

**ASTHMA, ALLERGY, AND RESPIRATORY SYMPTOMS IN CENTENARIANS  
LIVING IN POLAND**

M. Mossakowska<sup>1</sup>, R. Pawlinska-Chmara<sup>2</sup>, and K. Broczek<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>International Institute of Molecular and Cell Biology, Warsaw, Poland; <sup>2</sup>Department of Molecular and Experimental Biology, Opole University, Opole, Poland, <sup>3</sup>Department of Geriatrics, Warsaw Medical University, Warsaw, Poland

According to National Census, there were 1541 people over the age of 100 years (centenarians) in Poland, in 2002 including 1215 females and 326 males. The aim of the present study was to assess the prevalence of asthma, allergy and respiratory symptoms in centenarians included in the Polish Centenarians Program, PolStu 2001, conducted between 2001 and 2004. The study group consisted of 301 subjects including 258 females and 43 males. Research data were gathered by means of a questionnaire designed exclusively for the study, filled in by an interviewer with the subjects or their families in case of subjects' cognitive impairment. According to medical history reported by the subjects, 10 persons (3.3%) suffered from asthma and 41 (13.6%) from allergy. There were none subjects with childhood-onset asthma. Allergy to food and medicinal products was the most prevalent. One in three centenarians reported dyspnea, and one in eight complained of cough. Correlation of reported symptoms with smoking status was analyzed. According to literature, various symptoms are underreported in elderly population. Moreover, in extremely old subjects, it is very difficult to perform a comprehensive medical assessment with additional tests to reveal the clinical importance of symptoms. Medical care of the very elderly should, therefore, be based on clinical assessment with support of a long-term medical history and reliable information on physician-diagnosed diseases.