

NTU researchers link bronchiectasis with allergy

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An international research team led by Nanyang Technological University, Singapore (NTU Singapore) has found that patients with the lung disease bronchiectasis also often display sensitivity to airborne allergens, and has highlighted the particular role that fungi appear to play.

Their discovery suggests that doctors should examine bronchiectasis patients for a range of allergies, since the treatment for allergies already exists and controlling them could prevent the bronchiectasis from worsening.

Led by Assistant Professor Sanjay Haresh Chotirmall from the Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine (LKCMedicine) at NTU, the team included researchers from Tan Tock Seng Hospital, Singapore General Hospital, Changi General Hospital, National University of Singapore, Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A*STAR), National University of Malaysia, and the University of Dundee in Scotland.

They assessed fungal infection in over 200 bronchiectasis patients from Singapore, Malaysia and Scotland. While previous bronchiectasis research focused on non-Asian populations, this new study matched patients in Asia (Singapore and Malaysia) to patients in Europe (Scotland) in terms of age, gender and the severity of bronchiectasis.

The matching of patients allowed researchers to control the influence of these factors and hence show that the types and causes of allergies associated with bronchiectasis vary across regions.