

HOW OFTEN DO NORMAL PERSONS SNEEZE AND BLOW THE NOSE?

Research about a fluid dynamics controversy

compiled by Stephen Drew, Improbable Research staff

“How Often Do Normal Persons Sneeze and Blow the Nose?,” Bjarne Hansen and Niels Mygind, *Rhinology*, vol. 40, no. 1, March 2002, pp. 10-12. (Thanks to John Bell for bringing this to our attention.)

The authors, at Aarhus University Hospital, Denmark, explain that:

As all persons occasionally sneeze and blow the nose, it is necessary to define what is normal. In this study the daily number of sneezes and of nose blowing were recorded in diary-cards over a 14 day period by 80 hospital employees and medical students, who considered themselves not to suffer from rhinitis. The results showed that more than 95% of the normal persons sneezed and blew the nose less than 4 times a day, on average. It is concluded that it is normal to sneeze and blow the nose less than 4 times daily while a higher number can be a sign of rhinitis. It is recommended that counting of sneezes and of nose blowing is used in clinical trials in order to define the study population.

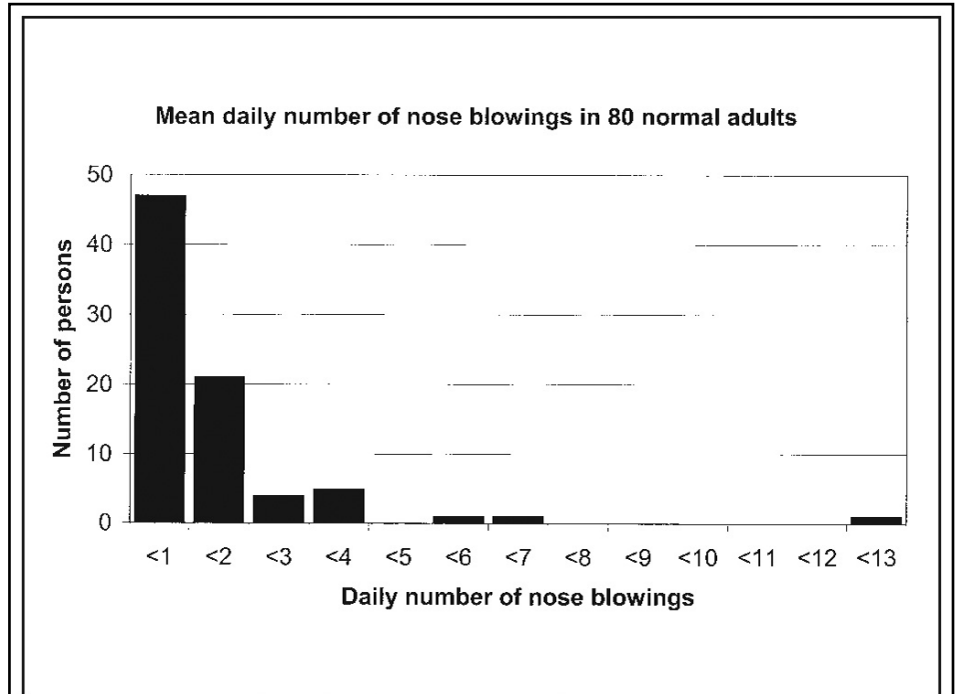
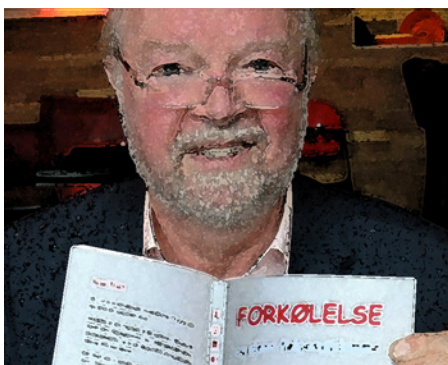


Figure 2. Mean daily number of nose blowing over a 14 day period in 80 normal adult persons.

Detail from the study.



Niels Mygind, co-author of the study. Mygind later wrote a book about the common cold, called Forkølelse [“Colds”]. Drawing by Nan Swift, Improbable Research staff.

How often do normal persons sneeze and blow the nose?*

Bjarne Hansen¹ and Niels Mygind²

¹ Otopathological Laboratory, Department of Otorhinolaryngology, Rigshospitalet, Copenhagen, Denmark

² Department of Respiratory Diseases, Aarhus University Hospital, Aarhus, Denmark