three conditions was reported by 1.1%. The overlap was greatest for current asthma and rhinitis, 4.4%, while it was 3.9% for current rhinitis and eczema and 1.7% for current asthma and eczema. Family histories of either asthma and/or allergy were the dominating risk factors for all three conditions. Generally all clinical and morbidity variables, including lung function, methacholine reactivity and positive skin prick tests, were most affected among those having all three conditions, particularly if they also had chronic rhinosinusitis. Conclusion: About one third of the adult population of West Sweden have either current asthma, rhinitis or eczema, while only 1.1% had all these three conditions. Those with all three conditions have a considerably more severe disease than those with one or two of the conditions.