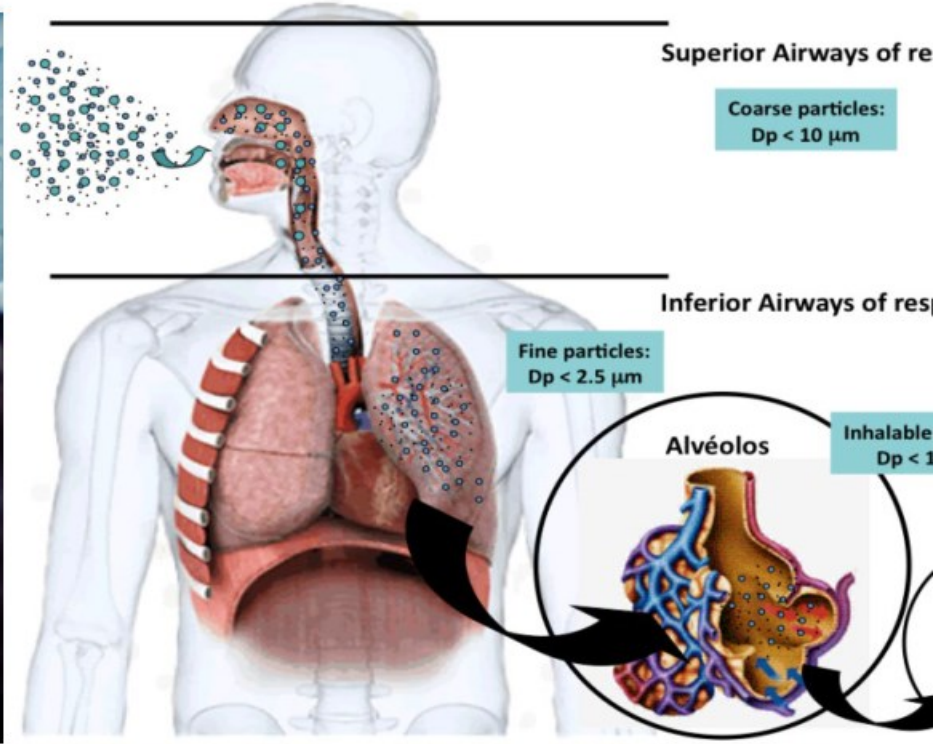




CLEAN AIR IN EUROPE



*we inhale
10,000 liters
of air/day*



Life after WHO 2021 AQG – What does science tell us?





24th May, 2023

 Chair of the European Respiratory Society (ERS) Environment and Health Committee; Professor in Environmental Epidemiology, Department of Public Health, University of Copenhagen, Denmark

WHO 2021 AQG – main messages and beyond

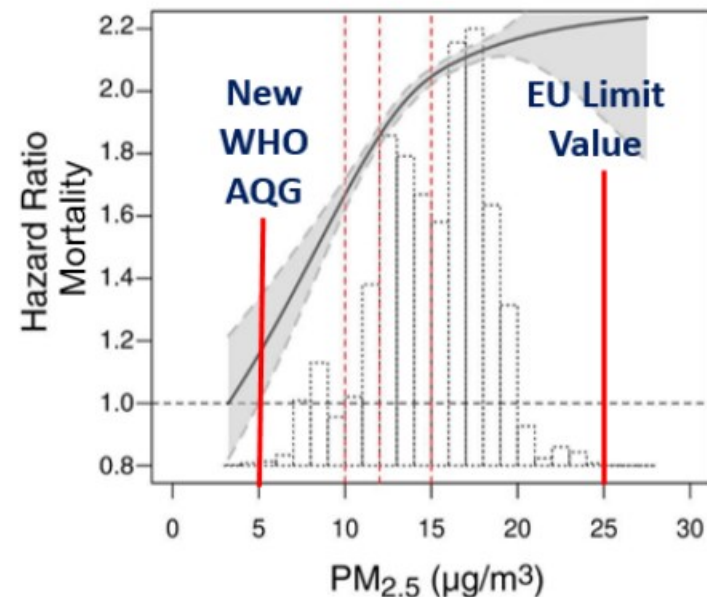


WHO AIR QUALITY GUIDELINES

NO₂	2005: 40 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$, annual 2021: 10 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$, annual	
PM_{2.5}	2005: 10 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$, annual 2021: 5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$, annual	

