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Press release (English)

Pollen mapping study Ally Science 2018: a successful start for allergy research via the citizens

At the peak of the 2018 pollen season, the novel Ally Science research platform has been launched: pollen allergy sufferers enter their allergy symptoms via a smartphone app; the anonymized data flow into allergy research. The longterm aim is to establish a platform for environmental epidemiology and early warning systems for pollen allergy sufferers.

The project got off to a successful start:

In the first phase of the project, almost 8'000 people participated and entered more than 24'000 symptom entries over the 89-day study period. The collected anonymized data show that the principle works: There is a good agreement between the plant species specific pollen forecasts of MeteoSwiss and the feedback from the participants. Many participants report several allergies and the respective symptoms. Nose and eye symptoms correlate most directly with pollen load and subside 1-2 days after high-intensity events, while lower respiratory tract symptoms (pollen asthma) persist for several days after pollen flight. This was not unexpected, but shows the quality of the data, even with a still relatively low number of symptom entries. All this shows that the principle of combining environmental and symptom data works and will form the basis for more in-depth evaluations. Intriguingly, data collected before 10am in the morning could fairly well predict overall symptom strength over the whole day – a prerequisite for the development of symptom-based early warning systems.

Building on the findings of the 2018 pilot study, Ally Science is entering a second phase in 2019 with an enhanced app and linking to technologies that measure pollen levels in real time.

People suffering from allergies can already now, with the start of hazel pollen flight, record their symptoms in the Ally Science app. In order to gain new findings in allergy research, the research team continues to rely on the numerous participation of citizens.

Ally Science is made possible by the following partners from the fields of health, technology and data stewardship:

- Allergy Station, Department of Dermatology, University Hospital Zurich

- Institute for Medical Informatics I4MI, Bern University of Applied Sciences
- MIDATA Cooperative
- Dyson SA§
- ELCA Informatik AG

Ally Science app information and download: www.allyscience.ch

Information on MIDATA IT data platform: www.midata.coop

Image materials and logo: [Logo Ally Science](#)

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