Introduction to Mold and Chronic Illness

Welcome, everyone, to the Michael Jackson and Chronic Illness Summit. I'm Doctor Christine Schaffner, and I'm here today with my dear friend and colleague and doctor Jessica Petrus.

And we're going to be talking about mold in the brain. Welcome, doctor Jess. It's so fun that I get to interview you today. Yeah, I'm honored to be here.

Thanks so much for having me. Yeah. So, you know, you and I both connect on so many levels, and we see a very similar patient population, and it's really the patient population who lives in.

Right. And it's the patient population who probably hasn't maybe connected with the doctor like you or I get and are still in this, you know, kind of sea of over information overwhelm and not knowing you know, where to begin.

So, I'd love if you don't mind, is really painting your kind of perspective of how you got to see, like, mold as such an integral part to your patient's healing journey.

It's interesting. I actually have a personal story about this. So, you know, I think so. One of my favorite sayings in the world is that, the practice or The light enters by Rumi.

And that's sort of what happens to myself and my fiancé. He was actually diagnosed with mold illness as well as Lyme and bio talks and illness as a whole.

And, I was like most medical doctors, I was like, what mold? But it causes, like, runny, watery eyes and a runny nose and sneezing. Is that what you mean, that kind of mold?

And so it sent me on sort of a rabbit hole, like so many other chronic illness patients that are left to research things on their own. I get the kind of I kind of became one of them, a researcher for my fiancee.

And, I really, of course, came across Richie Shoemaker's work and Lawrence has his work and some of those other people on Surviving Mold. And it really, inspired me because it seemed that mold was a catchall for so many other problems.

And I really always want to get to the root cause of why people are suffering and yeah, I know, I'm so grateful. The silver lining, right. The the light came through the cracks for, you know, not only helping here for unseen cover, but also, you know, just putting you on this journey because once you start looking, it's, you see, this is so pervasive and so, so many people, have this is a really, deep reason why they're like, so, so just tell me about, you know, we want to focus on brain light, and I see a lot of neurological conditions, and, you know, there's so many symptoms, or I was related to the brain and the nervous system.

So why don't you start painting the picture of how does mold affect the brain? Perfect. So I just want to explain to people that mold is a multicellular fungus.

How Mold Affects the Brain and Nervous System

It's sort of, most people predict Candida or yeast, I call it, it's mold is like its older, dirtier cousin. And it's better than being one cell. It's multicellular and it's interesting because it forms hyphae or these thread like structures in the air.

So spores that produce volatile organic compounds. And so, these things are low fat. They're what we call lipophilic. It's doctors, which mean they, they hide in the fat or adipose tissue, some of the connective tissue as well.

And the brain is 70% fat. And so really you got to think about how is it getting into this fat tissues in the brain. And one of, one of the biggest ways is we can inhale these spores or hyphae.

They hang. They're kind of semi heavy. They hang in the air. And if you touch them, they kind of act like one of those little dandelions used to glow as a kid.

They go everywhere. And so you can imagine breathing those into your sinus cavities in your indoor air, where 90% of us spend our time, or we spend 90% of our time, excuse me.

And goodness gracious, those can get locked up in the sinus cavities up in our nasal microbiome. And that's right. Really, a fast track to our brain and our cranial cavity.

And there have been studies, case studies and beyond that show that type three inhalational isomers is linked to mold as well. Yeah. I had a personal story with my mom actually, and she had a mold exposure and she, you know, she saw it as depression and also memory issues.

And I'm so glad you mentioned that type three inhalation Alzheimer's from Doctor Bateson, because I think that, that sometimes really puts the pieces together for people like, wow, you know, that.

I can't believe that can be the root cause of that brain fog. It's such a huge piece. To this puzzle, is so, so, doctor, just so we have, you know, this complex, right?

So we have many of our patients, so, like, affected by a mold and the way that you shared. And then when we treat these chronic illnesses, it feels like whack a mole in some ways. Right?

