

Goats could increase the risk of a rare lung cancer

September 25 2011

Exposure to goats could increase the risk of a certain type of lung cancer, according to French researchers.

The study, which will be presented at the European Respiratory Society's Annual Congress in Amsterdam today (25 September 2011), has linked a professional exposure to goats with a distinct subset of [lung cancer](#), known as pneumonic-type [lung adenocarcinoma](#) (P-ADC).

This form of lung cancer has a weak association with [tobacco smoking](#) when compared with other types of the disease. In attempting to identify other triggers that may cause the disease, scientists have previously noticed similarities between P-ADC and a viral infection which causes growths in the lungs of sheep. Given these similarities, the researchers have investigated whether a viral agent found in sheep and goats could be easily transferred to people who work with the animals, leading to a partiality for P-ADC.

The current epidemiologic study involved 44 patients with P-ADC and 132 controls without the disease. All participants were given a questionnaire assessing a number of risk factors including their smoking status, their personal history of cancer and their exposure to goats.

The results showed that people who had experienced a professional exposure to goats during their lifetime were five times more likely to get P-ADC compared with other types of lung cancer.

The findings also showed that P-ADC was significantly associated with females, and people who had never smoked or had any personal history of cancer.

Dr Nicolas Girard, from the Louis Pradel Hospital, Hospices Civils de Lyon, said: "Scientists have noticed similarities between P-ADC and a contagious viral infection in sheep before. This led us to explore the possibility that professional exposure to cattle could make humans more susceptible to P-ADC. These findings demonstrate that exposure to [goats](#) could be a risk factor for this type of lung cancer, however further studies are needed to assess other potential [risk factors](#) for the disease."

Provided by European Lung Foundation

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