Dampness in buildings and health: Nordic interdisciplinary review of the scientific evidence on associations between exposure to "dampness" in buildings and health effects (NORDDAMP)

Several epidemiological investigations concerning indoor environments have indicated that "dampness" in buildings is associated to health effects such as respiratory symptoms, asthma and allergy. The aim of the present interdisciplinary review is to evaluate this association as shown in the epidemiological literature. A literature search identified 590 peer-reviewed articles of which 61 have been the foundation for this review. The review shows that "dampness" in buildings appears to increase the risk for health effects in the airways, such as cough, wheeze and asthma. Relative risks are in the range of OR 1.4-2.2. There also seems to be an association between "dampness" and other symptoms such as tiredness, headache and airways infections. It is concluded that the evidence for a causal association between "dampness" and health effects is strong. However, the mechanisms are unknown. Several definitions of dampness have been used in the studies, but all seems to be associated with health problems. Sensitisation to mites may be one but obviously not the only mechanism. Even if the mechanisms are unknown, there is sufficient evidence to take preventative measures against dampness in buildings.

General information
Publication status: Published
Organisations: Indoor Environment, Department of Mechanical Engineering
Pages: 72-86
Publication date: Jun 2001
Peer-reviewed: Yes

Publication information
Journal: Indoor Air
Volume: 11
Issue number: 2
ISSN (Print): 0905-6947
Ratings:
Web of Science (2001): Indexed yes
Original language: English
Keywords: review, dampness, exposure, health effects, allergy, asthma
DOIs:
10.1034/j.1600-0668.2001.110202.x
Source: orbit
Source ID: 64120
Research output: Contribution to journal › Review – Annual report year: 2001 › Research › peer-review