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Universiteit Leiden



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STELLINGEN BEHORENDE BIJ HET PROEFSCHRIFT:

Helminth Infections and Allergies in Ghana

1. Infection with schistosomes is negatively associated with house dust mite skin prick test positivity but not with reported wheeze or asthma **[this thesis]**.
2. The prevalence of skin prick test reactivity to house dust mite allergen is highest among urban high socioeconomic status (SES) children followed by rural children and lastly urban low SES children **[this thesis]**.
3. Helminth-induced IgE against cross-reactive carbohydrate determinants accounts for elevated levels of peanut-specific IgE that does not translate into skin prick test reactivity among Ghanaian children living in areas endemic for helminth infections **[this thesis]**.
4. Environmental factors have a stronger effect than underlying genetics on peripheral blood gene expression patterns of urban and rural Ghanaian children **[this thesis]**.
5. Reduced contact of people with natural environmental features and biodiversity may adversely affect the human commensal microbiota and its immunomodulatory capacity [Hanski *et al.*, Proc Natl Acad Sci USA. 2012 May 22;109(21):8334-9]
6. Most childhood asthma in Latin America is non-atopic and has been associated with exposures linked to poverty such as environmental dirt, diet and psychosocial distress. [Cooper *et al.*, Curr Opin Allergy Clin Immunol. 2012 Apr;12(2):171-8]
7. Helminth infection during pregnancy may have a role in protecting against eczema in infancy [Mpairwe *et al.*, Pediatr Allergy Immunol. 2011 May;22(3):305-12]
8. IgE antibodies to plant-derived cross-reactive carbohydrate determinants appear to be of minor clinical significance while IgE directed against the oligosaccharide epitope galactose- α -1,3-galactose has been linked to two forms of anaphylaxis [Commings and Platts-Mills, Curr Allergy Asthma Rep. 2010 Jan;10(1):29-33]
9. A little dirt never hurt anyone.
10. Three items that are essential for fieldwork in developing countries are patience, a good pair of walking shoes and a smile.
11. The pace of urbanization in developing countries is so rapid that by the time you publish your research articles, your rural study site will be an urban area.
12. Nothing kills productivity more than a broken coffee machine.