You know, we're looking at the mold. We're looking at parasites. We're looking at even candida overgrowth. We're looking at retroviruses and viruses or, you know, all of these things.

And so can you, share, you know, what's your perspective as we look at this today? Looking at all these things and is mold may be the leading factor possibly.

You know, it's, for me, the big three, excuse me, are mold, Lyme and parasites. Really? I do think that depending on the person, parasites or mold can be one or the the biggest gotten in most people.

And they often play off each other because mold can spin the immune system into a twin imbalance. That leaves an underactive T. H., too. So people can actually which takes care parasites so people can actually be a risk for one.

And then because it swings the immune system out of balance, be risk for the other to, mold in general, it really, really disrupts our immune system, disrupts neuropeptide and neurotransmitter release in the brain.

And when that happens, we really have a cascade of symptoms. And overall immunity is decreased. And then we're at risk for so many other things that you just mentioned.

Really it's very, very difficult to have mold without having an accompanying yeast problem. It's, very difficult to have mold without other, immune problems and joint and autoimmune symptoms as well.

And so this is something I think that I would be remiss if I said that it wasn't something that that most patients should be looking at if they're having mystery symptoms.

And, thank you for that. And how, like when you approach any patient or guide people in uncovering, you know, the root cause of their health, you know, how do you start approaching and teasing out, you know, is mold a factor to focus on and really looking deeper in their environment, for sure.

So I really spend a lot of time with people upfront asking very detailed questions about their lifestyle, about their

diet, about their exposures, about what they do, from 9 to 5 and even beyond, and their daily basis and how, you know, I've screened drainage pathways with people and with mold especially.

There are certain questions that are very helpful to ask people, you know, do you feel better when you leave your place of residence and then feel worse when you come back?

Same thing for work or school or wherever you spend most of your time and don't feel well. You know, do you feel worse on rainy days? Do you feel like your symptoms relax and come back?

Do you feel have difficulty holding your hair and do you feel short of breath sometimes? Do you have brain fog, fatigue, chronic joint pains, pins and needles, sensations on your extremities?

All of these are questions that don't seem to relate to each other. To most people. But for someone who understands that mold is an all out systemic attack, and that can cause all of these different organ systems and different symptoms in those systems.

You need to understand mold can do this because it's at all it comes from the brain down a and know that's great. I love that question. I often ask that to like, do you feel better when you're, you know, leaving your brain in a place and then, you know, come back and you feel worse.

And so, I don't want to digress too much in this, but I always love, a lot of our community's perspectives of how do you like to guide people and testing for mold?

Testing for Mold Exposure in the Body and Home

And then, do you have like a, some like you go to resources like once molds like uncovered as an issue in the environment, like how do you lead people. Because that's the overwhelm.

Because people think, okay, I got a chance to I have to move, you know, and do I have to like, you know, redo my whole house. And so just maybe walking through that part of the puzzle of, you know, the anxiety that this can provoke for people, I understand.

I mean, honestly, it's one of my it's my least favorite part of my job to tell people there might be something wrong with their home. It's it's the worst, really, because it's it's it's not cheap.

It's it's it's pretty, you know, expensive to get this done properly. And so, you know, yes, I tell people there are number of ways you can do this. So there's the basic mycotoxins urine test from a number of different companies.

And you really want to make sure that people have their drainage pathways open before you do that. Because if you're not able to sweat, you're not able to go to the movements regularly.

Your lymph is stuck and stagnant. You're probably not going to release mold spores properly for the test as well. I've definitely seen that happen too.

There are some blood tests that that can be taken that sometimes aren't quite as accurate. And then I like to match any sort of testing that we do to testing in the home as well, and testing the home.

My favorite is the Environmental Relative Index testing or Army test. And the Army test is an environmental protection agency developed test that does, air testing and swiping and air testing to look for different samples of or species of mold.