1. Everyone is exposed – no lower threshold

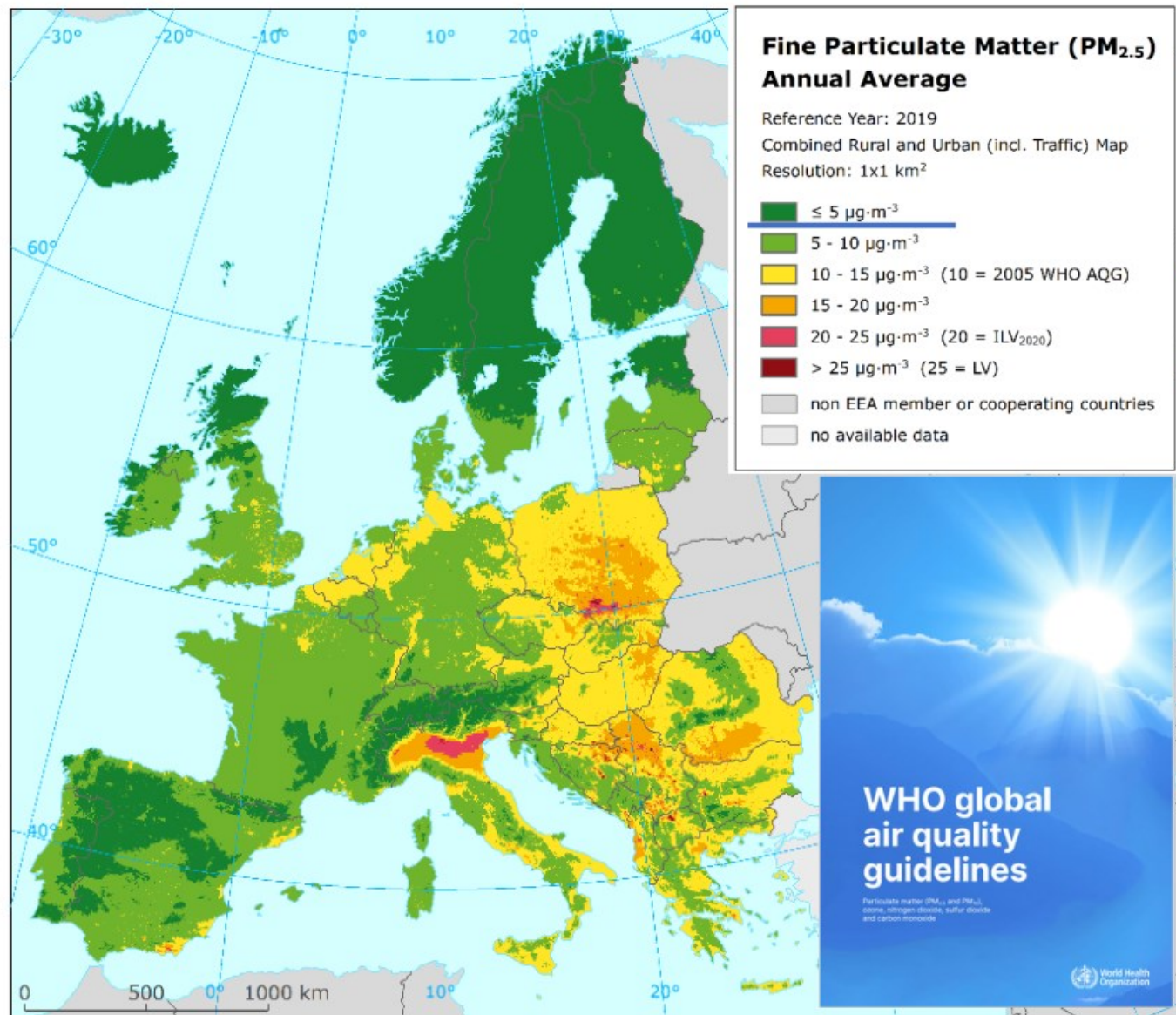
1. Everyone in Europe is exposed to harmful levels of air pollution (97.5% European population)
2. No lower threshold below which air pollution is safe



325,367 people
6 EU countries
ELAPSE



- Brunekreef et al, Research Report 208; Boston, MA: HEI.
- Strak et al. BMJ 2021.



2. Air pollution burden is huge, increasing & underestimated

- WHO 2005 AQG (Hoek et al. 2013): **6.2%***

- WHO 2021 AQG (Chen & Hoek 2020): **8.0%**

- ELAPSE (after WHO 2021 AQG): **11.8%**

- Stronger effects at low levels?

