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WELCOME to the latest news from the Aspergillus Trust. All members who have registered with the trust will receive this newsletter direct to their registered email account. You can change your options at: [www.aspergillustrust.org/updatedetails.asp](http://www.aspergillustrust.org/updatedetails.asp) if you no longer wish to receive newsletters direct to your inbox.

## Aspergillus Support Day

The first Aspergillus Support Day was on Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2007



Here's a photo of Julia on the day discovering the print of her image as a Simpson's cartoon character!

The appeal was circulated to all those registered on the groups who suffer from aspergillus related illnesses asking them to join in on the day by pledging a small donation of just **£1.00 / \$2.00 / €2.00**. We asked for your support to be able to print and distribute our latest patient information leaflets.

- Chronic Pulmonary Aspergillosis(CPA) / Aspergilloma
- Allergic Fungal Sinusitis (AFS)
- Bronchiectasis, Pseudomonas, non-TB mycobacteria and other sources of additional respiratory problems for aspergillus sufferers.

All leaflets will be available free to all to download from the Aspergillus Trust website at [www.aspergillustrust.org](http://www.aspergillustrust.org)

The result of the appeal is as follows:  
Donations received - 8  
Members who donated - 5 Others - 3  
There were 6 donations leading up to the day however, it was somewhat disappointing that we did not have one single member support the appeal on the actual day. One further donation was made on the 24<sup>th</sup> September.

**Total amount raised was £308.66**

Congratulations to Julia for coming up with such an inspirational idea. To Alex, Chris and Helena our Freewheelers who were fantastic in their support of the day. Thanks also to John Smout for all his help and enthusiasm in setting all this up on the website. To Coco for her Great North Run and last but not least all those who have so generously supported us in our appeal.

## London Freewheel Bike Ride

Sons of our trustee John Smout, Alex and Chris Smout and their friend Helena Collins, who lost a close member of her family to a respiratory disease, rode in the London Freewheel cycling event in London on behalf of the Aspergillus Trust.

The route around London was fenced off all the way around the 8½mile course and there were only 4 access points along the route.



Here's a photo of Alex & Chris as they set off on their ride... The team did two laps of the course, 17 miles in all and in exceedingly difficult circumstances managed to raise a fantastic **£171.00** for the trust on the support day. Our grateful thanks go to the 'Freewheel Team' - an amazing result!

## Coco's Great North Run

Antonia Steven (nickname Coco) has completed the Great North Run to raise funds for the Aspergillus Trust. Coco completed the run on Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> September in 2 hours and 30 Minutes. Antonia is just entering her third year as a student nurse at Manchester University, where she is specialising in children's nursing and hopes to get a job at a children's hospital in Manchester when she finishes.



Our sincere thanks and congratulations to Coco for such a fine achievement - very well done!

## Major cause of early lung infection death is bleeding, not inflammation

Researchers believe that they have discovered why a bacterial lung infection is so lethal in the early stages, and it's not what medical authorities had thought, according to research published in the journal *Immunity*. The study reveals for the first time that a toxin released by bacteria causes severe bleeding in the lungs by patients with pneumococcal pneumonia. It is the bleeding, the authors argue, not inflammation as once thought, which makes the infections deadly. The same study also reveals why antibiotics often fail to help prevent early death.

Also called pneumococcus, the bacteria *Streptococcus pneumoniae* infects the upper respiratory tracts of the elderly and young children mostly. There are 500,000 cases of pneumococcal pneumonia annually in the United States, with about 40,000 of them fatal, according to the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention. Those numbers would be worse in children younger than 2 years if not for the 2000 introduction of the pneumococcal vaccine (Prevnar), according to one report.

The picture remains far more serious outside of the United States, however, where pneumococcal infections take the lives of at least one million children each year, according to the World Health Organisation.

*"Our finding provides a better understanding of what makes a major global bacterial infection deadly, and marks the beginning of realistic efforts to save lives worldwide,"* said Jian-Dong Li, M.D., Ph.D., Professor of Microbiology & Immunology at the University of Rochester Medical Center and an author on the *Immunity* paper. *"The power of understanding this mechanism is that it not only suggests how better to treat this disease, but also that we should think twice about whether standard drug treatments are doing more harm than good,"* said Professor Li, also senior and corresponding author on the paper.

