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Living in Phoenix During the Summer Could be Dangerous for Your Heart!

New Study Reveals Heat and Air Pollution Linked to Heart Disease

Phoenix, one of six cities studied.

(Phoenix, AZ) August 16, 2010- Researchers from Brigham and Women's Hospital and the Harvard School of Public Health have established the first link between air pollution and sleep-disordered breathing (SDB), a known cause of cardiovascular diseases.

Researchers explored the link between air pollution levels, temperature increases and sleep-disordered breathing using data from the Sleep Heart Health Study, which included more than 6,000 participants between 1995 and 1998, and EPA air pollution monitoring data from Framingham (Massachusetts), Minneapolis, New York City, Phoenix, Pittsburgh, Sacramento, and Tucson.

The study appears online ahead of the print edition of the American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine on the American Thoracic Society's Web site.

SDB affects up to 17 percent of U.S. adults, many of whom are not aware that they have a problem. Air pollution is also an endemic issue in many of the nation's urban areas. Both SDB and pollution have been associated with a range of health problems, including increased cardiovascular mortality.

More than 3,000 individuals were included in the analysis.

Evidence was found for pollution and temperature effects on sleep-disordered breathing. According to researchers, "Increases in apnea or hypopnea...were associated with increases in short-term temperature over all seasons, and with increases in particle pollution levels in the summer months."



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Over all seasons, the researchers found that short-term elevations in temperature were associated with increased in Respiratory Disturbance Index (RDI), which was used to gauge the severity of SDB. In the summer, increases in PM10 were also associated with an increase in RDI (representing a 12.9 percent increase), as well as with an increase in the percent of time that blood oxygen saturation levels fell below 90 percent (representing a nearly 20 percent increase) and a decrease in sleep efficiency. There were no such statistically significant associations of particulate pollution with SDB in other seasons.

This is the first study to link pollution exposure and SDB.

Lauri Leadley, President of Valley Sleep Center and Certified Sleep Therapist noted; "This study gains even greater importance as scientists increasingly demonstrate the critical importance of sleep to health and well being. SDB increases risks for cardiovascular disease, strokes and other major health conditions. Air pollution is an independent contributor to most of these disorders and may produce its negative health effects by promoting SDB as an intermediary step in the pathway toward disease."

This study was funded by the National Heart Lung and Blood Institute, the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences and the Environmental Protection Agency.

Source: American Thoracic Society (ATS)

Breathing in America: <http://www.thoracic.org/education/breathing-in-america.pdf>

About Valley Sleep Center

Since 2002, Valley Sleep Center has provided Arizona with diagnostic sleep disorder testing in a home-like atmosphere, ensuring a comfortable, relaxing experience for patients. Their physicians are Board Certified Sleep Medicine Specialists and they are accredited by the American Academy of Sleep Medicine. They provide diagnostic testing for a multitude of sleep related disorders including insomnia, sleep apnea, snoring, excessive daytime sleepiness, hypertension, sleepwalking, and pediatric sleep problems.

For more information contact Lauri Leadley at 480-830-3900 or visit www.valleysleepcenter.com.



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