EU

EEA

2019: 307,000 deaths attributed to PM_{2.5}

2020: 412,000 deaths attributed to PM_{2.5}

238,000 deaths > 5 µg/m³ PM_{2.5}

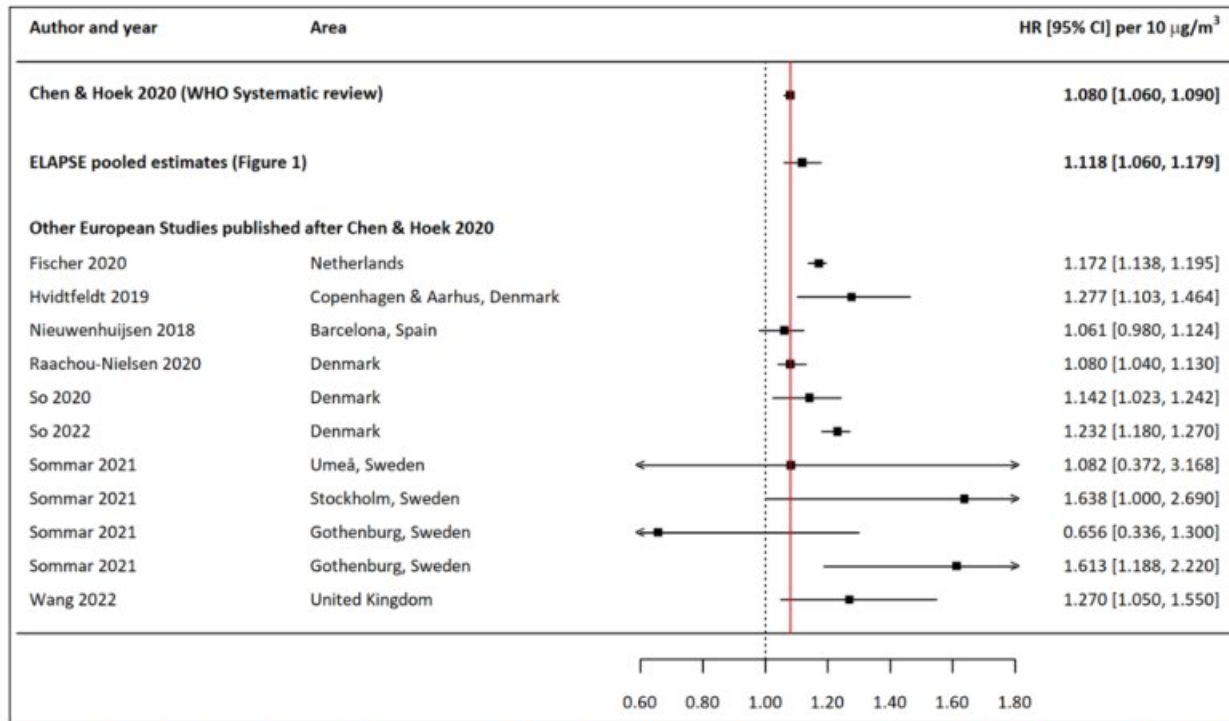
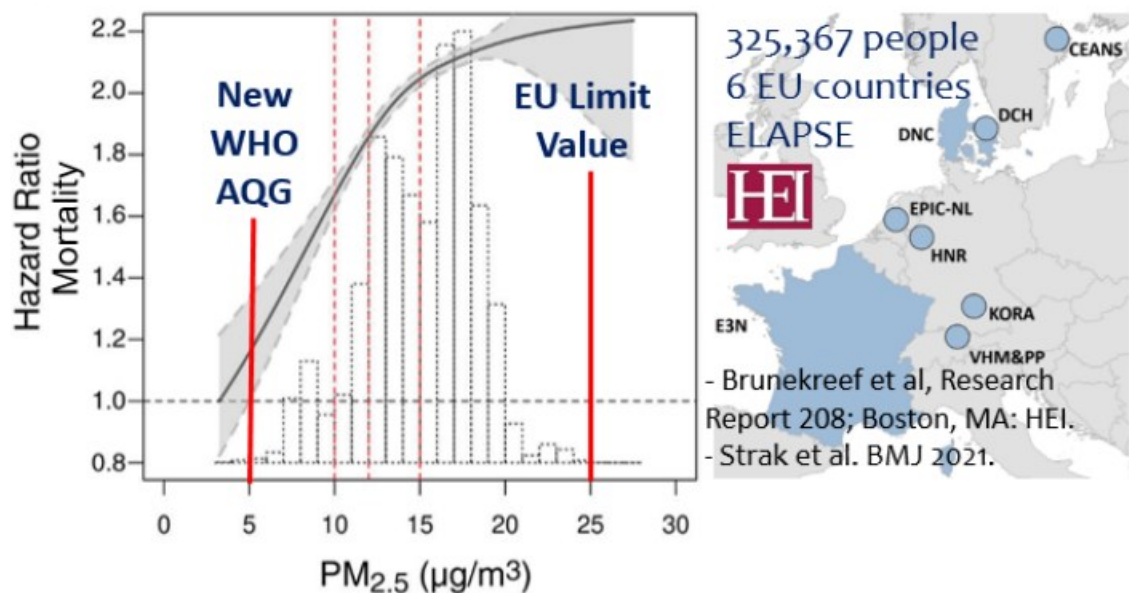