Read the complete article here:

[http://www.aspergillustrust.org/forums/topic.asp?TOPIC\\_ID=47](http://www.aspergillustrust.org/forums/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=47)

## New Viruses To Treat Bacterial Diseases

"My Enemies' Enemy Is My Friend"

Viruses found in the River Cam in Cambridge, famous as a haunt of students in their punts on long, lazy summer days, could become the next generation of antibiotics, according to scientists at the Society for General Microbiology's 161st Meeting at the University of Edinburgh, UK, which ran from 3-6 September 2007

*"By using a virus that only attacks bacteria, called a phage - and some phages only attack specific types of bacteria - we can treat infections by targeting the exact strain of bacteria causing the disease" ...* says Ana Toribio from the Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute in Hinxton, Cambridgeshire, UK. She went on to say: *"This is much more targeted than conventional antibiotic therapy"*

You can read the full transcript of the conference session at: [http://www.aspergillustrust.org/forums/topic.asp?TOPIC\\_ID=38](http://www.aspergillustrust.org/forums/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=38)



AT ebay for charity

You can now sell your unwanted items and donate all or part of the proceeds to the Aspergillus Trust. To see how it works in 5 easy steps go to: <http://www.missionfish.org.uk/About/howitworks.jsp#forsellers>

## Home mould removal 'eases asthma'

Asthma sufferers who remove mould from their homes could see an improvement in their symptoms, a Cardiff University study has found.

Half of the South Wales homes used in the research were cleaned of mould and ventilation was improved, and the other half were left mouldy for 12 months.

Asthma patients in the mould-free homes used their inhalers less and symptoms like sneezing lessened, said experts.

Charity Asthma UK said it wanted more research before conclusions were drawn.

Researchers at Cardiff University's School of Medicine studied 182 people with asthma living in 164 mouldy houses in two locations in south Wales.

Michael Burr, of the department for primary care said the removal of mould in half of the houses led to improvements in asthma symptoms, including runny or blocked noses and itchy-watery eyes.

### Mould spores

He added: "There was no clear effect on measurements of breathing, but this may have been because patients used their inhalers as needed so that they could always breathe freely." Jenny Versnel, Asthma UK's executive director of research and policy, said the study highlighted the importance of keeping houses dry and well ventilated.

"This can reduce exposure to certain asthma triggers such as mould spores which are found in damp places," she said.

Asthma UK figures show the prevalence of asthma in Wales is among the highest in the world, with 260,000 people receiving treatment, with the rate of hospital admissions for adults 12% more than anywhere else in the UK.

The study was funded by Asthma UK, the Medical Research Council, and the Wales Office of Research and Development. The research has been published in the September edition of the medical journal *Thorax*.

From BBC Health 05.09.07

## MAARA Pollen and Spore Report

The pollen season for 2007 is now effectively over. Maara will continue to monitor what is in the air, there will be no more pollen updates on their website until the 2008 season starts.

### Fungal spore concentrations

Recent fungal spore counts have reached high levels, with clinically significant concentrations of *Cladosporium* spores. Counts consist predominantly of *Sporobolomyces*, *Cladosporium*, *Tilletiopsis*, *Hyaline basidiospores* and *ascospores*.

If you want more information about what is in the air email [enquiries@maara.org](mailto:enquiries@maara.org)

## Link found between Depression and Household Mould

A groundbreaking public health study has found a connection between damp, mouldy homes and depression. The study, led by Brown University epidemiologist Edmond Shenassa, is the largest investigation of an association between mould and mood and is the first such investigation conducted outside the United Kingdom.

Shenassa's team analysed LARES data from 5,882 adults in 2,982 households and in his report he states:

*"What the study makes clear is the importance of housing as indicator of health, including mental health. Healthy homes can promote healthy lives."*

Read the full report here:

[http://www.aspergillustrust.org/forums/topic.asp?TOPIC\\_ID=39](http://www.aspergillustrust.org/forums/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=39)

## Scientists identify cause of Job's syndrome

News release from NIAID 18<sup>th</sup> September 2007

The rare immunodeficiency disorder known as Job's (pronounced like 'robe') syndrome is caused by a specific genetic mutation that both overstimulates and understimulates the human immune system, leading to harmful bacterial and fungal infections and the physical features characteristic of the syndrome, according to two independent groups of scientists, one from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the other from the Tokyo Medical and Dental University.

*"Understanding the genetic cause of this rare immunological disorder is a signal accomplishment, revealing information that has been sought for decades"* says Anthony S. Fauci, M.D., director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), a component of NIH. *"The immunological insights from this study not only promise to open new therapeutic doors for Job's syndrome, but also provide new leads for treating other immunodeficiency diseases"*

While individuals with Job's syndrome often live long lives, life-threatening complications from basic infections are a constant concern. Identifying the specific gene implicated in the disease could benefit scientific study of several diseases that afflict people with Job's syndrome, including infections caused by Aspergillus, Candida and Staphylococcus.

