Sonora Quest Laboratories
Valley Fever Diagnostic Center

Coccidioidomycosis (Valley Fever)

Living in the arid Southwest, most Arizonans have heard of Valley Fever caused by inhalation of the wind-borne spore of the mold called Coccidioides. The fungus thrives in dry, desert soils, and affects more people in Arizona than in any other state, including more than double those in California, the state with the second highest number of reported cases of this illness. Each year 100,000 patients might become infected with Valley Fever and 30,000 will become ill.

Sonora Quest Laboratories has partnered with Arizona Department of Health Services and The University of Arizona's Valley Fever Center for Excellence to develop an early warning system for when Valley Fever is active in the state.

Sonora Quest Laboratories tests thousands of patient specimens every month to diagnosis Valley Fever and is a valuable resource, working closely with public health epidemiologists and clinicians at the Valley Fever Diagnostic Center bringing together the interdisciplinary expertise needed to guide this effort.

Valley Fever Diagnostic Center's Emphasis:

- Education and awareness of physicians and patients
- Leadership in the industry with state of the art attention to conventional Valley Fever testing involving transparency of testing and methodologies
- Initiate development of diagnostic methods to improve turnaround time and sensitivity to early infections
- Partnership with the Arizona Department of Health Services and The University of Arizona Valley Fever Center of Excellence to monitor the disease and identify spikes in positivity rates

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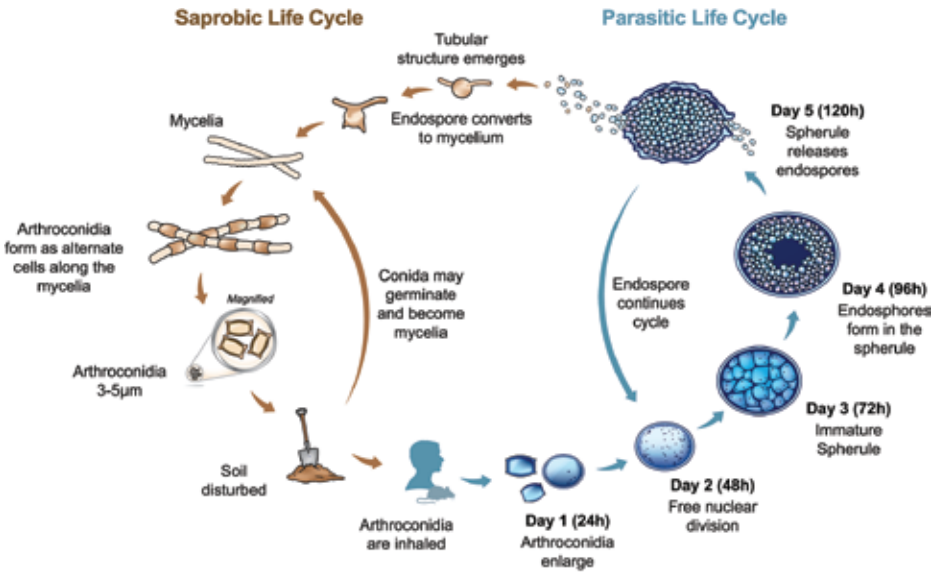

Life Cycle of *Coccidioides*[1]

Development of the specialized Valley Fever Diagnostic Center at Sonora Quest Laboratories includes:

- ***Collaborations*** directed toward improvement of Valley Fever detection and accurate infection diagnosis including: ASU BioDesign Institute, Mira Vista and TGen.
- ***Funding/Awards*** for Coccidioides studies have included: PathoGene (DxNA, Inc.), TGen/NIH/NIAID/Applied Bio Systems.
- ***Publications, Abstracts & Lectures*** include: Journal of Clinical Microbiology, Arch Intern Medicine, Open Forum Infectious Disease, Annual Meeting of the Coccidioidomycosis Study Group, Surprise Arizona, New York City Branch of the American Society for Microbiology, Southern California Branch of the American Society for Microbiology, Arizona Department of Health Services, Phoenix, AZ and University of Arizona College of Medicine, Tucson, AZ.

It is imperative to evaluate all aspects of infectious diseases diagnostics and not only to verify and validate their sensitivities, specificities and robustness but to also document their effect on actual outcomes of patient care. Our studies have involved design and utility of diagnostic testing from the tests themselves to specimen collection, transportation and test utilization by clinicians.[2]

References:
1. Dust Devil: The Life and Times of the Fungus That Causes Valley Fever. Eric R. G. Lewis Jolene R. Bowers Bridget M. Barker
2. Michael A. Saubolle, Ph.D., D(ABMM), F(AAM), F(ISDA), Sonora Quest Laboratories Clinical Microbiologist

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