Figure 3. Total mortality and long-term PM_{2.5} from other European studies published since the WHO systematic review by [redacted] (2020).*

*Red line indicates the summary estimate from the systematic review by [redacted] (2020). Range of mean PM_{2.5} exposure European studies from 5.8 to 20.5 µg/m³.
https://www.ersnet.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Statement-HIA-by-ERS_ISEE_final-002.pdf
https://journals.lww.com/epidemiology/Fulltext/2022/10000/Benefits_of_future_clean_air_policies_in_Europe_.5.aspx

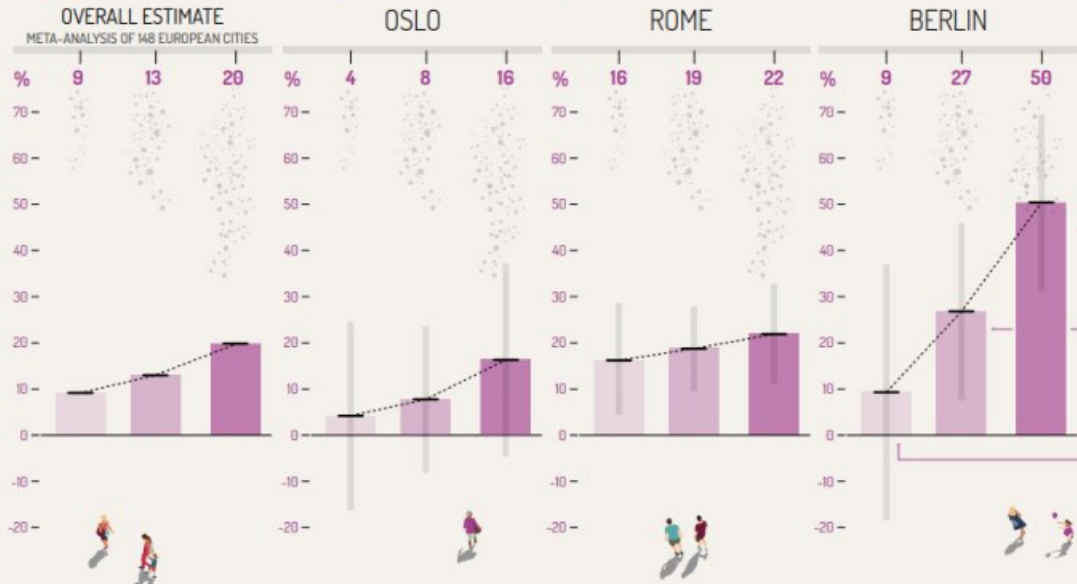
*interpretation: 6.2 % increase in mortality risk for each 10 µg/m³ increase in PM_{2.5}

3. Air pollution and climate change – inseparable issues

WE BREATHE CLIMATE CHANGE

More people will die of **lung** diseases in our cities when high temperatures are combined with high levels of air pollution. This is especially true for those of us who are 65 and older.

Change in number of deaths from lung diseases in European cities (%) in association with high temperatures, by different levels of air pollution (PM2.5)



EXHAUSTION
www.exhaustion.eu

The good news
Policies that make us less exposed to heat and air pollution will be beneficial for our health and wellbeing.

LEGEND
Change in n° of deaths from lung diseases when we are exposed to moderate temperatures compared to:

- High temperatures and high air pollution
- High temperatures and medium air pollution
- High temperatures and low air pollution

Confidence interval: the estimate lies in this interval, with very high probability

Moderate temperature level: in the study period, 75% of the days in the city have a temperature below this level (°C)

