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Utility of measuring allergen content in house dust samples in a cross-sectional study of respiratory health and atopy in a cohort of immigrant families in poor-quality housing in Malmö, Sweden

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Abstract
Background. Exposure to allergens plays a role in the development of atopic sensitization and influences allergic phenotype. House dust mites (HDM) are a common source of allergens in many parts of the world. The relationship between indoor environment factors such as temperature, humidity, allergen load, and respiratory health and atopy among children is still not fully understood. The aim of this study was to examine the relationship between the household dust allergen content and the presence of respiratory symptoms among children in the first 3 years of life.

Methods. A total of 380 families with children aged 0-3 years were recruited from kindergartens in the city of Malmö, Sweden. Dust samples were collected in all 130 apartments. Correlations between the presence of atopy and average allergen concentrations were examined by logistic regression. The role of various factors that may affect dust allergen content, such as time spent indoors, diet, and the presence of pets, were also examined.