

New research suggests link between climate change and outdoor allergies

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The environment is an ongoing concern in today's world but "Going Green" is becoming even more of a factor for people with respiratory allergic diseases such as allergic rhinitis or hay fever.

Pollen counts, seasons' duration and prevalence of sensitizations for five types of pollen in the Bordighera region of Italy were recorded from 1981 to 2007 by the Allergy and Respiratory Diseases Clinic, DIMI, Genoa University in Genoa, Italy. Over time, there was a progressive increase in the duration of some pollen seasons. Additionally, the total pollen load was progressively increased for some species.

"Climate changes are a reality, and they can be documented if long enough periods of time are considered," according to Renato Ariano, MD, lead author of the study.

"By studying a well-defined geographical region we observed that the progressive increase of the average temperature has prolonged the duration of the pollen seasons of some plants and, consequently, the overall pollen load," added World Allergy Organization Past President G. Walter Canonica, MD.

Results showed that the percentage of patients sensitized to these allergens increased throughout the years of the study, however the jury is still out as to whether longer pollen seasons actually put more people at risk for developing allergies.

"Longer pollen seasons and high levels of pollen certainly can exacerbate symptoms for people with allergic rhinitis and for those who previously had minimal symptoms. This may cause more people to seek medical attention," explained Professor Estelle Levetin, member of the National Allergy Bureau Task Force of the AAAAI.

The National Allergy Bureau (NAB) provides the most accurate and reliable pollen and mold levels from approximately 78 counting stations throughout the United States, two counting stations in Canada, and two counting stations in Argentina. The stations use air sampling equipment to collect

airborne pollen and spores which are then examined microscopically. This information is also used for research to aid in the diagnosis, treatment and management of allergic diseases.

If you suffer through pollen seasons, or wonder if your symptoms could be allergies, consult with an allergist/immunologist.

American Academy of Allergy Asthma & Immunology



Currently Recruiting Studies

Do you have eczema or atopic dermatitis?

Have you used PROTOPIC® (tacrolimus) ointment before you were 16 years of age to treat your eczema? Would you be interested in participating in a long-term program that will monitor your health? You may be eligible to participate in an observational research study. Talk to your physician if you would like to learn more about this important program.



Are you frustrated by your constant asthma

Volunteers, ages 18 to 65 years old, are needed for a clinical research study on uncontrolled asthma. Qualified participants must be on inhaled steroids, non-smokers, and having symptoms despite taking daily asthma medications. Qualified participants will receive compensation for visits. All study-related diagnostic testing, investigational



Does your asthma hinder your breathing?

Volunteers, ages 18 and older, are needed to participate in a clinical research study. Participants must have persistent asthma, history of little or no smoking, use a daily inhaled steroid. Study will consist of 6 visits over 4-7 weeks with two 13 hour visits. Qualified participants will receive compensation for completed visits. All study-related diagnostic testing, investigational medication and medical care provided at no charge.



A long long time ago...

Treatments for asthma back in the day...

- A treatment from early Americas deep south was to hang a hat on the bed post and proceed to drink whisky until you see two hats and you will be speedily relieved.
- African American tradition taught that, for three nights in succession, the patient must find a frog by moonlight and spit into its throat.

The most popular was a 19th Century book called "On Asthma" by Dr. Henry Hyde Salter in 1882. His book provided remedies that gave hope to many child asthma sufferers.

- Ipecac: It causes nausea and makes you vomit (sounds like fun). Salter observed that asthmatics with full stomachs had increased trouble breathing. He also believed irritants in food may cause asthma, so if you vomit and clear your stomach contents you will have an easier time breathing. (I'm not making this up).
- Tobacco: Salter encouraged kids having trouble breathing to smoke cigarettes. But, instead of inhaling, hold the smoke in as long as you can -- literally "ad nauseum". For prophylactic therapy, smoke a daily cigar.

If you would like to find an alternative approach to controlling your asthma, please contact a physician

Asthma and Allergies in Women

Asthma

Recent studies indicate that women's menstrual cycles can play a role in asthma symptoms.

Prior to puberty, asthma and hospitalizations for asthma are more common in boys than in girls. At the time of puberty, asthma occurs equally in boys and girls. By age 24, more women are affected than men. Overall, women are 30% more likely to have asthma and have a 40% higher asthma death rate than men.

Premenstrual asthma (PMA) is a condition in which asthma symptoms and lung function worsen a few days before menstruation. According to one study, 57% of women with asthma experience worsening of symptoms and increased medication use and 14% had a significant decrease in lung function before their menstruation.

During days 22-28 of the menstrual cycle, the hormones progesterone and estrogen decrease, reaching their lowest levels at day 28.

Progesterone and/or estrogen affect the airways or the cells of the immune system, making an asthma attack more likely.

Also, blood vessels in the lungs are found to form and disappear in rhythm with a woman's hormones, leading to increasing and decreasing ability of the lungs to take in oxygen. During the first two weeks of menstruation, estrogen levels increase and signal the formation of new blood vessels in the uterus and in the lungs. As estrogen levels decrease dramatically before menstruation, the decrease in blood vessels can also help explain the worsening of asthma symptoms experienced in PMA.

However, hormones by themselves do not explain the entire reasoning of PMA. The use of oral contraceptives does not prevent PMA and use of hormone replacement therapy (synthetic estrogen) in postmenopausal women increases the risk of developing adult onset asthma.

If you have PMA, keep a diary of asthma symptoms in relation to your menstrual period. Also, talk to your doctor about increasing preventative medication before menstruation.

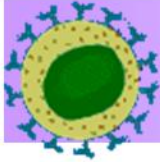
Allergic Rhinitis

Allergic rhinitis is the inflammation of nasal mucous membranes. Symptoms include sneezing, itchy nose and roof of the mouth, throat, eyes and ears, runny nose, congestion and watery eyes. These symptoms are thought to be hormonally induced during pregnancy and menstrual cycles.

Studies have shown that symptoms of allergic rhinitis increased in one-third of pregnant patients because of increased sinus congestion from the blood vessels in the nose expanding and increased blood volume.

Pregnancy rhinitis occurs without an infection, allergic, or medication-related cause. The condition starts before the last six weeks of pregnancy (corresponding to 34 weeks gestation), continues until delivery and clears up within two weeks after delivery. There may also be an association of nasal congestion with ovulation and the rise of estrogen during the menstrual cycle in some women.





ASTHMA, Inc. clinical research

4540 Sand Point Way NE, Suite 100
Seattle, WA 98105

Phone: 206-525-5520

Toll free Phone 888-400-7765

E-mail: studies@asthmainc.org

Visit us on the web at
www.asthmainc.org

Lindsey says “goodbye” and Kira says “hello”!

After three years of working at ASTHMA, Inc. the time has come for me to move on to other things. I will be moving to Fayetteville, NC to support my husband who is in the army and pursue a graduate degree in environmental sciences. It has been a pleasure working with each and every one of you, and I wish you all the best in the future.

-Lindsey

I have big shoes to fill, Lindsey will be missed. I am coming over from UW Physicians, and I am looking forward to moving into a whole new direction here at ASTHMA, inc. research.

- Kira



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