

Fungi offers new clues in asthma fight

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Hundreds of tiny fungal particles found in the lungs of asthma sufferers could offer new clues in the development of new treatments, according to a team of Cardiff University scientists.

In the first large study of its type, published in the journal, *BMC Infectious Diseases*, a team of researchers from Cardiff University's School of Medicine have uncovered large numbers of [fungi](#) present in healthy lungs.

"Historically, the lungs were thought to be sterile," according to Dr Hugo van Woerden from Cardiff University's Institute of Primary Care and Public Health, who led the research.

"Our analysis found that there are large numbers of fungi present in healthy human lungs. The study also demonstrates that asthma patients have a large number of fungi in their lungs and that the species of fungi are quite different to those present in the lungs of healthy individuals," he added.

By examining the [mucus](#) or sputum of patients with and without asthma, the team found some 136 different fungal species with 90 [fungal species](#) more common in [asthma patients](#) and 46 were more common in healthy individuals.

Having established the presence of fungi in the lungs of patients with asthma, the researchers now hope this could lead to new lines of research and eventually, better treatments for sufferers.

"Establishing the presence of fungi in the lungs of patients with asthma could potentially open up a new field of research which brings together molecular techniques for detecting fungi and developing treatments for asthma.

"In the future it is conceivable that individual patients may have their sputum tested for fungi and their treatment adjusted accordingly," he adds.

This is not the first time the Cardiff researchers have made the link between fungi and [asthma](#). Their previous research found that by removing fungi from people's homes, they could also help improve life for sufferers.

More information: www.biomedcentral.com/1471-2334/13/69

Provided by Cardiff University

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