

AllerGen NCE History and Programmes

AllerGen NCE, the Allergy, Genes and Environment Network is a “National Research Network” funded by Industry Canada through the Networks of Centres of Excellence (NCE) Program. It was established in 2004. AllerGen’s mandate is to “*support research, networking, commercialization, knowledge mobilization and capacity building activities that contribute to reducing the morbidity, mortality and socio-economic impacts of allergic diseases*”.

Practically, AllerGen’s goal is to improve the quality of life for allergy and asthma sufferers by supporting research that leads to new diagnostic tests, better medications, more effective public policies and an increase in the number of medical professionals researching and practicing in this area.

Specifically AllerGen was formed:

- To catalyze and support innovative research that contributes to the **discovery** of the causes of, and ways to prevent, control or eliminate allergic and related immune diseases.
- To catalyze and facilitate the **development** of new research platforms, tools, processes, products and services arising from discoveries, and promote their commercialization, their use and their influence on public policy.
- To develop and maintain **networking** and **partnership** arrangements that enable knowledge and technology exchange and exploitation (KTEE) and reposition Canada at the forefront of innovation.
- To create new opportunities for the **training** of highly qualified personnel in allergy research, patient care, innovation and the health system, and advance professional and lay knowledge about allergic and related immune diseases.
- Provide responsible, cost effective and accountable **management**, administration and support to all aspects of AllerGen’s activities.

THE HIGH COST OF ASTHMA AND OTHER ALLERGIC DISEASES

The incidence of allergic disease, like hay fever, asthma, eczema and food allergies, has reached record levels in the Western world. In Canada the incidence of these diseases is growing rapidly. According to Health Canada, non-food allergies are now the most common chronic condition in Canadians 12 years of age and older.

The economic impact of these diseases in Canada is in excess of \$15 billion annually. That is the estimated cost of ambulatory care, in-patient stays, emergency department visits, physician and facility payments, prescribed medications and productivity losses at work and at home that are a direct result of these diseases. This annual cost is on a level with arthritis and other chronic conditions.

From 2009 to 2012, AllerGen is investing in:

- Nationally networked research teams demonstrating excellence and productivity which offer unique capacity building opportunities;
- Research that builds on and extends existing AllerGen and partner investments;
- Research with the potential to accelerate social and economic impact through application of research results to real world problems faced by partner organizations, sectors of the Canadian economy and/or society.

AllerGen research priorities include three research areas of strategic importance to the generation of new knowledge with the potential for social and economic impact in the area of allergic and related immune disease.

- **Programme A** – Gene-Environment Interactions
Strategic Focus: Genetics, environmental exposures, and gene-environment interactions in allergy and asthma
- **Programme B** – *Diagnostics and Therapeutics*
Strategic Focus: Biomarkers, immune monitoring and drug development/discovery
- **Programme C** – *Public Health, Ethics, Policy and Society*
Strategic Focus: Allergic disease management and surveillance

AllerGen also supports four cross-programmatic, multidisciplinary research teams in several priority areas.

- **Established Cross-programmatic Teams**

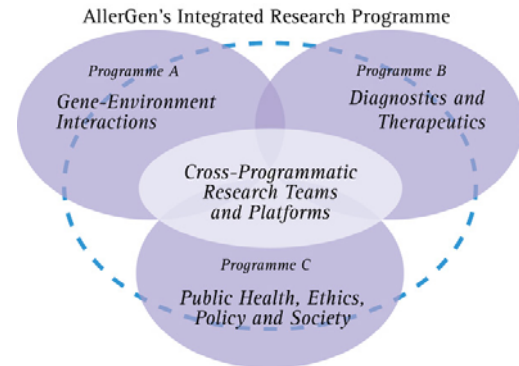
The Canadian Healthy Infant Longitudinal Development (CHILD) Study

Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis

- **Emerging Cross-programmatic Teams**

Mind-Body Interactions and Allergic Disease

Occupational and Work-related Allergy and Asthma



To achieve its goals, AllerGen is actively building partnerships with the corporate, not-for-profit and government sectors. These partnerships are connecting research with industrial and public sector know-how and strategic investment. By leveraging these resources, AllerGen is maximizing Industry Canada's investment and is producing tangible benefits for Canada.

AllerGen NCE is led by Scientific Director and CEO, Judah A. Denburg, MD, FRCP(C). He and his team currently provide support to 72 researchers and 254 highly qualified personnel. AllerGen's research program also involves 106 partners in Canada, United States of America, Europe, Australia and the United Kingdom.



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