The Center for Food Allergy at the Assaf HaRofeh Medical Center is home to one of the world's largest oral immunotherapy (OIT) programs, with a staff of six full-time physicians, two nurses, and three dieticians. OIT is currently offered to patients suffering from milk, peanut, egg, or sesame allergies, with the hope of expanding treatment programs to other foods, such as tree nuts. To date, there have been more than 850 patients who have enrolled in the program. Of the 700 patients who have completed their treatment, greater than 65% achieved full or partial food desensitization. The implications of desensitization range from the elimination of life-threatening reactions, to the increase in dietary options for patients. Patients and their families are thus able to attain a lifestyle, free from the burdens associated with food allergy.

In parallel with patient treatment, the program's research component has aimed to develop and improve methodologies such as the basophil activation test (BAT) for accurate diagnosis of food allergy, and for monitoring of patient progress through OIT. [A recent article published by researchers at the Center](http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0091674915007940), highlighted the potential of using BAT as a prognostic marker for success in OIT.

While the direct costs of treatment for OIT are largely defrayed by patient payments, other ancillary services that aim to improve the patient experience in OIT (such as the medical clowns or online reporting system) are not completely covered. The anticipated expansion of the OIT program to other foods will also require increased funding, for the determination of optimal treatment protocols. Finally, funding is sought for further research into the development of improved and streamlined methodologies for patient diagnosis and monitoring.

**Anticipated Budget Itemization**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **RESEARCH EXPENSES** |  |
| Partial salary support for researcher | $18,700 |
| Reagents, equipment, service for BAT | $5,600 |
| Instrument for serum testing | $2,500 |
| Expendable laboratory supplies | $1,300 |
| Small laboratory equipment | $1,200 |
| **Total research expenses** | **$29,300** |
|  |  |
| **CLINICAL EXPENSES** |  |
|  Oral food challenge support | $5,000 |
| Maintenance of online reaction reporting system | $4,000 |
| Patient support during visits (eg clown therapy) | $3,000 |
| **Total clinical expenses** | **$12,000** |
|  |  |
| Institutional overhead | $6,700 |
| **Project Total** | **$48,000** |