

Nothing to sneeze at: Allergies on the rise

Between 10 and 20 percent of Canadian children suffer from some form of allergy.

And the incidence rate may be on the rise, according to an Edmonton pediatrician.

Changing lifestyles and more pets in the home are among the prime contributors to an allergy environment, Dr. John Tkachyk told about 200 members of the Edmonton Allergy Information Branch on campus last Wednesday.

The chances of an infant getting allergies later in life are greater if the home environment is allergy-oriented, Tkachyk said.

More pets live indoors today than 20 years ago and people who

haven't given up the habit are smoking more now than ever, he added.

Also, the number of pets in Canada is increasing. In 1978, one in every three homes had a dog and one in four had a cat.

Pets cause allergic reactions to their saliva and urine, as well as their hair and hide, Tkachyk pointed out.

Eczema and frequent colds among infants can also trigger allergies later in life.

An infant with eczema has a 70 percent chance of getting a respiratory system allergy later on, Tkachyk said.

A decline in the breast feeding of infants was cited as a

reason for the increase in their allergic reactions to cow's milk.

Breast feeding can reduce the rate of cow's milk allergies among children by up to four times, Tkachyk claimed.

In addition, a recent study suggests that cow's milk allergies in children can be decreased if mothers themselves avoid milk during pregnancy. Calcium intake, however, is still important.

Because of the connection between colds and allergies, Tkachyk said he did not favour placing young infants in day care centres where exposure to colds is greater than in the home.

Asked during a question period if the recent expulsion of

hydrogen sulphide from the sour gas well blowout near Lodgepole caused an increase in allergic reactions, Takchyk called it "hard to prove."

The gas did aggravate some people, but the incident occurred during a peak allergy season anyway, he added.

Also asked whether ocean or prairie climates were more favourable for allergy sufferers, Tkachyk responded, "You don't escape allergies anywhere."

"Ocean breezes are fine but not if you live in Los Angeles," he said.

Tkachyk indicated, however,

that incidences of house mite dust and ragweed allergies are lower on the Prairies because of the drier climate.

He also said, in answer to another question, that there was "no good evidence" that vitamin deficiencies cause allergies.

First developed in the 1870s, allergy skin tests have since largely given way to the more reliable price tests refined in the 1960s.

But, despite great strides in the field, medical students still find training in allergies hard to get, Tkachyk admitted.

Family doctors especially would like to get more instruction in allergy treatment, he added.

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Grad students call for capital freeze

by John Algard

The University of Alberta Graduate Students' Association recently presented its policy respecting University budget priorities to the Board of Governors. The Association recommended a moratorium on all new capital building projects and a freeze on all new administrative positions.

"We believe that the University's principal functions are teaching and research," said GSA president Bob Ascah. Concerned that the University is concentrating on new campus buildings when there are insufficient or limited funds available to maintain the current physical plant, Ascah suggested that University monies be used to repair and renovate existing buildings.

Additionally, funds should be used to improve the level of safety in University research facilities, and to replace antiquated equipment. New buildings should be considered only when adequate and continuing sources of funding for the existing facilities have been secured.

The GSA expressed concern

that the current budget cuts are aimed at the academic and non-academic portions of the budget, and ignore the administrative section. President Ascah suggested that the University institute a freeze on all new administrative positions and, if necessary, reduce the number of administrative positions. Monies saved in this way could be used to defray operating costs or increase academic positions.

The GSA also recommended a moratorium on all new academic and non-academic programmes. "New programmes are being proposed when the University lacks the resources to maintain existing programmes."

Staff for new programmes are frequently taken from existing programmes and not replaced. The result is a weaker original programme and an inadequately supported new programme.

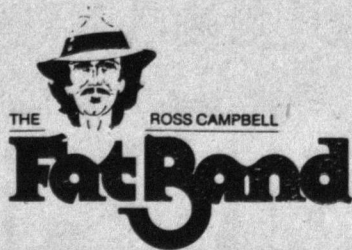
The GSA concluded their presentation by recommending an upgrading of the current low level of library service. Funding of this service would be through cuts to the administrative budget.

Come to the Gateway rookie night!

Thursday, January 27, from 4-6p.m. in Rm. 282 SUB.

CABARETS DINWOODIE

CJSR presents



with guests: ROUTE 66

Friday, January 28; 8 PM

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DARKROOM

with guests: SILENT MOVIES

Saturday, January 29; 8 PM

U of A Medical Students present

INSTRUCTIONS

Saturday, February 5; 9 pm.

Tickets are available from the SUB Box Office (2nd Floor SUB) and various club members.

NOTE: These events are open only to U of A students, staff, and guests. Absolutely no minors admitted!