And they average it out at the bottom score. So really people need to look at each individual spore of mold. Sometimes the spores individually are very, very high and too high for some sensitive individuals.

But because the final score is averaged out, it looks better than it is. So this is kind of complicated testing. Lots of

people haven't heard of this before.

And so you really need to find a great practitioner that is skilled in understanding or testing a remediation team, or a mold expert that understands how detrimental mold can be for certain people's health because you don't want someone who improperly remediated or how, yeah, definitely.

And do you have any, favorite like websites or resources for them, like how to make sure that these people are legit, you know, in the mold remediation world for sure.

Absolutely. So I really, for the Army tests, let me get just get the Army test versus the Army test. I like enviro BioMed bionics, enviro biomed.com. They do actually tests for not only mold but gram negative bacteria.

And I know my studies as well which has found even more commonly than mold in some water damage homes. As far as people testing that I trust there's a fellow named Michael Rubino who has getting ready to have a self-taught self education mold course in the home for people, which I think is really great.

You guys can learn about how where and how to look for mold in house and how to find it and where it might be if you're educated properly by the right people.

I also like yes, we inspect which is Brian Carr's company, through mold finders. And just a couple other tests for people. The Mark Hawkins nasal swab test is another test that looks for possible mold growth by testing for a, antibiotic resistance staff in the nose.

And then there's the visual contrast test, which is great because it's like 12 bucks so anyone can afford it. And really, 92% of mold patients fail this visual contrast test.

It's a it's a circle with spokes in it. And mold patients have a lot of visual problems and floaters and blurry vision. So the spokes blur together and they actually fail that test.

So that's a really great test for people to know about to on surviving mold.com. Anyway thank you. Thanks for all of those, practical tips. So if you're out there and you have haven't I'm down, you know, this avenue and are still struggling.

Please check out, the resources that Doctor Jess just shared with us. And, I want to talk about some other mechanisms about how mold affects us, but I, I'd love for us to also, you know, I think, you know, in this day and age, right?

There's, increase in what we would call these mental health conditions, right? So, you know, anxiety, depression, even, you know, bipolar, you know, different labels.

Insomnia, you know, all of this. And so in your clinical experience, have you ever seen that mold can be a trigger for the neuro inflammatory presentation that, you know, these symptoms, you know, you know, that are so rampant now?

I think I think we're just on this precipice of looking at mental health from this whole other environmental perspective. So just curious about your thoughts.

Yeah. It's so, you know, if our of our beloved animal or pet has a personality change overnight, we say, oh, they have some sort of an infection, but if a family member does, we say, oh, they need, you know, some sort of they have a mental illness, right?

They have some sort of psychotic break. So it's just interesting how we view animals differently than people. You know, the vets are onto, you know, whatever the vets are doing, you know, they, they know a lot.

They know what that is, is chronic infection. World and perspective is everything. So I was there's a specific study

that comes to my mind, I think from 2006 or 2007, and they call it groundbreaking in the study.

And it was about how a major depressive depressive disorder was linked to household mold, and they couldn't believe it. And this study and now it's kind of known that there's a link to this.

We even think that, people who have hallucinations, sometimes in certain homes, they may have, mold link there as well in some of the studies. And for sure, you know, we're activating microglial activation in the brain, which mold has been shown to be able to do.

Mental Health, Neuroinflammation, and Mold

It does create a certain cytokine storm. This is the OG of all cytokine storms. Before you know this this new virus came around for sure mold can do that.

And it absolutely imbalances the immune system. And really, you know, when you're decreasing something like monocyte stimulating hormone or MSH in the brain or, you know, really messing and inhibiting antidiuretic hormone, those have consequences in us and our mental person and our personality as well.

You know, mold because it decreases the neuropeptide MSH or melanocytes stimulating hormone in the brain that decreases endorphin production, that decreases melatonin production.

