

YAHOO! NEWS



What hypoallergenic dog?

REUTERS By Frederik Joelsing | Reuters - Fri, Jun 29, 2012

NEW YORK (Reuters Health) - The allergy-friendly dog may be little more than wishful thinking, a new study of Labradoodles and other allegedly hypoallergenic breeds suggests.

In fact, scientists found that "hypoallergenic" canines had more allergy-causing protein in their fur than did dogs without the label. And the air in their owners' homes contained no less of the allergenic protein.

"The term 'hypoallergenic' is a misnomer that is not evidence based," they conclude in their report, published this week in the Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology.

About one in five people in Western countries is allergic to dogs. But according to countless Internet pages, aspiring dog owners can get around runny noses and itchy eyes if they choose the right breed. There's the Poodle, for example, the Spanish Water Dog and the Labradoodle, a mix between a Labrador Retriever and a Poodle.

To put those claims to the test, Doris Vredegoor at Utrecht University in The Netherlands and her colleagues recruited nearly 200 dogs of four supposedly hypoallergenic breeds. They compared those with a group of 160 standard dogs.

Based on hair and coat samples, the researchers found higher levels of the Can f 1 allergen, one of the proteins that cause dog allergies, in the hypoallergenic group, with Poodles and Labradoodles leading the pack in allergen levels.

While floor dust from the homes of Labradoodle owners contained the lowest level of allergen, it's possible that allergic pet owners are more diligent with the vacuum cleaner, the Dutch team speculates. And they found no differences in allergen levels in the air, which would be more relevant to people with allergies than floor dust.

The researchers didn't measure allergies in the pet owners, but they say the allergen levels they found in homes with "hypoallergenic" dogs were high enough to trigger allergic reactions and asthma.

Simon Brodie of Lifestyle Pets, a controversial U.S.-based company that sells cats and dogs it claims are hypoallergenic, said the new report rang true with him.

"There is a lot of hearsay," he told Reuters Health. "I've had many people call up and say, 'We have a Labradoodle and we had it for ten days and had to send it back.'"

Brodie, the founder of Lifestyle Pets, said he has sold 40 dogs bred to be "hypoallergenic" -- at a price of \$16,000 each -- and so far has never had one returned.

He said the pets have a natural mutation in an allergy-causing protein that means they don't trigger reactions in most people. But he acknowledged that there is no published data on his animals, nor any controlled tests of how often they cause attacks in allergic people.

SOURCE: <http://bit.ly/MZx9Sx> Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology, online June 25, 2012.

What do you think?



With the summer in full swing, is your dog spending more time in the water?

Our dog hates the water!



We can't get our dog out of the water!