Introduction to Mold and Fasting

Hi everyone. This is Dr. Joseph Antoun, your co-host for the Fasting and Longevity Summit. This is a special episode with Dr. Lauren Tessier, who is one of the national experts on mold and other chronic inflammation and infections and has an approach that's more holistic, integrative, and that tackles the root cause of these illnesses, which is the right way and the best way to tackle them.

And to induce recovery. So make sure you stay tuned in. This is a topic that is not talked enough about in allopathic medicine. We typically a little bit less consider these kind of health conditions.

So and a lot of us today living with the environments we live in are suffering from these kind of illnesses and inflammations. And a lot of this here today will help us understand how fasting can be effective for us.

Categorize these conditions, and then how fasting can be effective in supporting part of the regression or the remission. Dr. Tessier, thank you very much for your time today.

Oh, I'm so excited to be here. I think this is going to be a great, great opportunity for people to drink from the firehose that is mold, mycotoxins and sting.

So thank you.

Dr. Tessieru2019s Background and Work

Do you mind saying a few words about yourself to introduce yourself to the listeners? Sure. So, Dr. Lauren Tessier, I'm a Naturopathic Physician licensed here in beautiful Vermont, potentially pending in California sometime soon, which is very exciting.

I've been helping people with mold issues, really starting right when I hung my shingle ten years ago and as the time marched on, you know, underwent numerous certification ends and then kind of broke out on my own and started also teaching.

I became involved with a nonprofit called ISEAI, the International Society for Environmentally Acquired Illness, both through their through vice president and president secretary, you know, danced around the whole executive board there.

And the reason why I mentioned that nonprofit is it's a really wonderful place for physicians, practitioners alike to really learn the ins and outs of mold, illness. So I'm here in beautiful Vermont.

Ironically, I did lose my office to the Vermont flooding. The irony there is absolutely not lost on me. So now I'm doing a little bit more of a virtual thing.

But nonetheless, I'm still here and I'm still kickin. And yeah, I'm really excited to chat with you today. We say that very much and you might hear for our listeners a little bit, maybe start by categorizing, you know, what is in a mold and a toxin.

And can you can you give us a little bit of a general categorization? And then before we start tackling the subject, four categories if you want, and then how fasting can help?

Sure, sure. So we'll start off with with fungi. Fungi is a really big kingdom, just like we have our plant kingdom, our animal kingdom. We have a whole entire fungi kingdom.

Within that kingdom, we have quite a few groupings.

What Mold and Mycotoxins Are

And within those groupings we have a handful of molds that are really impactful on human health and a mix of or I should say, fungi that are impactful in human health.

And the reason why I correct that is because we have both single cellular fungi, also known commonly as like yeast. So, you know, Candida is one everyone knows.

And then we also have our multicellular many cellular fungi that we commonly refer to loosely as molds. And so these are the organisms and not all of them are dangerous.

In fact, we do have some wonderfully beneficial fungi out there. However, when they start to be a problem is when we are confined in them with them in a small space.

So whether that small space is our indoor living environment or that small spaces within our body, that's when we have a little bit more trouble kind of keeping up with their impact.

So molds themselves, they are the organism mycotoxins are the toxins they produce. And a lot of people will hear myco excuse me. They'll hear micro like small rather than myco, which is that kind of root word for fungi.

So mycotoxins are toxins produced by fungi and these are non-living, right? They're chemical substance. And these have a really big affinity for anything that has fats and lipids.

And that's part of the damage that they do is through lipid oxidation. So anything are lipid peroxidation. Any place in our body that we have a good amount of fat is going to be most most impacted by these mycotoxins.

And the biggest body systems there are your brain, right, and your nervous system. That's 70% fat, I believe. And we have our liver and kidneys, which also happen to be our detox organs.

So these mycotoxins are phenomenal for messing with your natural detox processes. And they're also going to, you know, the main brain computer and causing issues there.

But it doesn't just stop at your tissues that are rich in fat. All of your cells in your body have that lipid membrane. Right. And then even more so, we have all of the machinery in the cells, our organelles that also have that lipid membrane.

And so those mycotoxins can get into the Salisbury too easily and cause a lot of damage for the machinery that is inside all of our cells, no matter if it's in the brain, the liver, kidneys, or if it's in the cardiac tissue or, you know, in the lining of the bladder, what have you. So Mycotoxins are obviously problematic.

The one thing I do want to offer to people, a ray of sunshine and hope in all of this is that not all molds produce mycotoxins and even some molds that do have the ability to produce mycotoxins.

They might not necessarily do it unless they're stressed or unless, you know, they're increased temperature or there's other bugs in their niche that are causing them stress.

