

Health Effects of Air Pollution in China

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Air pollution at local and regional scales in China has caused serious health concerns. While media reports have related high cancer rates in many villages and communities with local pollution, the number of long term and systematic research on health effects of air pollution in China is limited.

With fast economic development in the last decades, the health effects of air pollution in China are complicated by the coexistence of multi-pollutants from different types of air pollution, *e.g.* coal burning and vehicular exhaust. Considering the currently high pollution level, high marginal health benefit is expected from the air pollution control in China,

A number of reports from Word Bank, UNDP, HEI, and a review paper on “Air Quality in Selected Megacities” have summarized research results health effects of air pollution in China.

UNDP (China Human Development Report 2002) has reported that “epidemiological surveys in China have established a correlation between air pollution and respiratory diseases. These numbers can be extrapolated to show that each year, air pollution causes 1.5 million cases of bronchitis, and 23,000 and 13,000 deaths from respiratory and heart diseases, respectively”.

A recent special report on “Health Effects of Outdoor Air Pollution in Developing Countries of Asia: A Literature Review, 2004” by HEI has identified the gaps in current knowledge about health effects of air pollution in developing countries of Asia.

The current understanding of health effects of air pollution in China and the health benefit from air pollution control in this country will be summarized based on the reports from Word Bank, UNDP, HEI, review papers, and results from on-going projects.