

Mould Standards

There are literally dozens of mould standards form around the world, but none are useful, and all are based on out-of-date measurement, or recognised exposure hazards

The World health Organisation is typically quoted as recognising less than 500 spores is acceptable, but a common-sense question might be 500 normally present environmental species or 500 toxigenic species?

A mix of differing species of mould present can influence their potential synergy and create a hazard larger than their sum.

1000 spores may not affect the majority of people while 200 could affect some .

The WHO have acknowledged that 20% of the population, that's 1:5 people are genetically prone to mould negative health impact, and while genes play an important role the level of immune response may vary from the very young where immune response has yet to fully develop or the elderly where the immune response is depleted.

Add the chronically sick and their immune response can be even lower.

WE now address toxicity and while all moulds are allergenic, the allergic reaction may depend on dose. Obviously visiting a home or building where there is only 500 spores per cubic meter is different from spending 24/7 in the same levels of exposure.

The issue of toxigenic mould is another problem and while toxicity may be discussed and even debated, inflammatory response is now well documented as a major health impact form mould

All standards revolve around mould spore counts, some adjust for toxic species such a Chaetomium, Stachybotrys but whole spores is the count. The WHO have also stated and have been supported in the concerns over dead mould and hyphal fragments and these again according to WHO are 40-fold greater exposure than whole spores. These desiccated or dead fragments by-pass all human defences to enter the blood stream and possibly break the blood brain barrier.

A well-respected organisation IICRC have in their ANSI international standard S520. In this mould is graded as:

- 1 normal fungal ecology
2. settled spores usually from condition 3
3. active mould growth

Of course, many strive for condition 1 but this is inadequate for many reasons. Imagine a cushion which passed a test for condition 1. Now slap it and subsurface spores have come to the surface and re-created condition 2.

Now ask a patient suffering form mould illness if condition 1 is acceptable and they will not agree or accept. The next major issue is that everyone measures spores , but as alluded to previously , spore fragments cannot be counted because they are too small.

Building Forensics provide data driven results to satisfy all stakeholders.