



Bayer AG  
Communications  
51368 Leverkusen  
Germany  
Phone +49 214 30-1  
[www.bayer.com/en/media](http://www.bayer.com/en/media)

## News Release

---

Allergic Rhinitis in Children. Taking the School Environment as a Case

### **Experts Highlight the Underestimated Impact of Allergic Rhinitis on Children's Health and Academic Performance**

- 1 in 5 children worldwide suffer from allergic rhinitis, a disease linked to reduced quality of life and poorer academic performance
- Experts call for guideline-based treatment and allergy-friendly school environments to reduce the growing burden on children
- Bayer is supporting efforts to raise awareness and promote evidence-based care to improve outcomes for young patients

---

**Basel, Switzerland, October 22, 2025** – A recent interview published in the European Medical Journal, developed with support and sponsorship by Bayer, discusses the risk, impact and treatment of pediatric allergic rhinitis with 3 allergy experts: Dr. Michael Blaiss, Dr. Lei Cheng and Dr. Mário Morais-Almeida.\* Allergic rhinitis – also known as hay fever – affects as many as 1-in-5 children worldwide and is increasingly recognized as a barrier to quality of life, academic performance, and social interactions. The article, "[Global Perspectives on Challenges and Opportunities in Managing Allergic Rhinitis in Children: Taking the School Environment as a Case](#)" highlights the need for the utilization of evidence-based management guidelines and allergy-friendly school environments from the perspective of experts in the USA, Europe, and China.

#### **Impact on children's lives**

Far from being a minor seasonal inconvenience, allergic rhinitis can have far-reaching effects on children's quality of life and performance in and out of the classroom. Evidence shows that:

- **Absenteeism:** Children with symptomatic allergic rhinitis **miss almost 3 times more school days** than their peers.
- **Presenteeism:** Reduced academic productivity from uncontrolled allergic rhinitis symptoms leads to a **loss of one-quarter of academic hours** compared to children with good symptom control.
- **Sleep & academic performance:** Students with allergic rhinitis experience **2.5 times more sleep disturbances**, affecting both academic performance and daily wellbeing.
- **Social interaction:** Social impacts are also profound, with symptoms such as persistent sneezing or runny nose contributing negatively towards social interactions with their peers.

“Allergic rhinitis is still too often dismissed as a minor issue, but the data tells a different story,” said Dr. Gabriela Zuniga, Global Allergy Medical Lead, Consumer Health Division of Bayer. “The compounding effects of symptoms pose a significant risk to childhood development and wellbeing. These new global insights underscore why clinicians, parents, and schools need to recognize allergic rhinitis as a condition requiring prompt, evidence-based management.”

### **Environmental drivers and the school challenge**

The prevalence and complexity of allergic rhinitis are being amplified by environmental change:

- Climate change has extended pollen seasons by 1.3 days per year over the last 25 years, with higher air temperatures and pollution increasing pollen allergenicity.
- Urbanization and air pollution exacerbate symptoms. Studies from China show significantly higher allergic rhinitis prevalence in children attending schools in heavily polluted areas.
- Indoor exposures in classrooms – such as dust mites, mold, pet dander, and irritants from cleaning products – are frequent triggers for symptoms.

Children are disproportionately affected, spending around 90 percent of their time indoors, much of it in schools where ventilation and allergen control may be insufficient.

“Children spend a lot of time at school, so the school environment is one that we need to control.” – Dr. Cheng.

## **Improving treatment and outcomes**

Despite the availability of international guidelines such as the ARIA (Allergic Rhinitis and its Impact on Asthma) recommendations, the experts still believe there is an opportunity for further education of healthcare professionals to improve treatment outcomes.

Experts highlight that:

- Non-sedating second-generation antihistamines should be the standard of care to avoid impairing cognition and learning. First generation antihistamines are no longer recommended in international treatment guidelines for allergic rhinitis.
  - “These medicines cause drowsiness and have other potential harmful side-effects in a significant percentage of our population, including in the pediatric age group” – Dr. Morais-Almeida.
- Early recognition of allergic rhinitis severity and frequency is essential to prevent complications such as asthma.
- Achieving good allergic rhinitis control can restore school performance to normal levels.

The insights from the experts reinforces the need for greater awareness and adoption of treatment guidelines, such as ARIA, alongside school-level interventions to reduce allergen exposure.

“At Bayer, our goal is to use science to improve health and help billions of people to live healthier lives,” said Dr. Ricardo Salazar, Chief Medical Officer, Consumer Health Division of Bayer. “By raising awareness of allergic rhinitis in children and supporting the use of international treatment guidelines, we can ensure better health outcomes for young patients around the world.”

With prevalence rising due to climate change, pollution, and urbanization, experts stress that timely diagnosis, guideline-based care, and allergy-friendly classrooms are essential to reducing the burden of allergic rhinitis on children worldwide.

\*experts were compensated by Bayer.

## **About Bayer**

Bayer is a global enterprise with core competencies in the life science fields of health care and nutrition. In line with its mission, “Health for all, Hunger for none,” the company’s products and services are designed to help people and the planet thrive by supporting

efforts to master the major challenges presented by a growing and aging global population. Bayer is committed to driving sustainable development and generating a positive impact with its businesses. At the same time, the Group aims to increase its earning power and create value through innovation and growth. The Bayer brand stands for trust, reliability and quality throughout the world. In fiscal 2024, the Group employed around 93,000 people and had sales of 46.6 billion euros. R&D expenses amounted to 6.2 billion euros. For more information, go to [www.bayer.com](http://www.bayer.com).

Contact for media inquiries:

**Tetiana Ohnieva**

Email: [tetiana.ohnieva@bayer.com](mailto:tetiana.ohnieva@bayer.com)

to (2025-0193E)

**Forward-Looking Statements**

This release may contain forward-looking statements based on current assumptions and forecasts made by Bayer management. Various known and unknown risks, uncertainties and other factors could lead to material differences between the actual future results, financial situation, development or performance of the company and the estimates given here. These factors include those discussed in Bayer's public reports which are available on the Bayer website at [www.bayer.com](http://www.bayer.com). The company assumes no liability whatsoever to update these forward-looking statements or to conform them to future events or developments.