So not all molds produce micro toxins, but when they do make, the toxins are problematic to the system. So it's kind of the the 20,000 foot view of those two two different terms of molds and mycotoxins.

That's thank you for helping us understand that. And I know you have the philosophy of like categorizing the society and all the models in like for disease or for verticals.

Do you want to talk a bit more about that?

Four Categories of Mold-Related Illness

Sure, sure. So I have a a low tech visual support here. Hopefully people can see that. So, yeah, there we go. And then you keep it up a little bit so that.

Yes. Time. Yes. So the one thing I just want people to kind of grasp from that is there's four overlapping circles patterns. Each major circle is going to represent kind of the body's response or a classification of that illness.

So we have infection, an infection pretty widely accepted in the allopathic medical paradigm. A lot of studies will say people have to be immunocompromised to have fungal growth that actually has a good amount of evidence against that.

There are plenty of people who have a healthy, well functioning, a mean, a competent system that do have fungal infections in what that circle. I also lump colonization in because that circle represents to me that the bug is in the body, the fungus is in the body.

So that's kind of one picture. One of the other circles there I label with allergy. So allergy is going to be the immune system's response to a lot of the carbohydrate and the polysaccharides of the fungal cell wall, the fungi, the mold, what have you, and the body's response to an allergy is going to be exactly what you think of dry eyes, itchy eyes, watery eyes, sneezing, coughing, shortness of breath, tightness in the throat, cough, you name it.

Right. So we have that circled in there. Another circle that I work with there for people is the toxic reaction. And that's actually going to be a lot of what we end up talking about today.

Speaking about today, the toxic reaction is from those mycotoxins that I mentioned and this is less widely accepted. So infection and allergy totally widely accepted.

Mycotoxins not so much. We won't get into why I suspect that that's the case, but there is a lot of evidence in the food systems from developing nations, a lot of animal evidence, cellular evidence.

However, we can't ethically expose people to something we know will harm them. And collect data. So that's why we don't have a lot of these randomized controlled trials of mycotoxins exposure.

So mycotoxins because they go into all the cells in the body that get into all the tissues, they cause oxidative damage. A lot of the systems in the body, pretty much all the systems are going to have symptoms.

So if you can name it, it's probably going to happen or at least I've seen it with clients. And these are often the folks that they go into their primary care with a list of 20, 20 or more symptoms.

They get told they have fibromyalgia and depression and they kind of get sent on on their way. So if that's you don't give up hope just yet. That's final.

That's that's very, very important. I wanted to ask you about there's a lot of people listening to us today, if they're not physicians or they're not from the medical community or are practitioners, they're they're wondering, like, what is a potential taboo?

What is a potential presentation of symptoms that they should think in soliciting their doctor or coming to people like yourselves? Excuse yourself to think that, hey, I might have a an infection or mold or make toxins in my body.

And you just probably said it, right? You get a decision like a lot of symptoms happening together and in each one of them is like almost subclinical, right?

Right. Within a traditional way of practicing medicine, says, well, your immune system shows, okay, you maybe have a little bit of fire therapy, but it's not all the way up there.

You look fatigued. But I tested. Yes, it's normal.

Common Symptoms and Misdiagnosis

I tested your you know, everything is looking subclinical in some literally. And this is this is where and this is why you have fibromyalgia, automobiles feeling down.

You're depressed or you're or is anxiety and actually ends up in many cases b, b b exactly what you're addressing in. So I didn't mean to interrupt, but it's important to help know patients and or people listening to us here, you can understand how it starts or what are the symptomatic of the symptoms of what we're discussing about here.

For sure. And I appreciate that because the biggest symptom that I see for folks is fatigue, fatigue and brain fog. I mean, that's that's anything that's everything that's bad that gets you like, you know, all of your labs covered are insurance because it could potentially be anything fatigue.

Oh, my goodness. Likes stop the presses. We need to do a CBC. We need to do all these rollouts. Right. So fatigue and brain fog tend to be the biggest complaint that I have people come into or come to see me for.

However, these folks have also gone through that, oh, it's Lyme. Oh, it's this coinfection. Oh, it's, you know, X, Y, Z. And the last thing that they've actually looked at is, you know, mold or environmental impacts in their home.

So, you know, folks who have gone through Lyme treatment for ten and 15 years with minimal improvement, minimal bugging, like, you know, think think about the home for sure.

So the the symptoms really do overlap. And that's like the whole point of all that circle mess framework saying that the symptoms do overlap. And so when we're chatting with someone, we kind of, you know, put what symptoms could go in what circle.

And then based on that, we do treatment and workup. So our workup for toxic reaction is going to look a bit different for our work up for an allergic reaction.

