

WHY IS ASTHMA ON THE INCREASE: NURTURE VIA NATURE

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Interplay of genes and environment determines health. While we are born with our genetic constitution defining our inherent nature, its phenotypic expression is heavily dependent on the continuum of environment during nurture. In this context, we look at the recent global increase in asthma prevalence, and find that changing dietary habits, lifestyle and other environmental factors such as air pollution may induce asthma in genetically susceptible individuals through complex metabolic disturbances. Allergy may be an outcome, not necessarily the cause, of such changes. Thus the question in asthma is no longer whether it is the genes (nature) or environment (nurture), but how the changing nurture is influencing a natural propensity. Some answers have been found and more are needed.
