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ABSTRACTS

POLLEN GRAINS IN HUMAN CYTOLOGY

Rivasi,* F., Accorsi, C.A., Bandini Mazzanti M. & Forlani, L.,
Istituto di Anatomia Patologica, Università , via del Pozzo 71, 41100
Modena, Italy. Istituto ed Orto Botanico, Università di Modena.
Dipartimento di Biologia Evoluzionistica Sperimental, Università, via Irnerio
42, 41127 Bologna, Italy.

Pollen grains are frequently found in human cytology. This paper reports on pollen analyses carried out on many thousands of cytological smears (vaginal, mammary, bronchial, nasal secretions; effusions; urine...) in the course of a ten-year research. The frequency and the significance of the pollen records vary according to the specific cytological field taken into account. In the mammary secretions, urine and effusion the polliniferous slides are very few and the pollen number per slide is low (max 10 pollens, always anemophilous). In these cases the pollen records evidence the airborne contamination during medical procedures; the same happens with most of Pap-tests. In several Pap-tests, the high frequency of pollen belonging to pharmaceutical taxa e.g. Matricaria chamomilla L. suggests that lavages with vegetable components were used by the patients before undergoing the test. In respiratory cytology and, in particular, in the nasal secretions released spontaneously during allergic rhinorrhea, larger amounts of polliniferous slides as well as higher number of pollens per slide (up to 700) were recorded and pollen spectra reflected the vegetational environment. In these cases most pollens are thought to come from the respiratory system and consequently, in case of pollinosis, pollen analyses of the secretions have to be considered useful to detect the pollens causing the disease.