

Researchers offer new target for treating asthma

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Researchers have found a potential new target for treating asthma, according to a study led by researchers at the University of Colorado School of Medicine at the Anschutz Medical Campus and published in the journal *Nature Communications*.

About 10 million Americans and more than 300 million people worldwide have [asthma](#). The most common therapies now used with [asthma patients](#) address airway muscle contractions triggered by inflammation, but those treatment results are often temporary or incomplete.

In the article in *Nature Communications*, Christopher Evans, PhD, associate professor of medicine at the CU School of Medicine, and his co-authors propose targeting other factors related to the overproduction of mucus, an often overlooked factor that causes breathing problems associated with asthma.

Specifically, Evans and his colleagues found that the protein Mucin 5AC (Muc5ac) plays a critical role in airway hyperreactivity, a characteristic feature of asthma that makes it difficult to breathe. In experiments with mice, the scientists found that genetic removal of Muc5ac eliminated [airway](#) hyperreactivity.

"The role of mucus as a cause of asthma has been misunderstood and largely overlooked," Evans said. "We found that it is a potential target for reducing obstruction in asthma."

Provided by University of Colorado Denver

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