

From: cleanair@cleanairtas.com
Sent: Sunday, 8 October 2023 03:24
To: 'humanethics@unsw.edu.au'
Cc: 'r.macintyre@unsw.edu.au'
Subject: BREATHE research study

Good evening,

During COVID I followed Prof MacIntyre and was very much in favour of what Raina was advocating. However, BREATHE is not in relation to a pandemic.

There are a couple of things that concern me with the BREATHE study. Bear in mind I am a 74-year-old male, have worked in hospital engineering and biomedical engineering, looked after patient's O2 equipment in their homes, and been a life-long asthma sufferer. Not that this matters as wood smoke is harmful to everybody, not just susceptible groups.

My first concern:

The deliberate use of surgical masks on compromised participant's during high smoke levels; any smoke levels.

My knowledge of surgical masks is they are loose fitting and have been designed to help prevent outward travel of large-particle droplets or sprays from the wearer. They are not inward filtering PPE. We don't breathe out smoke, or we shouldn't!

Enough studies have been undertaken to show even short-term exposure to wood smoke is harmful, This is down to hours; not days, weeks, or months as proposed during by the BREATHE study.

I feel it is unethical to deliberately subject participants to episodes of wood smoke with a face covering that gives little or no known protection to elevated smoke levels.

I know this because I have run particle counts using a surgical mask, an EPA cross-calibrated particle counter and an equivalent wood smoke source.

For this reason, I ask that surgical masks be removed from this study.

My second concern:

Bushfires/planned burns/fuel reduction burns/ backyard burns/ asset protection burns/ strategic burns/ residue burns, etc., they are all the same, the smoke is virtually continuous causing negative climate feedback and harm. Smoke is smoke, it doesn't fit into differently named boxes.

These smoke events can all join in together now. We have recently had two escaped planned burns causing bushfires in as many weeks in Tasmania. 80% of bushfires are human caused.

Times have changed, planned burns can be conducted anytime of the year now, not just at a specific time of the year. Bushfires as a result, or from natural causes, can happen at any time also.

I am not sure where this study is heading. Do you know where it is heading? So the burning can continue?

There is no way we can be locking people up in a sealed room in their homes with portable air purifiers as was suggested by the CSIRO study at <https://tinyurl.com/2wzeecm>

If this is where we are heading, there is no way people can be required to wear respirators following this study just so that arson burns can continue, and the air used as a sewer. This is unethical.

Where does this leave our environment? It is unethical for humans just to be worrying about protecting themselves. Where does this leave our animals, our birds, our pollinators, our forests, our air, our water ways, our land for crop growing, all subjected to cancer causing toxic particulates and gasses, our stratosphere from planned burn convections?

We cannot fit face respirators to our koalas, wombats, wallabies and all the other living things because we selfishly find a face 'mask' for humans. This is masking the smoke problem.

I have lived in an elastomeric or TPE P2 respirator and it is not something I would want others to do. Save them for pandemics.

Again, lived experience indicates there are many disadvantages with portable air purifiers.

P2/N95 respirators have been studied to death and Standards written. Avoidance in many situations is not an option.

Rapid attack to stop the fire and smoke at the source is what is required.

Thank you.

Kind regards,

Clive M. Stott

<https://cleanairtas.com>