Read the full news release here  
[http://www.aspergillustrust.org/forums/topic.asp?TOPIC\\_ID=41](http://www.aspergillustrust.org/forums/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=41)

## Bacteria Researchers Score a Direct Hit

In the battle against bacteria, researchers have scored a direct hit. They have made a discovery that could shorten the road to new and more potent antibiotics.

The rapid development of bacterial resistance to conventional antibiotics (such as penicillin or vancomycin) has become a major public health concern. Because resistant strains of bacteria can arise faster than drug companies can create antibiotics, understanding how these molecules function could help companies narrow their focus on potential antibiotics and bring them to market sooner.

As reported in a paper accepted for publication in the *Journal of the American Chemical Society* and posted on its Web site, researchers have now deciphered the molecular mechanism behind selective antimicrobial activity for a prototypical class of synthetic compounds.

*"The compounds, which mimic antimicrobial peptides found in biological immune systems, function as molecular 'hole punchers,' punching holes in the membranes of bacteria,"* said Gerard Wong, a professor of materials science and engineering, physics and bioengineering at the University of Illinois, and a corresponding author of the paper. *"It's a little like shooting them with a hail of nanometer-sized bullets -- the perforated membranes leak and the bacteria consequently die"*

The researchers also determined why some compounds punch holes only in bacteria, while others kill everything within reach, including human cells.

Read the full article here:

[http://www.aspergillustrust.org/forums/topic.asp?TOPIC\\_ID=43](http://www.aspergillustrust.org/forums/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=43)

## Government Launches Winter Flu Campaign, UK

Article Date: 28 Sep 2007 - 3:00 PDT

Flu contributes to over 25,000 excess winter deaths every year and thousands of people are hospitalised due to serious complications.

Chief Medical Officer Professor Liam Donaldson advises: *"If you suffer from illnesses such as asthma, diabetes or serious heart or kidney disease, or you are 65 years or older, you are particularly at risk from flu. For those most at risk, flu can lead to more serious illnesses, including bronchitis or pneumonia and could result in hospitalisation or, in the most serious cases, death"*

Professor Donaldson went on to say:

*"People and children at risk from the effects of flu need to get a flu jab every year. It only takes a minute to get the flu jab, but this will protect you, your child or grandchild for 12 months. This is why you should contact your GP and make an appointment to get a free annual flu jab. The flu jab can literally save lives."*

Read the full government press release here

[http://www.aspergillustrust.org/forums/topic.asp?TOPIC\\_ID=42](http://www.aspergillustrust.org/forums/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=42)

## European Lung Foundation

The ELF is the public voice of the European Respiratory Society (ERS). We aim to share the knowledge and expertise of the ERS with you.

Founded in 1990, the European Respiratory Society is a non-profit making, international medical organisation with over 7,000 members from 100 countries. It is the biggest society in Europe in its field.

What this means is that all the information provided on this website has been reviewed by lung specialists in Europe to ensure that everything is accurate and unbiased.

Information will also be regularly modified to make sure that it is up to date. You can visit the ELF at:

<http://www.european-lung-foundation.org/>

There is also a fact sheet titled 'Indoor Air pollution and the Lungs' available for download from the ELF here:

[http://www.european-lung-foundation.org/uploads/Document/WEB\\_CHEMIN\\_4441\\_118\\_9085160.pdf](http://www.european-lung-foundation.org/uploads/Document/WEB_CHEMIN_4441_118_9085160.pdf)

## Airline Oxygen Issue Moves Forward

Article Date: 09 Aug 2007 - 2:00 PDT

A strongly-worded letter from key members of Congress urging the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) to issue final regulations governing the use of portable oxygen concentrators (POCs) on commercial airlines is having its intended effect.

The AARC has just learned DOT Secretary Mary E. Peters has responded, saying the regulations are being finalised now and should be ready by the end of the year. Currently, the federal government gives the airlines the option to permit approved POCs on board. The proposed regulations would, if enacted, require the airlines to do so.

Read the full news article here:

[http://www.aspergillustrust.org/forums/topic.asp?TOPIC\\_ID=44](http://www.aspergillustrust.org/forums/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=44)

*"If you haven't any charity in your heart, you have the worst kind of heart trouble"*

Bob Hope

## Lifting the lid on computer filth

Office workers are exposed to more germs from their phones and keyboards than toilet seats, scientists reveal. Workstations contain nearly 400 times as many microbes than lavatories, it is claimed.

The key offenders are telephones, which harbour up to 25,127 microbes per square inch, keyboards 3,295 and computer mice 1,676.

