
MEDLINE Abstract

Recognition of clinical immunology as a distinct medical subspecialty: importance for the practice of allergy.

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BACKGROUND: Although residents trained in accredited teaching programs in allergy and immunology are exposed to many areas of clinical immunology, the vast majority of these residents' subsequent practices are composed of caring for patients with allergic and asthmatic conditions. Except for rheumatologists, almost all other clinical immunologists appear to lack organized training programs, defined certification pathways, and clear career opportunities.

OBJECTIVE: Recognition of clinical immunology as a distinct medical subspecialty with many areas of expertise will enhance the image of allergists and clinical immunologists, ensure subspecialty certification, and provide better career opportunities. **METHODS:** Documents, publications, and private opinions of individuals within professional allergy and clinical immunology organizations were evaluated for possible contribution to the subject content of this article.

RESULTS: There is a need for defined residency programs, medical board certification, and professional organizations that speak for and provide postgraduate education for all clinical immunologists. Molecular and genetic discoveries are delineating the central role of fundamental immunology in all immune-mediated diseases and future therapy of allergic and immunologic diseases. **CONCLUSIONS:** Allergists of the 21st century should participate in the growing recognition of clinical immunology as an important medical subspecialty that can provide science-based therapies for allergic and immunologic disorders. The future practice of allergy depends largely on the molecular and genetic discoveries that serve to unite all practitioners of clinical immunology. Forging common alliances of education, certification, and career pathways with other clinical immunologists is the correct investment for a bright future for allergy.

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