

EAA Survey 2020: The eczema impact report (1994-2019)

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FROM THE EAA SUFFERER SURVEY

The EAA Survey 2020: The eczema impact report (1994-2019) reviews data about how eczema affects individuals over a 25-year period from results of a survey conducted by the Eczema Association and highlights a range of insights and trends about eczema in Australia.

The survey was conducted by the Eczema Association of Australasia Inc and the Eczema Association of New Zealand Inc. The report was created by FiftyFive5.



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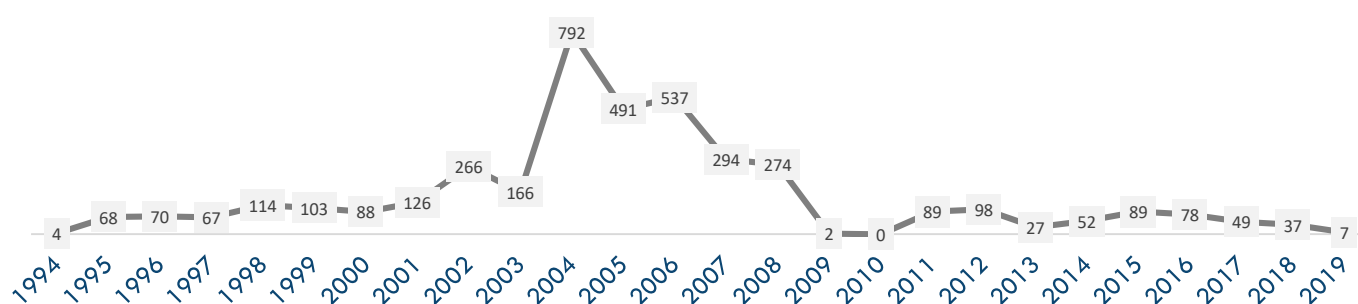
BACKGROUND & METHODOLOGY

The Eczema Association of Australasia Inc (EAA) has been collecting responses for its Eczema Sufferer Survey for over 25 years. The survey is conducted in pen and paper format and responses have been sourced through a variety of methods, including:

- Distribution to new EAA members
- Distribution to initial contacts (members of the public requesting information)
- Public access via the EAA website
- Promoted online and through Facebook during Eczema Awareness campaigns
- Promoted through word of mouth such as over the phone and at conferences and events

In total 4,039 responses were collected between 1994 and 2019, distributed as follows:

EAA Sufferer Survey Responses by Year



It is worth noting that many of the responses in the database were collected between 2002 and 2008, so the data presented at a total level throughout this report is weighted towards this period of time.

The survey has been completed by eczema sufferers themselves or by Parents/Carers on behalf of eczema sufferers. Some key facts about the sufferers who the data set represents:

- 1) 45% of data points relate to child sufferers aged 0-5 years old, 13% children aged 5-18 and 43% adults.
- 2) The spread of survey responses across the country is broadly in line with the Australian population as per ABS Statistics data¹. However, Victoria is somewhat under-represented compared to natural population spread, while Queensland is over-represented.
 - a. NSW 33% of responses (vs 32% of Australians)
 - b. QLD 26% (vs 20%)
 - c. VIC 21% (vs 26%)
 - d. WA 8% (vs 10%)
 - e. SA 7% (vs 7%)
 - f. TAS 3% (vs 2%)
 - g. ACT 1% (vs 2%)
 - h. NT 0% (vs 1%)

The results of the survey have been used for all statistics quoted in this document and associated commentary. Given that the survey is *claimed* data, collected over a long period of time and via a variety of sources, it should not be taken as scientific or academic fact. It should also be noted that many questions have incomplete data – that is where the respondent has not provided a response at all. In the majority of these cases, the results shown are based on those respondents who did give a response. Figures are rounded, meaning they may not always appear to add up to 100%.

¹ <https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Latestproducts/3101.0Main%20Features3Sep%202019?opendocument&tabname=Summary&prodno=3101.0&issue=Sep%202019&num=&view=>

ECZEMA AS A CONDITION

Part of the sufferer survey is aimed at understanding eczema as a condition and the impact it has on the lives of sufferers.

Eczema is most commonly diagnosed at or soon after birth; 52% of surveys indicated that the condition was diagnosed between the ages of 0-6 months. A further 11% were diagnosed before their first birthday, meaning just under two-thirds of all eczema sufferers are diagnosed between birth and 1 year of age.