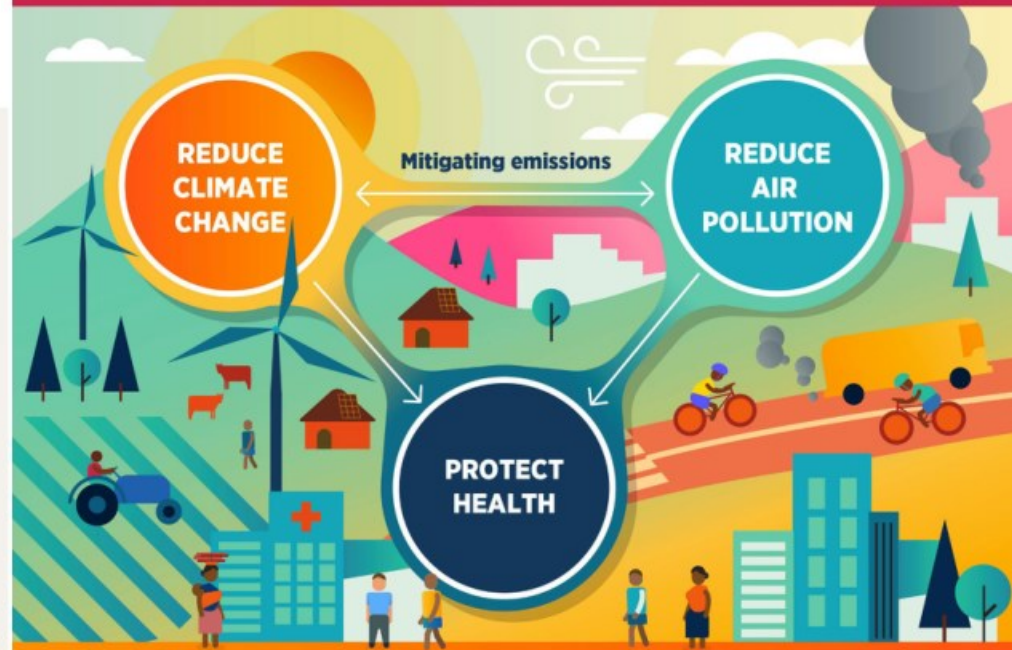
Overall estimate	Oslo	Rome	Berlin
20.2	15.3	25.7	20.2

High temperature level: in the study period, 1% of the days in the city have a temperature above this level (°C)

Overall estimate	Oslo	Rome	Berlin
26.4	21.7	29.6	27.1

Overall estimate	Oslo	Rome	Berlin
low 4	low 2	low 9	low 7
medium 10	medium 6	medium 15	medium 12
high 21	high 15	high 23	high 21

