
**Abstract**

Perinatal administration of the probiotic *Lactobacillus rhamnosus* strain GG (ATCC 53103), reduces incidence of atopic eczema in at-risk children during the first 2 years of life (infancy). We have therefore assessed persistence of the potential to prevent atopic eczema at 4 years. Atopic disease was diagnosed on the basis of a questionnaire and a clinical examination. 14 of 53 children receiving lactobacillus had developed atopic eczema, compared with 25 of 54 receiving placebo (relative risk 0·57, 95% CI 0·33–0·97). Skin prick test reactivity was the same in both groups: ten of 50 children previously given lactobacillus compared with nine of 50 given placebo tested positive. Our results suggest that the preventive effect of lactobacillus GG on atopic eczema extends beyond infancy.