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Inhalational mold toxicity: fact or fiction? A clinical review of 50 cases.

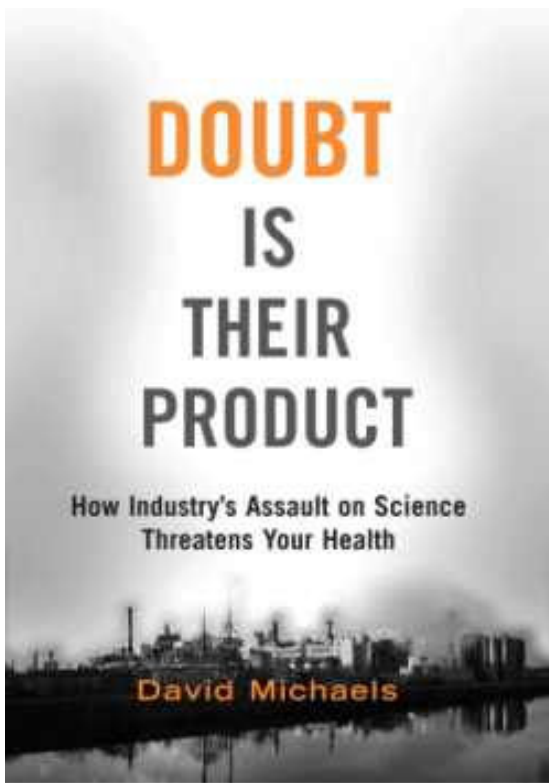
Khalili B, Montanaro MT, Bardana EJ Jr.

Oregon Health Sciences University, Portland, Oregon 97239, USA.

barzinkhalili@yahoo.com

“BACKGROUND: Three well-accepted mechanisms of mold-induced disease exist: allergy, infection, and oral toxicosis. Epidemiologic studies suggest a fourth category described as a transient aeroirritation effect. Toxic mold syndrome or inhalational toxicity continues to cause public concern despite a lack of scientific evidence that supports its existence. OBJECTIVES: To conduct a retrospective review of 50 cases of purported mold-induced toxic effects and identify unrecognized conditions that could explain presenting symptoms; to characterize a subgroup with a symptom complex suggestive of an aeroirritation-mediated mechanism and compare this group to other diagnostic categories, such as sick building syndrome and idiopathic chemical intolerance; and to discuss the evolution of toxic mold syndrome from a clinical perspective. METHODS: Eighty-two consecutive medical evaluations were analyzed of which 50 met inclusion criteria. These cases were critically reviewed and underwent data extraction of 23 variables, including demographic data, patient symptoms, laboratory, imaging, and pulmonary function test results, and an evaluation of medical diagnoses supported by medical record review, examination, and/or test results. RESULTS: Upper respiratory tract, lower respiratory tract, systemic, and neurocognitive symptoms were reported in 80%, 94%, 74%, and 84% of patients, respectively. Thirty patients had evidence of non-mold-related conditions that explained their presenting complaints. Two patients had evidence of allergy to mold allergens, whereas 1 patient exhibited mold-induced psychosis best described as toxic agoraphobia. Seventeen patients displayed a symptom complex that could be postulated to be caused by a transient mold-induced aeroirritation. CONCLUSION: The clinical presentation of patients with perceived mold-induced toxic

effects is characterized by a disparate constellation of symptoms. Close scrutiny revealed a number of preexisting diagnoses that could plausibly explain presenting symptoms. The pathogenesis of aeroirritation implies completely transient symptoms linked to exposures at the incriminated site. Toxic mold syndrome represents the furtive evolution of aeroirritation from a transient to permanent symptom complex in patients with a psychogenic predisposition. In this respect, the core symptoms of toxic mold syndrome and their gradual transition to chronic symptoms related to nonspecific environmental fragrances and irritants appear to mimic what has been observed with other pseudodiagnostic categories, such as sick building syndrome and idiopathic chemical intolerance."



"Doubt is our product," a cigarette executive once observed, "since it is the best means of competing with the 'body of fact' that exists in the minds of the general public. It is also the means of establishing a controversy."

In this eye-opening exposé, [David Michaels](#) reveals how the tobacco industry's duplicitous tactics spawned a multimillion dollar industry that is dismantling public health safeguards. Product defense consultants, he argues, have increasingly skewed the scientific literature, manufactured and magnified scientific uncertainty, and influenced policy decisions to the advantage of polluters and the manufacturers of dangerous products. To keep the public

confused about the hazards posed by global warming, second-hand smoke, asbestos, lead, plastics, and many other toxic materials, industry executives have hired unscrupulous scientists and lobbyists to dispute scientific evidence about health risks. In doing so, they have not only delayed action on specific hazards, but they have constructed barriers to make it harder for lawmakers, government agencies, and courts to respond to future threats.

The Orwellian strategy of dismissing research conducted by the scientific community as "**junk science**" and elevating science conducted by product defense specialists to "sound science" status also creates confusion about the very nature of scientific inquiry and undermines the public's confidence in science's ability to address public health and environmental concerns

United States Chamber of Commerce Institute for Legal Reform in conjunction with the Manhattan Institute Center for Legal Policy, "A Scientific View of the Health Effects of Mold", July 2003. **Sentence paid for to be written expressly for judges:**

*"Thus the notion that 'toxic mold' is an insidious secret 'killer' as so many media reports and trial lawyers would claim is '**Junk Science**' unsupported by actual scientific study."*