So you're talking about people have difficulty sleeping insomnia all the time. They may have pain all over their body. They have may have mental pain because they have such a lack of endorphins.

There's been studies that show inhibition and insidious hormone is linked to autistic like behaviors. And so, you know, the models who really are almost hermits, they don't want to talk to anyone.

They, they, they have this social isolation almost because of what they're going through. And it may be linked to some of this going on in the brain. Yeah. Yeah.

No, that's that's great. And yeah, 2006 to 2007. Right. We're you know, I think, talking about, and I don't think that literatures have been made up too much in the mainstream media, unfortunately.

But hey, you know, we'll keep at it. And I, I see that I mean, I see it in my patients, you know, you know, their mental emotional state being severely affected by these things.

And when they start cleaning up their environment, cleaning up their bodies, they, they, are themselves again. And I, I always love to remind people when they're going through this, it's all going to come back, you know, because I think people worry, right?

Is my brain going to come back? Am I going to connect to who I am again? They literally say, I feel like I'm getting Alzheimer's. Yeah, yeah, yeah, that's a really common.

Yeah. I'm like, am I going to lose my brain right. So, if you know, what they've been through isn't enough, right? You know, to have the, you know, brain symptoms.

So, so strategies, so maybe some strategies and tools. Yeah. Some of your favorite things to recover. Multi brain. Multi brain. Yeah. You guys can get your brain back.

That's the great news. You really really can. And I have seen people who are very young, I think they're coming down with a neurodegenerative condition and make a full recovery because it was something like this rampant mold growing behind a wall that no one knew was there in their home.

And that's another clue, guys. Most people don't know it's there. So first and foremost, the number one rule in environmental medicine that causes chronic preventable disease is avoidance.

So if you think or have an inkling that you're exposed to this, your health is worth so much more. So really take that first initial step to investigate.

Do that test in the home. Do that test on your body. Reach out to a trusted practitioner if you feel like you need help. It's really that important because there are a lot of people.

There's somebody who I can get better with. They're in a moldy house or other people are so sensitive they cannot get better until there is a void, as I know you've probably seen that too.

Yeah. And so the other thing that I really start with Molly patients is I want them to understand that mold goes after not only fat tissue, but it also goes after mitochondria and liver.

Next. And what does what organs have the most mitochondria are little energy makers that make ATP. The brain has some of the most of any organ in the body.

And so when you feel like your brain isn't working, it literally is not able to make energy or ATP. You're you're right on. And so really, when we start to support those mitochondria and their function to make that ATP and make energy, your brain starts to kind of come back online and you start to have that more pep in your step.

That brain fog sort of lifts a little bit, and you can form sentences and recall people's names again, really opening drainage pathways in general, the lymphatic and lymphatic system extremely important to get unstuck.

One of my favorite sayings is stagnation breeds a disease. Couldn't be more true. Yeah. Couldn't be more true. And so you really need to get things flowing in the body.

The bile is where a lot of mold likes to hide too. It's also breaks down fat. So you have a lot of fat content there too. So really looking at things like you're acidic, like acid, I really like Tauro.

You're killing acid because touring crosses the blood brain barrier to help mental health. And this helps then the bile, which helps things move. Remember, we have things moving, going to the bathroom 2 to 3 times per day with normal, solid, well formed bowel movements is really important.

Being able to sweat because you can literally sweat out mold spores. You guys, I've seen it happen. And so one of my favorite things to do is take a binder, put someone an infrared sauna or hot detox bath, and then take a binder when they get out.

And really avoid is turning on your drainage pathways that I just talked about by very, tailored supplementation.

Recovery Strategies: Drainage, Binders, and Sweating

And then really doing things like sweating, castor oil packs, movement in the sunlight, binders to pull out what doesn't belong, and you become an honorary your path strategist.

I do I mean, seriously, it just makes so much sense. I love it, you know, I love I love that you are doing this work and that you're embracing all this rain.