I should mention the final circle there is something called chronic inflammatory response syndrome. This was popularized by Richie Shoemaker in the late nineties, early aughts, and it's pretty much the theory that these bio toxins get into the system and they cause immune system chaos and confusion that keeps burning like a wildfire long after the kind of starting flame has gone out.

And so, you know, that has a whole entire workup, but that one also overlaps with all the other symptoms. So I'm sure people are wondering, so what is fasting have to do with this? Or that was the next big question is in how within this fasting and longevity summit, what fasting has to do with with all this working on the root cause and the symptoms and on the cells directly, which I expect is the direction you're going to take it.

Mm hmm. And the beautiful part about fasting, is it does something that no other supplement or a medication can do. That process can kind of be patchwork then with a lot of different things.

But there's behavioral change, just modification that's free to do. Or if you have trouble with that, you can go through a difference. Dietary systems that help support that, too.

You know, this this whole entire process, it's phenomenal for mold and mycotoxins exposure. So I'm sure we've already gotten a good a good a good amount of rundown about the benefits of fasting.

How Fasting Supports Recovery

But we know that we have an increase in a process called autophagy, which is cleaning up the problematic cells in the body. In a similar vein, that's fasting calorie restriction.

I'm kind of lumping all of these together also has induces a process called mitophagy, which is the cleaning up of the damaged mitochondria. We see that it is supportive for nervous system inflammation, oxidative damage throughout the body, specifically also in the nervous system.

We also see that it can help support and enhance your detoxification pathways and even help to balance your immune system functioning. So if we hold that for a moment and then we wonder about how molds and mycotoxins come into it, I have to say there's a very strong connection there.

And there's even some studies that have look specifically at the impact of some of these things on Mycotoxins. It's not just approximating to edges, you know.

So the concept of allergy, right, we talked about that is one of the the circles for mold. There is a study that shows that as medics who are reactive to dust when they undergo a fasting process, they drop their allergic allergy stimulating cells.

You're attached to help our cells. You drop that count and you also drop your allergic signals, your allergy related cytokines. And so if we are applying that again to our four circles, we're seeing a direct impact on that allergenicity, that allergic reactivity to mold.

So that's kind of one circle that we're navigating there, going into more of the micro toxin world, which is the world that I love, spending a lot of time in research and we see that autophagy is obviously going to clean up a lot of these damaged cells, these damaged tissues.

But what we know about Mycotoxins is they severely damage our mitochondria. And the reason why our mitochondria is a huge target for Mycotoxins is because it has a extra layer of membranes, it has extra fat in it, even more so than what we see on the exterior of the cell.

And so your mitochondria really get targeted and we've seen that when we can enhance mitophagy and we know that we can do that through fasting and caloric restriction and time to eating.

In these things, we see that we're cleaning up these damaged mitochondria. Normally mitochondria have a half life to like 10 to 25 days, but we're going in and we're making it happen quicker.

We've seen in some studies that when we induce mitophagy, we actually increase the cell's ability to tolerate tobacco. The scenes. Chaco Those scenes are one of the most toxic mycotoxins that are produced by many different molds.

And it's amazing to think that that a piece of very specific literature has actually been created that shows that. And it's not to say I want people to who are living in mold to stay in mold and not eat like that's that's not what I'm saying.

A cornerstone to any type of mold treatment is to get out of exposure and then we start fixing things after that. So fasting just from that perspective can be so helpful.

And as I mentioned, fatigue is a huge component of Mycotoxins exposure. And what are the mitochondria do that they lose? That's right. Right. They're the powerhouse, as you know.

And so when you ask. Them, we know very well that fasting can support majorly with mental clarity and energy versus the fatigue and the brain fog. Absolutely.

And we know that Mycotoxins cross the blood brain barrier and they cause lipid peroxidation in that tissue up there. And as you mentioned, there's tons of studies that show poor blood flow to the nervous system is improved or the impacts of low blood flow to the nervous system is improved with fasting.

I mean, the list goes on and on. And I think the Akutagawa of all of this really lies in the detoxification process.

Mycotoxins need to be removed from the body, they need to be cleared out.

And we really need to support these processes. The problem is, is that they have the ability to go into your phase one and phase two, but phase one, detox pathways and step on the brakes so they slow down your C wide pathways, numerous of them.

What we've seen with fasting, intermittent fasting, is that fasting will increase these processes. And so where Mycotoxins are coming in and they're stepping on the brakes for these detox pathways, fasting can come in and step on the gas, kind of move that forward.

And that's something that we absolutely need to get this stuff out of the body. So, I mean, the list goes on and on, but I would say that those are really the the high points of the benefits that we can see from fasting when it comes to mold illness.

And Doctor, does that apply to COVID long haulers as well?

