

TYPE A-B BEHAVIOR AND THE INCIDENCE OF ALLERGIES IN COLLEGE STUDENTS¹

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The purpose of this paper is to report a correlation that we have computed between Type A-B behavior and self-reports of allergies. We were led to this pairing of variables by both Stebbings' (5) data which suggest a positive correlation between hypertension and allergy and the (4) hypothesis that allergies may play an important role in the development of coronary heart disease. Further, we took note of data (1) which suggest that the incidence of allergies may be associated with certain personality characteristics. However, the precise nature of these traits remains to be determined. Thus, we predicted, using Friedman and Rosenman's (2) descriptions, that a group of high-drive, coronary heart disease-prone Type A students would be more likely to report allergies than a group of Type B students.

To test this hypothesis, we asked more than 300 university students to respond to the Glass (3) version of the Jenkins Activity Survey for college students and this question: "Do you have any allergies? If yes, explain." The Jenkins survey was scored using the system developed by Glass. We selected groups of students who were either clearly Type A (Jenkins score ≥ 10) or Type B (Jenkins score ≤ 6), excluding scores of 7, 8, and 9. The responses of these students formed the basis for the contingency table that is presented in the table. The difference between distributions for allergies

Group	Allergies	No Allergies	N
Type A (f)	43	43	86
Type B (f)	22	57	79

for the Type A and Type B groups are significant, in the direction predicted by hypothesis ($\chi^2 = 8.46$, $p < .01$, with $Pbi = .23$). Grossly speaking, there is an association between the personality traits which define the Type A syndrome and the incidence of allergy or some factor(s) common to both. Since our subjects were relatively young, we suspect that this relationship may prove to be even more salient in an older more severely afflicted Type A group.

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