And, it's just amazing how that whole equation is not. And conventional medicine. Yeah. You know, it's just incredible. But we're going to get there with, you know, people like yourself, meaning we know we're here to get there. And, I'm going to go back to your protocol in a moment.

But I also I know that you talk a lot about, hormonal health and looking at, you know, women's health and, you know, reproductive system and, you know, mold, can be an endocrine disruptors.

So I would love for you to share that mechanism. And before we dive into some even more treatments. Absolutely. One of my least favorite. I'm such a nerd, but one of my least favorite species of mold is Syria, which produces your

own, certain micro toxin.

And this serial unknown actually confuses our body. It looks a lot like an estrogen. So it can bind to estrogen receptors. And actually, in all the animal studies, we have a plethora of them.

Causes hyper estrogenic syndrome. I mean, to the point where piglets are born with like and large lady is like, it was pretty bad when they ate moldy maize or moldy corn.

So we have a direct link to what it does in to animals, because they always have the moldy food there. And so we do have this in our food. We know this.

We do have this is it is a water. Water, damage building type of mycotoxins. So it does it is produced in water damage buildings as well as in the food supply.

And so we really have to be careful if we're living in something like an opiate toxin, which can be produced by, Penicillium or Aspergillus. Also can act as a mild estrogen mimic or and so these few these two are known as endocrine disruptors.

They can swing our hormones way out of balance by binding to estrogen receptors and fooling our body. And so these things they've been shown over and over in animal studies, they're just now coming out in the human studies and showing what they can do.

And so if you guys are living in a water damage building or home or you suspect that you are and you're let's say you're a woman, your cycles are crazy, crazy PMS, bloated, irritable, so much pain.

Consider that it could be the water damage in your home. And again, and it's a great overview. And I think even the zeroing in on is called a micro estrogen.

Right. So they even have a language. It's like these things clearly, you know, mimic estrogen on top of already an environment that we have so many estrogens, you know, in our environment as well.

So, you know, it's amazing that, you know what? We're, you know, how resilient we are in light of, you know, all these assaults on the estrogen receptor.

So, you know, in every way. Yeah. So just your protocol is called gel bind sweat. Right. And you've already alluded to, you know, what you want people through, but I just go deeper into it.

I want people to know, like the killing part, the binding part, the sweating part, and how, you know, people's health. It was kind of an accident that it caught our eye and it was sort of come viral and I didn't expect it.

It's it's just kind of sounds catchy and sexy, I guess. But basically, you really need the binding and sweating for mode. But let's be honest, mole doesn't run by itself.

It's got a ton of frenemies that run in the toxin bucket with it like yeast I alluded to earlier. And usually there's so different types of bacteria in that healing process going on.

All of them are together, right? So you can kill bind. Sweat is usually reserved for people who do have a bit drainage pathways and have really prepped their body and are ready for that.

I really like something like people have heard of bio cited. You can use, you know, oil of oregano. You can use all kinds of different in a killing herb that you prefer, or any product that you prefer or that has worked for you.

You might wait, you know, 20, 30 minutes and take a binder or something like, you know, I really love southpaws, binders, the wonderful, the best in the market in my opinion.

But we also have things you guys heard of bentonite and see, like clay, activated charcoal, diatomaceous earth, things like this. You know, you can then even chlorella, you guys sometimes can work, right?

Chlorella is a great one to, then get in a sauna. If you're lucky enough to have access to a sauna, you can also work out. You can also get the hot baths and drink some ginger tea beforehand to help yourself.

Sweat and sweating is a great way to release heavy metals. Things like, cadmium, nickel, mercury. It's also a great way to release mold spores, and different things like PCBs and the endocrine disruptors we were talking about in love that do you have?

I know this question probably comes up all the time, but do you have any favorite go to, you know, saunas or, you know, products to, you know, I, I'm so thrilled that even though I know it's still an expense, that there are so many more on the market that make this really more accessible and affordable.