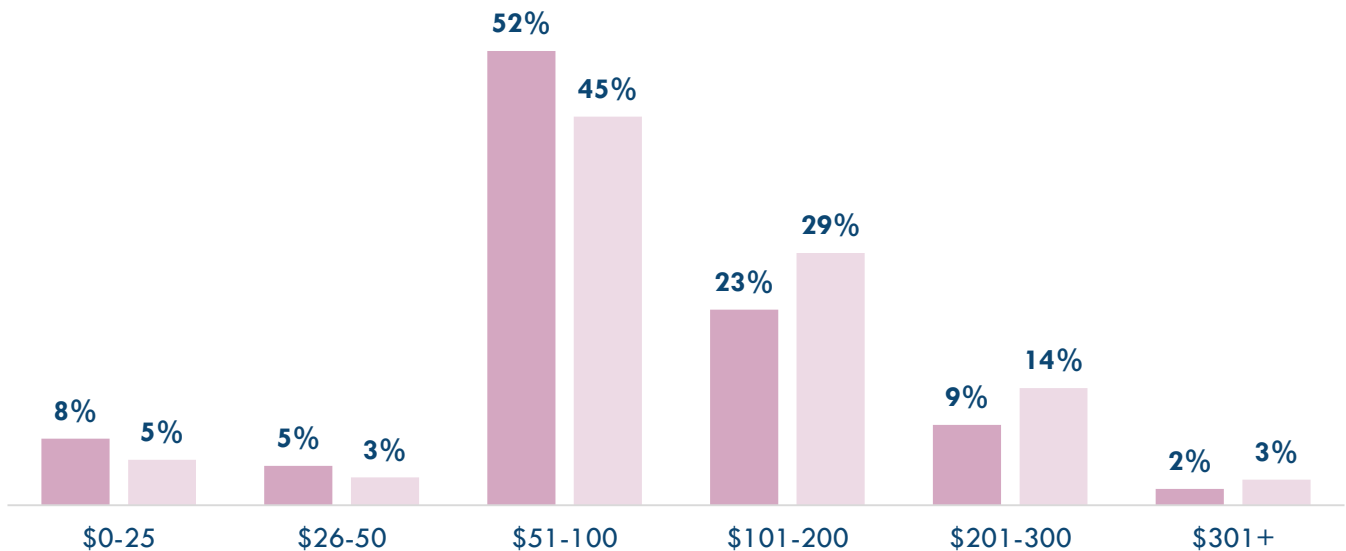
There is evidence to suggest that eczema is genetic/hereditary at least to some extent, with 41% of sufferers indicating that there is a family history of eczema.

It is clear that for many it is a debilitating condition with 52% of sufferers describing their condition as 'chronic' and 29% that it has 'severely' impacted them or their family in some way.

One impact that eczema has is the financial outlay in treating or maintaining the condition. Overall, 52% of sufferers spend an average of \$112 per quarter on prescriptions, while 53% of sufferers buy over-the-counter treatments and spend an average of \$133 per quarter.

Average Spend per Quarter

■ Prescription (52% of sufferers) ■ OTC (53% of sufferers)



There are also lifestyle sacrifices that eczema sufferers make. While RSPCA data² indicates that 61% of Australian households have a pet of some kind, only 38% of respondents to the EAA survey indicated they own a pet.

Just over half of eczema sufferers (52%) must also be conscious of environmental and physical triggers that worsen their condition. Of those whose condition is triggered, the weather is the biggest issue for them (72% of those whose condition is triggered). After weather, the biggest triggers for many are stress (57% of respondents mentioned), food (51%), soap (48%) and grass (36%). It is clear by the fact that many respondents chose multiple triggers, that for each individual there are a number of things to be conscious of and avoid.

² <https://kb.rspca.org.au/knowledge-base/how-many-pets-are-there-in-australia/>

ASSOCIATED CONDITIONS – ASTHMA AND HAY FEVER

There is widespread evidence³ that eczema sufferers are also more likely to suffer from asthma and/or hay fever and this fact is backed up by the survey results which show:

- 30% of eczema sufferers also have asthma, compared to 11% of Australians⁴
- 38% of eczema sufferers have hay fever, compared to 15% of Australians⁵
- 20% of eczema sufferers have **both** asthma and hay fever

As with eczema, there is also evidence that asthma and hay fever are genetic/hereditary to at least some extent:

- 38% of eczema sufferers have family history of asthma
- 39% of eczema sufferers have family history of hay fever
- 29% of eczema sufferers have family history of **both** asthma and hay fever

³ <https://nationaleczema.org/atopic-dermatitis-and-allergies-connection/>

⁴ <https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/4364.0.55.001~2017-18~Main%20Features~Asthma~35>

⁵ <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/chronic-respiratory-conditions/allergic-rhinitis-hay-fever-in-australia/contents/summary>

TREATMENTS

The EAA survey indicates that the most commonly prescribed treatment for eczema is steroid/cortisone treatments with 59% of sufferers indicating that they had been recommended this. Antibiotics were recommended to 39% of sufferers, antihistamines to 31% followed by a variety of other treatment types from OTC creams to medical procedures.

STEROIDS/CORTISONE TREATMENTS

Steroids/cortisone treatments were recommended to 59% of sufferers. The most commonly recommended brands and their effectiveness in providing 'great' or 'excellent' results were:

- 23% were recommended **Sigmacort** of which 79% indicated Great or Excellent results
- 19% recommended **Elocon** – 68% Great/Excellent results
- 18% recommended **Advantan** – 66% Great/Excellent results
- 17% recommended **Aristocort** – 80% Great/Excellent results
- 16% recommended **Celestone** – 81% Great/Excellent results

The brand which had the highest proportion of sufferers indicating it provided Great/Excellent results was Celestone with 81% of sufferers.

