Indoor air pollution wreaks havoc on children's lungs

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Children with asthma and hay fever often struggle with their breathing. Add secondhand smoke, kerosene and biomass fuel to the mix and allergy and asthma symptoms increase.

According to a study being presented at the American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology (ACAAI) Annual Scientific Meeting in Atlanta, November 6-10, increased levels of asthma and allergic rhinitis (hay fever) were found in children in India who were exposed to more indoor pollutants.

The study examined 70 households where no children had symptoms of asthma and/or hay fever, while the other 70 households had at least one child with one of those conditions.

Researchers measured the levels of air pollutants - smoking, kerosene and biomass fuel combustion - in all the homes, and found that in the homes of children who suffered from asthma and allergies, household air pollution was twice as great.

Similarly, higher levels of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) were found in the houses of children with asthma and hay fever.

Title: The Association of Household Air Pollution with Allergic Respiratory Diseases in Children

Author: Raj Kumar, MD, ACAAI Member

By the Numbers: According to ACAAI, allergies, including allergic rhinitis, affect an estimated 40 million to 50 million people in the United States. Some allergies may interfere with day-to-day activities or lessen the quality of life. Triggers of non-allergic rhinitis include irritants such as cigarette smoke, strong odors and fumes, including perfume, hair spray, and other cosmetics, laundry detergents, cleaning solutions, pool chlorine, car exhaust and other air pollution.

Provided by American College of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology