

THE ENDOCRINE SYSTEM AND YOUR HORMONES

Luke Curtis, my co-author of the review article on the Adverse Health Effect of Indoor Mold, published in the Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology, wrote another important paper on the effects of mold that I would like to share with you.

My experience with hundreds of patients exposed and injured by mold demonstrated the multi-systemic nature of toxic mold exposure. However, I never fully realized the pathophysiology of these effects. Luke and his co-authors demonstrated that there is a major imbalance and dysfunction to the endocrine system specifically to growth hormone, thyroid, and the adrenal hormones.

To be specific, 51% were growth hormone deficient, 81% were thyroid deficient, and 75% were ACTH deficient. All of the seventy-nine patients were fatigued and 94% had chronic fungal sinusitis. In all of the deficient patients who were given supplemental growth hormone, thyroid, and cortisol, the fatigue was improved.

Of special interest to me was that only seventeen out of seventy-nine patients were aware of being mold exposed.

This paper documents what I always say, "Many physicians do not have the foggiest idea of what is wrong with a patient." The field of Environmental Medicine is a new and exciting approach to the care of complex ill patients. We are trained and experienced to try and find the causes of disease.

In our practice, we see a large number of hormone deficient patients identified by hormone testing. Now, after reading Luke's paper, I have added Insulin Growth Factor One (IgF1) to our evaluation of sick, tired patients to identify growth hormone deficiency. Although doing an endocrine work up is an additional expense, it is worth it if you identify the cause and can treat it successfully.

Treating deficient patients with Human Growth Hormone (HGH) is not as easy or as reasonable as the cost of thyroid or adrenal hormones. But if you are dragging and just not recovering from your chronic debilitating illness, a trial for one to three months may be well worth it. Unlike the other hormones that can be taken orally, growth hormone is given like insulin- by daily subcutaneous injections. Up until now, insurance companies have refused to pay for this treatment.

As Luke's paper points out, there are now only 60,000 people with the accepted diagnosis that are receiving growth hormone. However, if toxic mold is causing this hormone loss, then the number of people who could benefit is closer to 4.8 million. There are secretagogues or mimics of HGH that are a fraction of the cost of the whole hormone and importantly may work almost as well.

Allan Lieberman, M.D., F.A.A.E.M.
Medical Director
Center for Occupational and Environmental Medicine