

Research Highlights from Thoracic Society Conference

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DENVER — National Jewish faculty joins thousands of researchers from around the world to present the latest research in lung and related diseases at the 2007 International Meeting of the American Thoracic Society, May 18-23, in San Francisco. Listed below are a few highlighted talks National Jewish researchers will deliver.

In Asthma, Perception is Reality

For asthma patients perception can be as important as the physiological reality of their airways. A key to heading off an asthma attack is detecting it in its early stages and responding before it gets out of control. But National Jewish psychiatrist Frederick Wamboldt, MD, and his colleagues found that asthma patients with a history of severe asthma attacks had not only more “twitchy” lungs, but also were less able to perceive increasing obstruction of their airways. Those patients were less likely to detect an impending attack and respond appropriately.

Medications Can Help Reduce Ill Effects of Air Pollution on Asthma Patients

Air pollution is known to effect lung growth and increase the frequency of asthma exacerbations. National Jewish pediatric allergist [Ronina Covar](#), MD, and her colleagues found that air pollution is associated with increased inflammation in the airways of some asthma patients, but not all. Children taking inhaled steroid controller medications appeared protected against the inflammatory effects of air pollutants.

Obesity Associated with Resistance to Asthma Medication

National Jewish pulmonologists [David Beuther](#), MD, and Rand Sutherland, MD, have discovered that obese adult asthma patients are less likely to respond to corticosteroids, the mainstay of asthma treatment. Almost 90 percent of obese asthma patients demonstrated little or no improvement in lung function after a week of treatment with oral corticosteroids.

No Increased Risk with Salmeterol

The asthma medication salmeterol was given a “blackbox” warning after reports of increased risk of death among asthma patients taking the long-acting beta agonist. The warning was controversial because many believed the FDA’s decision was based on questionable data. In an attempt to get better data on the risks of salmeterol, National Jewish allergist Harold Nelson, MD, and his colleagues conducted a meta-analysis of 52 salmeterol clinical trials involving 19,850 subjects. They found no increased risk of hospitalizations when salmeterol was taken concurrently with an inhaled steroid, and patients taking the two medications together in one device showed the lowest rates of hospitalizations.

Household Bleach Neutralizes Allergens

National Jewish allergist [Karin Pacheco](#), MD, and her colleagues showed that household bleach can denature 99 percent of cat, dog and dust-mite allergens, which eliminates an allergic response in 95 percent of cat-allergic people, 92 percent of dog-allergic people, and 60 percent of dust mite-allergic people.

National Jewish Health is the leading respiratory hospital in the nation. Founded 121 years ago as a nonprofit hospital, National Jewish Health today is the only facility in the world dedicated exclusively to groundbreaking medical research and treatment of patients with respiratory, cardiac, immune and related disorders. Patients and families come to National Jewish Health from around the world to receive cutting-edge, comprehensive, coordinated care. To learn more, visit the media resources page.

Media Contacts

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