

Letter to the editor

I read with interest the paper by Ezeamuzie et al. entitled "Prevalence of allergic sensitization to inhalant allergens among blood donors in Kuwait – a desert country" (1). I was very surprised to learn about the high prevalence of sensitization to house-dust mites, given that the mean relative humidity, 15–30%, is considered unsuitable for mite growth, which is water dependent (2). The authors speculate that one of the reasons for this phenomenon might be the extensive use of air conditioners, which "may well have created the indoor climatic condition conducive to mite growth".

Air conditioners are usually recommended (3) as a means to *reduce* high indoor humidity and so create an indoor climatic condition *unconducive* to mite growth. So, if anything, air conditioners in Kuwait should have helped to change the indoor environment for the better. Another possible explanation is the use of a cooling system that *raises* the indoor humidity (4). This kind of a system is specially recommended for hot, dry areas, such as Kuwait.

It would be important if the authors could clarify this point.

References

1. Ezeamuzie CI, Al-Mousawi M, Dashti H, Al-Bashir A, Al-Hage M, Al-Ali S. Prevalence of allergic sensitization to inhalant allergens among blood donors in Kuwait – a desert country. *Allergy* 1997;52:1194-1200.
2. Spieksma FThM. Domestic mites from an acarologic perspective. *Allergy* 1997;52:360-8.
3. Platts-Mills TAE, Solomon WR. Aerobiology and inhalant allergens. In: Middleton E, Reed CE, Franklin Adkinson N, Yunginger JW, editors. *Allergy, principles and practice*. St Louis, MO: Mosby, 1993:523-4.
4. Ellingson AR, LeDoux RA, Vedanthan PK, Weber RH. The prevalence of *Dermatophagoides* mite allergen in Colorado homes utilizing central evaporative coolers. *J Allergy Clin Immunol* 1995;96:473-79.

J. PANASOFF

Lin Medical Center, Allergy Department,
35 Rostchild Avenue, 35152-Haifa, Israel

This document is a scanned copy of a printed document. No warranty is given about the accuracy of the copy. Users should refer to the original published version of the material.