ANTIBIOTICS

Antibiotics were recommended to 39% of sufferers. The most commonly recommended brands and their effectiveness in providing 'great' or 'excellent' results were:

- 11% were recommended **Amoxil** of which 70% indicated Great or Excellent results
- 6% recommended **Flucinoxacillin** – 59% Great/Excellent results
- 6% recommended **Bactrim** – 66% Great/Excellent results

Flucinoxacillin had the highest proportion of sufferers indicating that their condition was aggravated, 19% of sufferers who had been recommended it.

ANTIHISTAMINES

Antihistamines were recommended to 31% of sufferers. The most commonly recommended brands and their effectiveness in providing 'great' or 'excellent' results were:

- 15% were recommended **Claratyne** of which 84% indicated Great or Excellent results
- 14% recommended **Phenergan** – 74% Great/Excellent results
- 14% recommended **Zyrtec** – 81% Great/Excellent results
- 7% recommended **Polaramine syrup** – 76% Great/Excellent results

Phenergan had the highest proportion of sufferers indicating that their condition was aggravated, 8% of sufferers who had been recommended it.

OTC CREAMS

OTC creams were recommended to 21% of sufferers. The most commonly recommended brands and their effectiveness in providing 'great' or 'excellent' results were:

- 4% were recommended **Egozylte** of which 79% indicated Great or Excellent results
- 2% recommended **Cetomacrogal cream** – 77% Great/Excellent results

FUNGAL CREAMS

Fungal creams were recommended to 18% of sufferers. The most commonly recommended brands and their effectiveness in providing 'great' or 'excellent' results were:

- 7% were recommended **Canestan** of which 71% indicated Great or Excellent results
- 3% recommended **Daktarin** – 61% Great/Excellent results

WET DRESSING

Wet dressings were recommended to 19% of sufferers.

- 62% of sufferers who had been recommended it indicated Great or Excellent results
- 15% of sufferers who had been recommended it indicated that it Aggravated their condition

IMMUNOSUPPRESSANTS

Immunosuppressants were recommended to 10% of sufferers, most commonly Elidel (7%).

- 67% of sufferers who had been recommended Elidel indicated Great or Excellent results
- 11% of sufferers who had been recommended Elidel indicated that it Aggravated their condition

MEDICAL PROCEDURES

Medical procedures were recommended to 7% of sufferers, most commonly UV Treatment (4%).

- 58% of sufferers who had been recommended UV Treatment indicated Great or Excellent results
- 16% of sufferers who had been recommended UV Treatment indicated that it Aggravated their condition

SEDATIVES

Sedatives were recommended to 6% of sufferers, most commonly Valium (3%).

- 49% of sufferers who had been recommended Valium indicated Great or Excellent results
- 4% of sufferers who had been recommended Valium indicated that it Aggravated their condition

PROFESSIONALS

A wide variety of professionals have been seen by eczema sufferers however the majority indicated that they were of no or not much help rather than very or extremely helpful.

The most common is the GP whom 60% have seen – of those, 11% found them to be Very or Extremely Helpful while 26% said they were no or not much help. The majority of sufferers felt the GP was Slightly Helpful (63%).

Dermatologists (seen by 33%) and Chemists (30%) were the next most commonly seen professionals with 21% and 12% finding them Very or Extremely Helpful respectively.

Of the most commonly seen professionals⁶, the EAA was viewed as the most helpful: Very or Extremely Helpful to 39% of those who consulted them (9% of sufferers indicated they had consulted with the EAA). The least helpful professionals were Homeopaths and Chinese Herbalists who were viewed as no/not much help by 52% of sufferers (6% of sufferers said they had seen each of these professionals).

The most helpful professionals⁷ seen by eczema sufferers were:

- 9% have seen the **EAA** of which 39% said they were Very or Extremely Helpful
- 18% have seen an **Allergy Specialist** – 22% Very/Extremely Helpful
- 14% have seen a **Paediatrician** – 22% Very/Extremely Helpful
- 33% have seen a **Dermatologist** – 21% Very/Extremely Helpful
- 10% have seen a **Dietician** – 15% Very/Extremely Helpful

The least helpful professionals⁷, seen by eczema sufferers were:

- 6% have seen a **Homeopath** of which 52% said they were No Help At All or Not Much Help
- 6% have seen a **Chinese Herbalist** – 52% No/Not Much Help
- 5% have seen a **Clinic Nurse** – 49% No/Not Much Help
- 17% have seen a **Naturopath** – 44% No/Not Much Help
- 16% have seen a **Child Health Nurse** – 40% No/Not Much Help

TESTS RECOMMENDED

27% of eczema sufferers were recommended additional tests. Of those:

- 79% of sufferers recommended a test had an Allergy Test
- 52% a Prick Test
- 51% a Blood Test
- 18% a Skin Biopsy
- 6% a Saliva Test

⁶ Of those professionals seen by more than 5% of sufferers