

Warning! Pollution From Coal Burning Most Dangerous For Your Heart

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It is a fact that polluted air isn't a good thing for human health. Inhaling or breathing toxic air pollutants can cause respiratory irritation and breathing difficulties among several other health issues.

Air pollution occurs when dust particles, gases, fumes or smoke from vehicle emissions, chemicals from factories are emitted into the atmosphere, making the air contaminated. This polluted air when inhaled or breathed is harmful to humans, animals and plant.

Now a new study has found fossil fuel emissions, including coal and petroleum, generate far more toxic particles than others sources.

The present study shows air pollution from coal burning is far more dangerous to human health, specifically for heart, than those from other sources.

To reach their findings researchers from NYU Langone Medical Center, in New York City, analyzed data gathered from 450,000 American citizens in 100 cities between 1982 and 2004.

Lead researchers Dr. George Thurston, professor of Population Health and Environmental Medicine at NYU Langone, along with his team then analyzed the gathered data and estimated the size, type and amount of pollution each individual would have exposed of.

After an extensive study, Dr. Thurston and colleagues found that exposure to tiny particles in fossil fuel emissions (coal, crude oil and natural gas) was linked to an increased risk of cardiovascular disease-related mortality.

Specifically, they found that tiny pollution particles from the burning of coal (less than one ten-thousandth of an inch in diameter known as PM2.5) increase the risk of death from heart disease five times more than other air pollution particles of the same size.

Longer exposures to these PM2.5 particles were most closely associated with an elevated risk of death from ischemic heart disease (IHD), a condition that reduces the supply of blood to the heart thus triggers heart attack.

“Past studies of this kind have essentially assumed that all PM2.5 particles have the same toxicity, irrespective of their source,” says Thurston. “Our results indicate that, pound for pound, coal-burning particles contribute roughly five times as much to heart disease mortality risk as the average air pollution PM2.5 particle in the United States.”

Interestingly, Thurston and colleagues found that PM2.5 pollutants from wind-blown soil and the burning of wood or other biomass were non-significant contributors” to the risk of mortality from heart disease. This means coal emissions are a major threat to human heart health.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), an estimated 3 million people worldwide die each year due to air pollution, and the fresh findings indicate that coal emissions are a major contributor in this public health crisis.

Emissions from fossil fuels, mainly from the coal burning, must be reduced to lower the number of fatalities caused by air pollution, the researchers stressed.

The latest findings were published online Dec. 2 in the Journal Environmental Health Perspectives.