Acute pulmonary hemorrhage in infants associated with exposure to Stachybotrys atra and other fungi

Etzel RA, Montaña E, Sorenson WG, Kullman GJ, Allan TM, Dearborn DG, Olson DR, Jarvis BB, Miller JD

Abstract

BACKGROUND:

A geographic cluster of 10 cases of pulmonary hemorrhage and hemosiderosis in infants occurred in Cleveland, Ohio, between January 1993 and December 1994.

STUDY DESIGN:

This community-based case-control study tested the hypothesis that the 10 infants with pulmonary hemorrhage and hemosiderosis were more likely to live in homes where Stachybotrys atra was present than were 30 age- and ZIP code-matched control infants. We investigated the infants' home environments using bioaerosol sampling methods, with specific attention to S atra. Air and surface samples were collected from the room where the infant was reported to have spent the most time.

RESULTS:

Mean colony counts for all fungi averaged 29,227 colony-forming units (CFU)/m3 in homes of patients and 707 CFU/m3 in homes of controls. The mean concentration of S atra in the air was 43 CFU/m3 in homes of patients and 4 CFU/m3 in homes of controls. Viable S atra was detected in filter cassette samples of the air in the homes of 5 of 9 patients and 4 of 27 controls. The matched odds ratio for a change of 10 units in the mean concentration of S atra in the air was 9.83 (95% confidence interval, 1.08-3 X 10(6)). The mean concentration of S atra on surfaces was 20 X 10(6) CFU/g and 0.007 x 10(6) CFU/g in homes of patients and controls, respectively.

CONCLUSION:

Infants with pulmonary hemorrhage and hemosiderosis were more likely than controls to live in homes with toxigenic S atra and other fungi in the indoor air.

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