REDUCING AIR POLLUTION AND MITIGATING CLIMATE CHANGE, TOGETHER HELP TO PROTECT OUR HEALTH



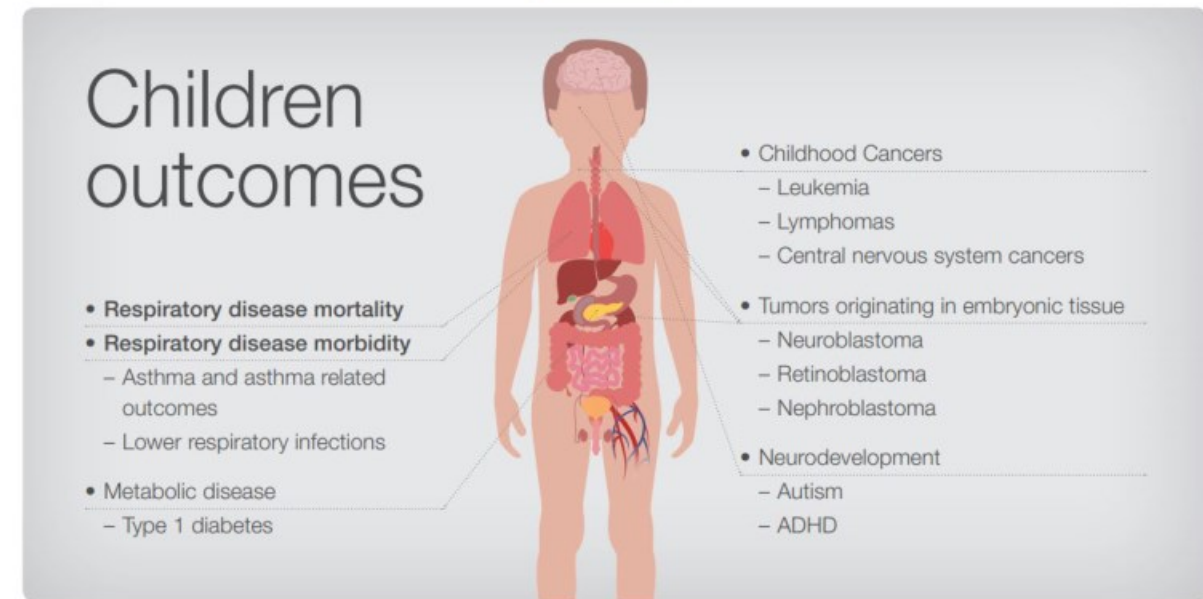
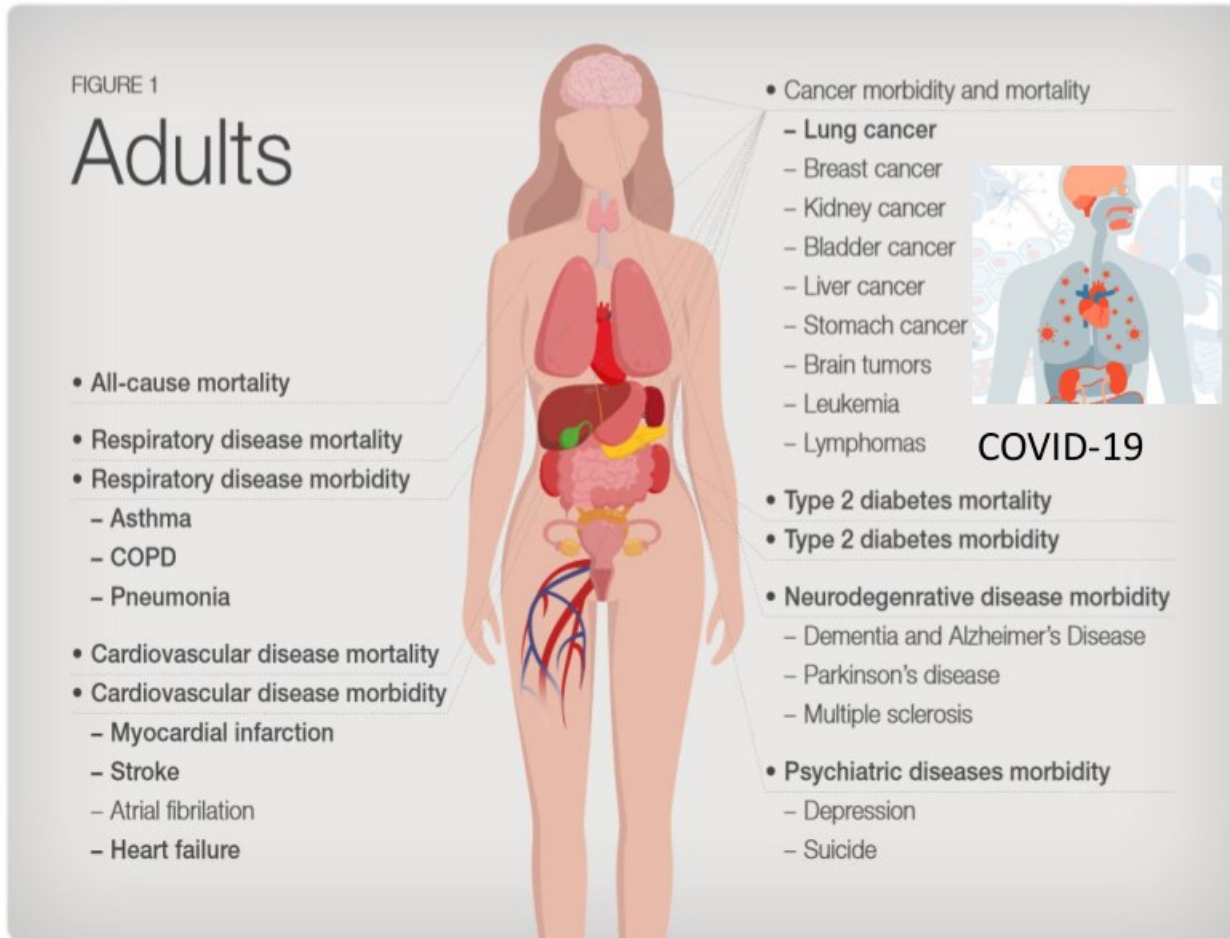
WHO Air Quality Guidelines set goals to protect millions of lives from air pollution.

CLEAN AIR FOR HEALTH #AirPollution World Health Organization



Health burden of air pollution

Premature deaths + millions of new cases of disease, symptoms, worsened quality of life, doctor visits, ER visits, hospital admissions, sick days (school & work), medication use....



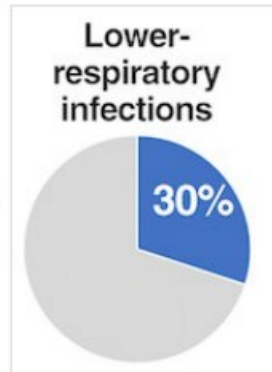
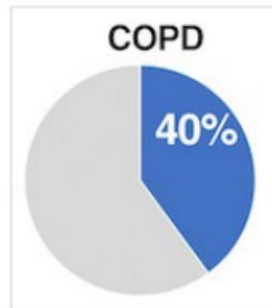
Air Pollution and Lung

