

### **The Impact of Allergies and Allergy Treatment on Worker Productivity.**

Wayne N. Burton, Daniel J. Conti, Chin-Yu Chen, Alyssa B. Schultz, and Dee W. Edington. *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, January 2001; 43(1): 64-71.

The productivity of Bank One telephone customer service representatives who suffered from allergies was studied before, during and after the ragweed pollen season. A total of 634 employees were surveyed. A significant correlation was observed between the increase in pollen counts and a decrease in productivity for workers with allergies. Compared to those without allergies, employees with allergies who reported using no medication showed a 10% decrease in productivity. No differences were found for allergic employees who used different types of medications, although the medication groups had significantly higher productivity than the no medication group. The expected lowered productivity of those who used sedating antihistamines was not found, perhaps due to their relatively lower symptom severity. Health risk appraisal information was available for 568 of the employees and showed that employees with allergies were more likely to have a low life satisfaction, high stress, migraines, high cholesterol and five or more total risk factors compared to those without allergies.