

MedCity News

Allergy diagnostics market to reach \$3.8bn by 2024
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Allergies remain big business for biotechs, a new Transparency Market Research report confirms, with data indicating the global market for allergy diagnostics will close to triple from \$1.3 billion in 2015 to \$3.8 billion in 2024.

Just five companies dominated 73 percent of the 2015 market: Thermo Fisher Scientific, Quest Diagnostics, BioMerieux, Omega Diagnostics Group, and Stallergenes Greer, according to a news release announcing the report.

On its website, Thermo Fisher claims to supply seven out of 10 allergy laboratory tests worldwide. Whether the big five will maintain their market share remains to be seen, but the overall opportunity appears robust as allergy rates continue to rise.

Adding to the economic opportunity for diagnostics companies, developed nations are disproportionately affected by allergies. The report news release cites 2013 statistics from the Global Burden of Asthma, which found the United States, England, Australia and New Zealand had a 20 times higher prevalence of allergies than other countries.

As a result, the North American market will account for almost 40 percent of the growth outlined in the report. However, the report also predicted the expansion of the Asia Pacific market at a “phenomenal CAGR,” as rates rise in concert with the region’s economic development.

In a phone interview, an allergy expert described how humans react to allergens.

“The allergic response is your immune system overreacting to something that isn’t otherwise dangerous to you,” explained Steve Wilson, chief operating officer at La Jolla Institute for Allergy and Immunology, in a phone interview. “In modern times we’ve become better and better at sanitation, so humans are being exposed to many fewer microbes than when we evolved. By removing beneficial microbes, it does appear to allow the immune system to overreact to other things. Those other things are allergens.”

This so-called hygiene hypothesis is one of a number of risk factors under investigation by allergy researchers. Others include the overuse of antibiotics and the avoidance of common allergens by healthy people, which conversely increases their risk.

By 2024, the year with which the report concludes, patient and provider expectations for allergy testing may have evolved. It’s clear now that the change won’t come from TheraNanos, but a range of other companies are pushing to redesign the allergy testing process.

Austrian start-up Kiweno markets its allergy tests directly to consumers with a 23andMe-style sample collection kit that can be completed from home. The user can access their results via an online platform, along with personalized dietary recommendations and forums for community support.

Companion diagnostics could be another lucrative area for growth, especially in the business of asthma. In 2015, AstraZeneca announced an agreement with Abbott to develop a companion diagnostic for its investigational biologic, tralokinumab. According to the news release, no companion diagnostic had been approved for an asthma therapy at that time. The dual offering is in phase III trials.