

ALLERGY

HYGIENE HYPOTHESIS HYPERBOLE

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Having written about the [hygiene hypothesis](#), I missed a PNAS News feature [even some years ago](#).

Again: The hygiene hypothesis was not born by David Strachan and well, there are more cracks of the hygiene hypothesis.

“The trouble is, as soon as you use the words ‘hygiene hypothesis,’ the word hygiene prejudices what the cause is,” says Bloomfield. To the public, “hygiene” is interpreted as personal cleanliness: washing hands, keeping food clean and fresh, sanitizing the home. However, because the hypothesis has been largely uncoupled from infections, the idea that we need to be less hygienic is wrong. Relaxing hygiene standards would not reverse the trend but only serve to increase the risks of infectious disease, says Bloomfield. The term “hygiene hypothesis” also fails to incorporate all of the other factors now linked to the increase in immunoregulatory diseases.

I expect that five years after mandating “super hygiene” during COVID-19 we can finally bury the hygiene hypothesis.

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