

OBJECTIVE

Sample and count moulds and pathogenic bacteria in the workplace atmosphere at a coastal newsprint mill to assess their potential for causing respiratory problems.

SUMMARY

Counts of airborne moulds and bacteria at five of seven locations monitored in a newsprint mill were higher than at most control sites away from the mill. Mould counts were substantially lower than some recorded in studies at woodworking facilities in Sweden.

Highest mould and bacteria counts were measured near a hog fuel conveyer to a power boiler, and near a conveyer from a chip silo.

Although the monitoring did not show alarming levels of airborne microbial agents at the mill, doctors in pulp mill communities, and company nurses should be alerted to the potential for moulds and bacteria to be aetiological agents of respiratory disease in mill employees.

Control of dust during handling of wood chips and wood wastes will minimise airborne mould and bacteria counts in pulp and paper mills.