Fasting, Long COVID, and Immune Balance

Who chapter that that you know and there's a huge discussion there there is some theory that when we induce fasting we are cleaning up and turning over the macrophages and the macrophages containing the spike protein and that has trouble clearing is supposedly one of the the underscoring issues of long haulers.

Another thing I just want to put out there for people, when we were going through COVID, where were we is we're stuck in our right. Right. We're stuck in our home.

So, you know, you also wonder about the dance and the intersection of exposures of mold in the home, suppressing the immune system, getting your body, you know, all out of whack with this virus.

But yeah, I have seen data that one of the best ways to clear out that spike protein is through fasting. And then you get all the added benefits of balancing the immune system to including moving the body away from an autoimmune pathway back on to the straight and narrow, moving it away from that t h 17 pathway and back onto that t red pathway.

And you know that chronic inflammation that we see with COVID, with lime, with mold, with all these complex chronic illnesses, that's really underscored by an imbalance in your tea helper cells in your t rex.

And so yeah, I think fasting is an integral part of complex chronic illness recovery B above and beyond mold. And there are theories, some meaning. I'm trying to understand when you use fasting, an active phase in the late phase as a prevention, there's some some theory saying, well, if you do fasting in the active phase and maybe the toxin in this and then the protein spike, where do you want to get the macrophages up?

You want to detox? It could be maybe. And again, I'm just thinking out loud here. You'll help us through that work through that. But I'm wondering, would you use fasting and what kind of fasting in active mode in the in the later mode, when, when and how do you implement fasting with with with these conditions?

You know, it's dependent on I would have to say what the person is capable of doing. You know, someone who I would say tends to have a lower constitution, might not be might not have the cellular reserves, I guess is what I would say.

To go into those unfed states, I would be more inclined to hold off or at least get them a little bit more balanced to move into that phase. You know, for some time, I really like doing or for the people that it's helpful for.

I really enjoyed doing ketogenic work and we also saw, you know, the keto diet and intermittent fasting kind of came together at some point and they have overlapping benefits, but there's plenty of people who cannot tolerate that ketogenic diet.

And so in those cases, those would be the folks that I would start to employ the intermittent fasting with. And, you know, I'll say I might not be the the fasting pro.

I'm more of the mold pro, so I'm not too clear on, you know, the the perfect implementation for each person. But I have seen fasting in general be beneficial for people if they have that constitutional to carry them forward.

Yeah.

When Fasting Is Appropriate

So here you have to explain if you feel like their body and their condition can handle going through cycles of passing, this is where you would you would think more about it versus if they already are frail or too fatigued or do not have a lot of reserves.

This is where you try to get them in a better shape and and then maybe afterwards, you know, use use as a face to face three than the fact that you prevention.

Yeah I think that there's an important part to having someone in a Fed state to have those resources. And in general, I find that people who have a little bit of weight tissue, tissue, weight on them, who can actually go into those reserves and pull from it, by all means.

But someone who's 98lbs soaking weight isn't probably going to be someone who I'm going to really push on that weight. Or if we do it, it's going to be modified and, you know, look like an 18 six or something rather than like a full 3 day fast.

One of the other issues with mold exposure is that that the brain fog and a lot of people will have difficulties with remembering to diet plan, they'll have difficulties with cooking and, you know, remembering to shop.

So sometimes fasting can almost be a a double edged tool there for folks. But I always want to make sure that people are in. I guess that's the best way to put it.

They have the resources. They're in a Fed state before we move into that, they have something to pull from. Well, I appreciate you very much. This has been a wealth of information, the first categorization of the issue and the policy, and then expressions and symptoms.

And then, you know, how fasting could potentially help. I think the the concept of autophagy, we talked a lot about it in this in this summit. But the concept of my reflection, which is really important in this case and in in in how the body can gain back the energy from fatigue and from this in a chronic state is an important topic that that you to be covered with us today and any other any any final thoughts or somebody before we depart here?

Sure. I think, you know, the overall take home, if you're someone who you think you're a mold exposed, you know, you can always head over to my website for more resources.

I have a free e-book that's lifeaftermold.com.

Final Takeaways and Hope

Go ahead. Over there. But aside from selling myself in this moment, you know, don't lose hope. You know, it's a long path. It's a long process to get your space safe and then to clean out your body, but only you know how crummy you feel.

And so don't listen when people tell you that it's all in your head or you know that that social isolation point. So I know it's a little bit of a out of the box from this discussion, but it's a little bit of like keep hope in your heart, keep moving forward.

And things will absolutely get better. Well, appreciate you very much, Dr. Tessier, and thank you for this really thoughtful and informative. Thank you very much.

Thank you so much for having me. Thank you.