You know, so I'm just I'm sure people are curious, like, what do you recommend? Yeah. You know, I always like you try to think about the energy that is in the room and what produces what and what you're exposed to that are maybe abnormal frequencies that we can't see.

And so, you know, if you have something like an infrared sauna, you are at risk for probably high, you know, electromagnetic radiation production. So I like low EMF saunas.

I think those are great. Verizon, which makes a pretty affordable portable. And for people that is low EMF, low torque. So if you're really sensitive to chemicals and things like that, you have trouble with dizziness, breathing, breathing them in, you should this should be okay for you.

Hormonal Disruption and Estrogen Mimicry

I if you like the big cedar saunas, I love clear light sauna, which is also low EMF too. I actually own one of them. So, I practice what I preach, but how often are you sweating?

A week? How often? And yet, you know, honestly, probably once or twice. But really, I work out, I try and workout, move my body every day. I feel like that's such a privilege.

If you're able to move your body, it's like, almost like praising your temple. I know that sounds corny, but really for me, like, I think it's a privilege to be able to move every day.

Yeah, absolutely. And, I know, and I, I also try to sweat every day, and you feel so much better. It's a great way to start your day and, you know, just get your energy right through the day. Right.

So, shake that, all that out, all that negativity. Yeah, totally. So, doctor. Jess, what are you, I, like, inspired, anything that you're really excited or inspired about, that you want to share with the chronic illness community that's on your heart at the moment?

I just really have a very strong feeling that all the ancient knowledge that is hidden from conventional and mainstream medicine and from many of you guys, is going to keep opening and pouring out, and there's going to be new revelations and all the things that you guys think you can't afford that you need to heal or that your body can't do it, you're going to be shocked.

You're going to be absolutely floored at what's coming out and what you're going to learn. And what your body can do at what is reversible that you were taught was not, and that your body is this miraculous vessel that when given the right recipe, can actually do miraculous things.

And you're really I think people are getting mad. They're going to be mad that they didn't know before, because it's going to be, trust me, you guys, you're going to have all the hope and and you're going to be amazed.

Hope, Resources, and Where to Find Doctor Jess

And I just want to leave people with hope because I really feel strongly that this is coming. Yeah. No, I agree with you. I think that obviously this is, you know, an interesting time to be on the planet.

And even prior to this, you know, last year you saw so much suffering that a lot of this community has gone through. And I'm just not being or they're not being validated.

And I think, yeah, I'm really excited about these, innovative or elegant solutions. Right. That can really accelerate our healing in a way that we probably, haven't even dreamt up yet.

So I love that. I love that inspiration. So, doctor, just so you have a lot of ways that people can connect with you and learn from you and hang with you.

So, please share how people can find you. Share. So I like, like Doctor Christine just have hierarchy to these things. So if you guys, just want to look at my website, I have a ton of free information on there.

I especially focus on how to do kale vines. Right. And just questions on my audience online asked me that. I answered for free on the website. So that's Dr.

Jess and e.com Doctor johnson.com. And then I'm really active on social media because I teach for free on there. And I have a lot of fun with it as well.

So doctor Jess, Jessica Petrus on Facebook, doctor Jess period MD on Instagram. And now unfortunately for me, tick tock, my team made me do it. And then finally, finally my app is, the highest hierarchy we can have a live webinar tomorrow we're going to have a concert live with someone that's a subscriber.

So please join in, guys. We do all kinds of interactive stuff, and you can talk to me on webinars, on the community forum. I do professional videos and courses and there's so much more on there.

I can't even explain it in a reasonable amount of time. So that's app dot Doctor Jess, IMDb.com. Awesome. Well, you're doing incredible work and helping, you know, shift the paradigm out there.

So thank you so much for being on the summit and all the information and wisdom you share today. I really appreciate it. Thank you for having me. Thank you.