By contrast, the average toilet seat contains 49 microbes per square inch, the survey showed. Microbiologist Dr Charles Gerba, of the University of Arizona, who carried out the research, said: *"When someone is infected with a cold or flu bug the surfaces they touch during the day become germ transfer points because some cold and flu viruses can survive on surfaces for up to 72 hours"*

The study found that where office workers who were told to clean their desks with disinfecting wipes, bacterial levels were reduced by 99%.

Read the full press release here:

[http://www.aspergillustrust.org/forums/topic.asp?TOPIC\\_ID=45](http://www.aspergillustrust.org/forums/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=45)

## Reduction of Invasive Aspergillosis Incidence among Immunocompromised Patients after Control of Environmental Exposure

In a recent study researchers detected a straightforward association between environmental modification and decreased Invasive Aspergillosis incidence, which emphasises the use of an environmental strategy, including high-efficiency air filtration, in the prevention of IA.

The objective of the study was to assess the impact of the relocation of an adult haematological intensive care unit on invasive aspergillosis (IA) incidence.

Clin Infect Dis. 2007 Sep 15;45(6):682-6

Authors: Benet T, Nicolle MC, Thiebaut A, Piens MA, Nicolini FE, Thomas X, Picot S, Michallet M, Vanhems P

See the full study report here:

[http://www.aspergillustrust.org/forums/topic.asp?TOPIC\\_ID=46](http://www.aspergillustrust.org/forums/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=46)

PMID: 17712750 [PubMed - in process]

## AGM and General Meeting

The AGM and General Meeting took place at the Directory of Social Change Charity Centre offices in London on Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> September.

Minutes of both meetings will be available on the website shortly and details of the next meeting in March/April 2008 will be posted as soon as a suitable venue and date can be arranged.

If you would like more information about the Aspergillus Trust - please contact us by post at

Aspergillus Trust  
PO Box 168  
Hexham NE46 9AN  
United Kingdom

email [info@aspergillustrust.org](mailto:info@aspergillustrust.org)

## On a final note

Lack of support is seriously undermining what the board of trustee's is endeavouring to achieve on behalf of patients. In a nutshell, if you value what we are trying to do then please say so, get involved, show your support and help us to help all those suffering from these dreadful illnesses.

Jim Breen

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## Autumn Recipe - Mixed Berry Jam

This recipe needs **No Added Sugar** but, instead, uses apple juice in concentrated form, which you can buy from healthfood shops. A member of the Women's Institute makes this regularly for someone who is diabetic but, obviously, individual diabetics needs vary greatly. It is not a true 'preserve' as it is too low in sugar to prevent moulds from forming - it can be stored in unopened jars for up to 6 months. Once opened, must be refrigerated and used within two weeks.

Ingredients

Makes about 675g (1½ lbs.)

Preparation time 20 Minutes      Cooking Time 30 Minutes

225g (8ozs) Strawberries - fresh or frozen, hulled

225g (8ozs) Blackberries - fresh or frozen

225g (8ozs) Gooseberries

225g (8ozs) Apple Juice Concentrate, weighed in a plastic container.

1. Liquidise half the fruit and place in a saucepan with the rest of the whole fruit
2. Simmer gently until the gooseberries are cooked - about 15-20 minutes
3. Add the apple juice concentrate and boil for 15 minutes or until you achieve a 'set'. Remove any scum from the surface.
4. Pour into cooled sterilised jars and cover, label and store for up to 6 months. Once open; store in the fridge and use within two weeks.

This recipe is from a recipe book called 'Best kept Secrets of the Women's Institute' by Midge Thomas. Simon & Schuster ISBN 0-74322-113-3 £7.99

## Get involved

There are many ways that you can help the Aspergillus Trust in its work, these include:

- Becoming a Member ...join us and pledge your support.
- Contribute to our Voluntary Subscription scheme.
- Support other members by joining our online community forum
- Share your skills and ideas with us to further the aims and objectives of the AT.
- Volunteer to help us in organising our regional meetings and distributing information and help to other Aspergillus sufferers in your area.
- Invite family and friends to become AT supporters ...many companies for example have 'Dress Down Charity Days' - suggest that they consider nominating the AT as their Charity.
- Help with fundraising by taking part in or organising events and raising sponsorship for the trust.
- By making a donation.

*"What I do you cannot do; but what you do, I cannot do. The needs are great, and none of us, including me, ever do great things. But we can all do small things, with great love, and together we can do something wonderful"*  
Mother Teresa of Calcutta

## News Items

If you have any news, articles, recipes, ideas, comments, or information you would like to contribute to future publications of the AT News please get in touch at:

[news@aspergillustrust.org](mailto:news@aspergillustrust.org)

**Please Note:**

Articles will be included entirely at the discretion of the board of Trustee's.