- **Long-term (years, lifetime) exposure to air pollution** can lead to impaired lung function and development of new lung disease in healthy individuals and increased risk of dying from those diseases:

asthma, COPD, pneumonia, COVID-19, lung cancer

- **Short-term (hours, days) exposure to air pollution** can exacerbate existing lung disease in lung patients and trigger:

wheezing, cough, shortness of breath, need for medication, ER visits, hospitalizations, and death



GBD - Mortality specific-causes, 'fraction attributable' to air pollution
<https://www.stateofglobalair.org/>



Air pollution a factor in girl's death, inquest finds

© 16 December 2020



lived 25 metres from the South Circular Road in south-east London

A nine-year-old girl who died following an asthma attack has become the first person in the UK to have air pollution listed as a cause of death.

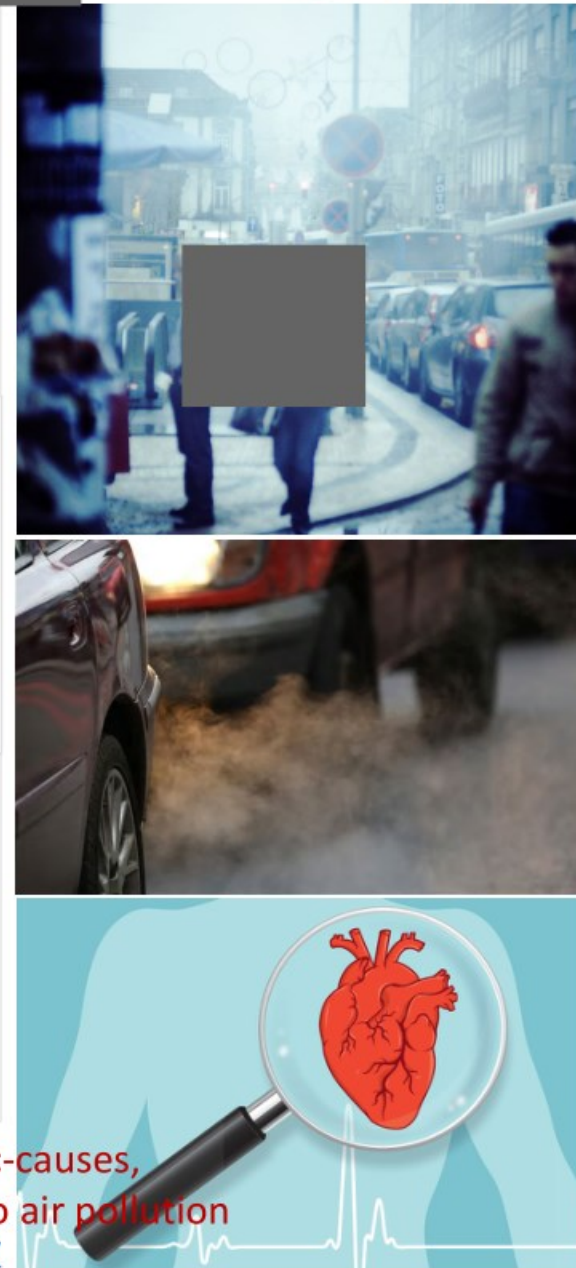
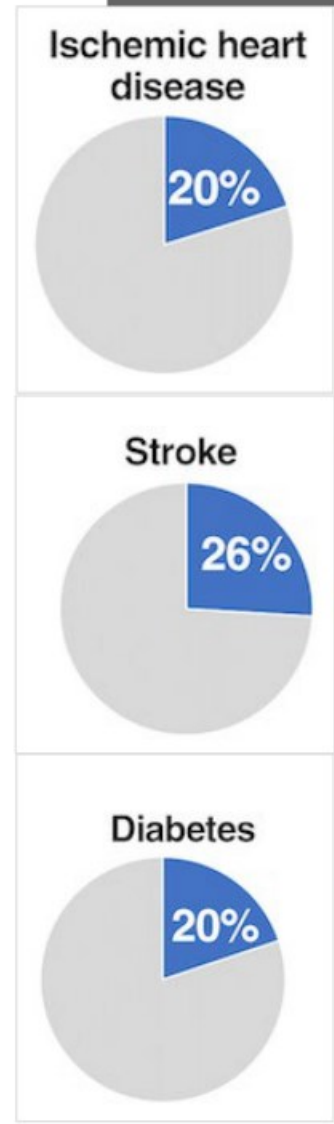
