

Environmental health



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1. 0 Common Health Problems Associated with Indoor and Outdoor Air Pollution in Urban Settings

Air pollution, both outdoor and indoor, affects the health with various long-term and short-term impacts. The extent to which a person can be affected by air pollution depends on the period of exposure to the chemicals that damage the normal health functioning. The short term impacts include irritation to the nose, eyes and throat along with respiratory infections such as pneumonia and bronchitis. The long term impacts include lung cancer, chronic respiratory disease, heart disease and damage to the nerves, kidneys, brain and liver (Berkeley Lab, 2011).

Among the above mentioned diseases, the following are the most common in an urban setting:

1. 1 Pneumonia

Acute infections in the lower respiratory parts and pneumonia are the most common reasons for death among children under the age of five years.

Indoor pollution exposure is the reason that causes pneumonia (World Health Organization, 2011).

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1. 2 Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)

The sole responsible factor for 700, 000 out of 2. 7 million deaths in the world has been indoor air pollution. The most common disease due to COPD is chronic bronchitis, and women who are continuously exposed to the indoor smoke are the prime victims (World Health Organization, 2011).

1. 3 Lung Cancer

Apart from smoking, lung cancer can even be caused due to exposure to coal fires. The simple stoves used for cooking may even cause such diseases. Each year, the number of deaths due to lung cancer is one million and 1. 5% of these deaths are caused by indoor air pollution (World Health Organization, 2011).

2. 0 Reason for Vulnerability of Children to the Effects of Air Pollutants

In particular, children are more vulnerable to the effects of air pollutants because they are in their developmental stage and are physically different from adults. The lungs and airways of children are not matured and thus are more prone to the adverse effects of pollution. The lungs, in its developing stage, bear a large surface area that creates the easy absorption of pollutants. The breathing speed of the children is faster than adults and thus through inhaling, it absorbs a greater amount of contaminants in comparison to that of adults (Children's Environmental Health Project, 2000).

Researches show that children who reside in economically-disadvantaged areas that have high density of traffic may be prone to asthma exacerbation from exposure to air pollution (California Environmental Protection Agency, 2009).

3. 0 Reduction of the Impact of Air Pollution

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The exposure of the community to the impacts of air pollutants can be reduced by the below mentioned initiatives. The nurse who has been appointed for implementing the plan has to take the following initiatives to save adults and children from the exposure:

Educate the community about the process of recycling and its excellent effects that help in reducing the impacts of air pollutants (U. S.

Environmental Protection Agency, 2010)

Advise the households to replace their gas lawnmowers with electric gas ovens and save their babies who are affected the most from smoke emissions from the gas lawnmowers

The community people can be recommended to dispose of the toxic chemicals from home and use non-toxic ones (South Coast Air Quality Management District, 2005)

For example, use of a brush instead of sprayer during painting will help in replacing toxic chemicals with non-toxic ones

One final advice that the nurse can provide is that of planting trees and keeping the present trees healthy in order that sufficient oxygen can balance the excess pollution created in the air (DiFazio & Et. Al., 2004)

These preventive steps have to be primarily included in the environmental awareness program, which need to be initiated by the nurse for helping the community that is exposed to maximum air pollution due to the presence of the freeway transportation route.

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