MANKIND BESET BY DEVILS: ON THE FUNCTION OF SNEEZING AND COUGHING AS A FORM OF DEFENSE AGAINST INFECTIONS

F.J. van Overveld and G.T. Rijkers

1) University College Roosevelt, Dept. of Science, Middelburg, The Netherlands

2) Laboratory for Medical Microbiology and Immunology, St Elizabeth Hospital, Tilburg, The Netherlands

Coughing and sneezing are reflexes to clear upper and lower respiratory tract from potential infectious organisms or irritating compounds from the environment. The mechanisms of coughing and sneezing, as well as their role in the primary defense against infections is presented.