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## THE MEDICAL IMPORTANCE OF CADDISFLIES

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Caddisflies normally are not considered medically important insects. However, my interest in their medical importance was spurred recently when I was tasked to identify two caddisflies (Hydroptilidae, *Orthotrichia aegerfasciella* (Chambers), 1 male, 1, female) collected from a hospital surgical suite while a surgical procedure was being performed. The presence of any arthropod under such aseptic circumstances is obviously undesirable.

Most trichopterists probably are unaware of potential negative health effects associated with contacting caddisflies. Caddisflies can cause allergic responses (asthma and dermatitis) in sensitive individuals who come in contact with wing hairs or other body parts. Trichopterists who collect adult caddisflies by aspiration may receive significant exposure to wing hairs. The literature suggests that hypersensitivity to caddisflies may be quite common among allergy patients. The range of reported responses is broad, ranging from minor annoyance to near incapacitation. Some patients sensitized by exposure to caddisfly antigens have developed cross-reactivity to shellfish and stings of venomous insects. This could result in life-threatening situations for individuals with a predisposition for severe IgE-mediated reactions (anaphylaxis) due to contact with arthropod proteins.

Below, I have provided a list of selected publications that address caddisfly allergins. This list is not exhaustive, but includes the more pertinent articles. These papers provide for informative and interesting reading. On somewhat of a humorous note, Parlato (1929) confused caddisflies with sandflies (Diptera: Psychodidae: Phlebotominae) and attributed them to be the cause of 'Oriental Sore' (Leishmaniasis). For caddisfly workers employed by medical organizations, this information may prove useful for justifying research on caddisflies.

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