

New study reveals strong link between higher levels of pollution and lung health of European citizen

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New data has identified a clear link between higher levels of exposure to air pollution and deteriorating lung health in adult European citizens. This study confirms previous findings that children growing up in areas with higher levels of pollution will have lower levels of lung function and a higher risk of developing symptoms such as cough and bronchitis symptoms. Additionally, the new study identified that people suffering from obesity are particularly vulnerable to the negative effects of air pollution, possibly due to an increased risk of lung inflammation.

Senior author, Nicole Probst-Hensch and lead author Martin Adam, from the Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute, said: "The ESCAPE project has clearly confirmed that air quality largely differs across Europe. The findings of this project are crucial as they demonstrate that [air pollution](#) is having a negative effect, not only on children as previously demonstrated, but also into adulthood. Although the levels we see in Europe are much lower than in the so-called megacities in China and India, we are still seeing a deterioration of [lung function](#) in people exposed to [higher levels](#) of air pollution and this must be addressed."

Commenting on the results, Professor Peter Barnes, President of the ERS, said: "The findings of this study demonstrate the importance of educating about clean air and the [negative effects](#) of air pollution. Urgent action is needed to tackle air pollution in Europe. It is crucial that policymakers in Europe take note of these findings and update guidelines in Member States to meet the WHO recommended air quality standards. This will ensure equal protection of all citizens' health across the continent."

A large proportion of Europe's population live in areas with levels of air quality that are known to

have negative impacts on health. Earlier this year, the WHO estimated that air pollution was the cause of seven million premature deaths in 2012, with 3.7 million of these being connected with poor outdoor [air quality](#).

More information: Long-term exposure to air pollution and lung function in adults: multicentre cohort study and meta-analysis, the ESCAPE project, [DOI: 10.1183/09031936.00130014](https://doi.org/10.1183/09031936.00130014)

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