

Summaries of Specific ACCESS Findings

Environmental or Occupational Risk Studies

3. Article Title: “A Case Control Etiologic Study of Sarcoidosis: Environmental and Occupational Risk Factors”

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The cause of sarcoidosis is unknown. Past research suggests that a number of exposures in a person’s home or work environment may be linked to sarcoidosis. Interviewers asked questions of people who had been diagnosed with sarcoidosis and of their matched controls. We asked both groups questions about their jobs, homes, and hobbies. We studied all the answers and a combination of answers to determine if patients with sarcoidosis and their controls shared the same type of exposure.

We found sarcoidosis was more likely to occur in people with certain types of jobs and certain types of exposures in their jobs or homes. More so than in the home, people’s workplace exposures more often were linked to having sarcoidosis. The *jobs* we found associated with sarcoidosis were farming, raising birds, and being a middle school or high school teacher. The *exposures* in people’s work places linked to sarcoidosis were insecticides or pesticides, mold or mildew, and musty odors.

People in the study who smoked tobacco products or who breathed other peoples’ smoke (called ‘second-hand smoke’) tended to be the study controls, not those with sarcoidosis.

In ACCESS, several environmental exposures that past authorities had thought to be linked to sarcoidosis were found *not* to be associated with sarcoidosis. For instance, ACCESS did not find that being exposed to pine trees, wood dust, metals, silica, talc at work, or eating clay to be associated with having sarcoidosis.

In conclusion, ACCESS did not find the cause of sarcoidosis. Importantly, the study suggests that there may be more than one exposure that can cause this disease. We found several job, home, and hobby exposures linked to having sarcoidosis. Future studies will be needed to look harder at certain environmental factors, such as insecticide use on the job, working in musty, moldy environments, or being a school teacher. Although ACCESS showed that these kinds of environments were associated with an increased risk for having sarcoidosis, this study does not *prove* that these environmental factors are the *cause* of sarcoidosis.