

POTENTIAL HEALTH CONDITIONS FACING HOARDING RESIDENTS

Target audience: Public health officials, building inspectors, housing specialists, landlords, emergency responders, health care providers, and concerned neighbors

HOARDING

Definition: Acquisition of and failure to discard possessions of little use or value. Living spaces cannot be used as intended due to excessive clutter. It causes significant distress or impairment in functioning.

Types: Animals, Possessions (paper/clothing), Both

Associations: Strong link with OCD, as well as, depression, agoraphobia, schizophrenia, anorexia.

Long term treatment: Exposure & response prevention (ERP), cognitive behavior therapy (CBT), SSRIs, SNRIs, TCAs.

AMMONIA

FROM ANIMAL WASTE ACCUMULATION

Ammonia concentrations: ≥ 50 ppm is an extreme irritant and 300 ppm is an immediate threat to life and health.

- Example in one article of ammonia level in an animal hoarder home:
152 ppm even after ventilation.

Exposure risk factors:

- High concentrations
- Prolonged exposure
- Faster respiratory rate
- Increased absorption into lungs and mucous membranes

Direct tissue damage:

Lungs. Inhalation of hydro-soluble irritants like ammonia is associated with proximal airway injury.

- Chronic dry cough
- Chronic or worsening dyspnea
- Restrictive or obstructive lung disease
- Bronchospasm/asthma
- Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)
- Constrictive bronchiolitis
- Bronchopneumonia

-Bronchiectasis (permanent enlargement of small airways) is best documented and can occur from 2 months-2 years after the exposure.

-Death from severe laryngeal edema and obstruction, pulmonary edema, or extensive lung complications.

Mucous membranes. Breathing fumes can lead to conjunctivitis, rhinopharyngitis, laryngitis.

Skin. In solution with water, ammonium hydroxide can cause liquefaction necrosis and alkali burns. As it dissolves, heat is released capable of thermal injury.

Nerves. Paresthesias in the hands and feet.



OTHER POTENTIAL EXPOSURES AND RISKS TO HEALTH

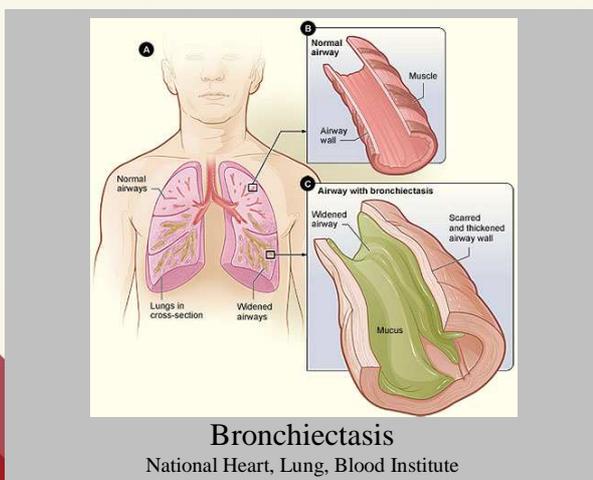
- Unstable housing structures leading to collapse and fire hazards
- Mold and dust mites exacerbating allergies
- Insect vectors (ticks, mosquitoes) carrying Lyme disease, West Nile Virus, encephalitis
- Animal vectors poorly immunized hosting rabies and other diseases
- Rodents damaging structures and spreading infection
- Clutter leading to poor ventilation of heat sources causing carbon monoxide poisoning

WHEN TO SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION

- Suspect dehydration, anorexia, malnutrition
- Non-healing wounds
- Excessive wheezing, shortness of breath, central cyanosis, trouble breathing on exertion, persistent cough

TREATMENT OPTIONS

- Albuterol nebulizer or inhaler
- Supplemental oxygen
- Intravenous fluids
- Allergy medications like epinephrine or anti-histamines such as Benadryl or Zyrtec



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