ALLERGIC BRONCHOPULMONARY ASPERGILLOSIS IN WASTE DISPOSAL - DELAYED DIAGNOSIS WITH PROTRACTED CONSEQUENCES

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Background:
The disposal and processing of waste involves various inhalational health hazards arising from bio-aerosols. Diseases caused by type I sensitization to moulds are described, while hypersensitivity pneumonitis is rarely reported. Allergic bronchopulmonary aspergillosis (ABPA) as an occupational disease has not been previously described.

Methods:
In July 2012 and March 2013, a technician of an incineration plant and a garbage man (respectively) experiencing workplace-related respiratory symptoms were examined: medical history, lung function and DLCO, spirometry, skin prick test, spec. IgE, IgG, and TCT; with follow-up at 24 or 36 months.

Results:
Type I and type III-sensitization to Aspergillus were present in both cases. Due to typical symptoms and TCT confirmed infiltrates, ABPA was diagnosed. In addition, IgE against Penicillium species and Micropolyspora faeni were identified.

Discussion:
ABPA as an occupational disease and a particular risk in waste disposal have not yet been described. In both cases, the misdiagnosis of drug-resistant pneumonia was initially made. The necessary change of workplace was thus delayed. Exposure to mould strains, however, was not entirely avoidable at either of the new workplaces. Again, infiltrates and type I typical airway obstructions occurred. ABPA as a work-related serious illness requires a change of workplace or occupation.