



**EMBARGOED UNTIL**  
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**Note to media: See abstract 356**

**Consumers Beware: There Is a Difference between Predicted and Actual Pollen Counts**

SAN FRANCISCO – The more than 35 million Americans who suffer from seasonal allergic rhinitis, or “hay fever,” often rely on pollen count information to know when to limit their exposure to the types of pollen that cause their symptoms. But how reliable are pollen forecasts that websites often use? Some may not be as accurate as you think, suggests a study presented at the 2011 Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology (AAAAI).

Researchers from Environmental Allergy Assays in Ontario and the Allergy & Asthma Care Center in North Dakota investigated the disparity between two popular sites that use predicted pollen forecasts and the AAAAI’s National Allergy Bureau™ (NAB). The NAB is made up of a network of counting stations staffed by AAAAI member volunteers who use air sampling equipment and microscopes to derive daily pollen levels.

“We have long noted that the actual pollen content of the air samples from our NAB stations were often at variance with the some web pollen forecasts for our area and wondered if it were also the case at other NAB stations,” said James J. Anderson, MLT, lead author of the study.

Pollen levels, top 3 pollen lists, total counts and indices from 12 NAB stations in the United States and one in Canada were compared to corresponding daily reports from two popular pollen count websites for the 2007 and 2009 pollen seasons.

After analysis, the predicted pollen information from these websites was found to be different from actual counts derived from the 13 NAB stations.

“Predicted counts reported on many websites may be based on pollen data from previous years and general weather forecasts,” noted Estelle Levetin, PhD, FAAAAI, chair of the AAAAI’s Aerobiology Committee that oversees the NAB. “Pollen counts from the NAB stations are based on actual counts, which reflect the real day to day weather events.”

You can monitor pollen and mold levels in your area at [www.aaaai.org/nab](http://www.aaaai.org/nab).

The AAAAI represents allergists, asthma specialists, clinical immunologists, allied health professionals and others with a special interest in the research and treatment of allergic disease. Established in 1943, the AAAAI has more than 6,500 members in the United States, Canada and 60 other countries. Visit [www.aaaai.org](http://www.aaaai.org) for more resources and expert advice from allergists.

*Editor's notes:*

- *This study was presented during the 2011 Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology (AAAAI) on March 18-22 in San Francisco. However, it does not necessarily reflect the policies or the opinions of the AAAAI.*
- *A link to all abstracts presented at the Annual Meeting is available at [www.annualmeeting.aaaai.org](http://www.annualmeeting.aaaai.org)*