

Indoor Air Pollution: A Major Threat to Human Health

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Abstract : Globally, almost 3 billion people rely on biomass (wood, charcoal, dung and crop residues) and coal as their primary source of domestic energy. Cooking and heating with solid fuels on open fire give rise to major pollutants. Women are primarily affected by these pollutants as they spend most of their time in the house. The WHO World Health Report 2002 estimates that indoor air pollution (IAP) is responsible for 2.7% of the loss of disability adjusted life years (DALYs) worldwide and 3.7% in high mortality developing countries. Indoor air pollution has the potential to not only impact health, but also impact the general economic well-being of the household. Exposure to high level of household pollution lead to acute and chronic respiratory conditions (e.g.: pneumonia, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, lung cancer and cataract). There has been many strategies for reducing IAP like subsidize cleaner fuel technologies, for example use of kerosene rather than traditional biomass fuels. Another example is development, promotion of 'improved cooking stoves'. India, likely ranks second- distributing over 12 million improved stoves in the first seven years of a national program to develop. IAP should be reduced by understanding the welfare effects of reducing IAP within households and to understanding the most cost effective way to reduce it.

Keywords : open fire, indoor pollution, lung diseases, indoor air pollution

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