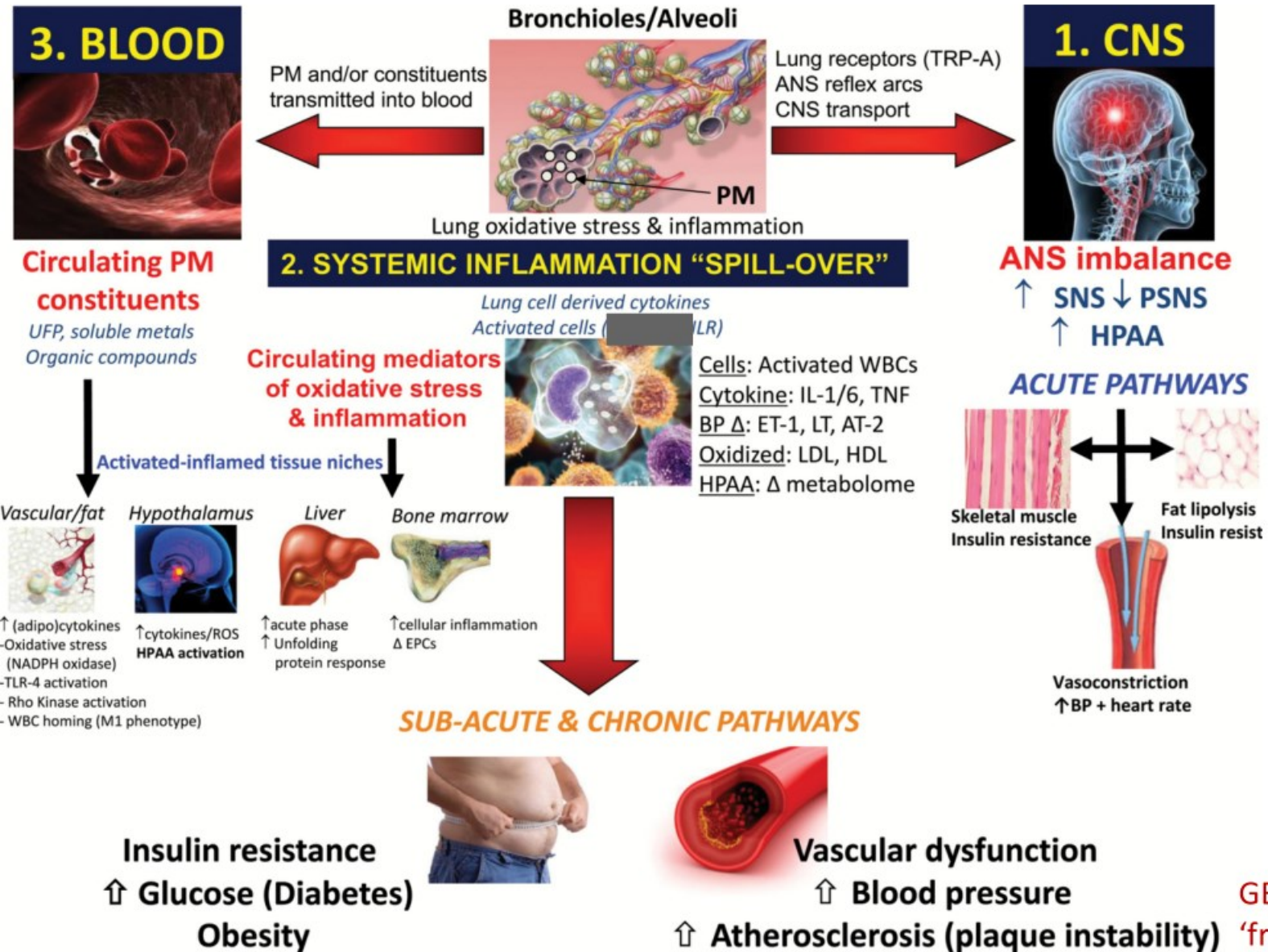
who lived near the South Circular Road in Lewisham, south-east London, died in 2013.

16% asthma cases in children due to air pollution*

*Khreis H, et al.. Environ. Int. 2017

- 9 year old girl suffered fatal asthma attack triggered by air pollution, London, February 2013

Air pollution and cardio-metabolic health



GBD - Mortality specific-causes, 'fraction attributable' to air pollution
<https://www.stateofglobalair.org/>

Air pollution and cancer



European Commission

Strengthening Europe in the fight against cancer



EU Health Union: Europe's Beating Cancer Plan

#EUCancerPlan

3 FEBRUARY 2021



- Cancer causes 1 in 4 deaths in the EU (1.3 million cancer deaths in 2020)
- Air pollution is carcinogenic,* causes lung cancer and possibly other (breast, liver, blood, stomach, colon) cancers
- BECA - the EU Green Deal is a key tool to limit people's exposure to (air) pollution and prevent cancer,

GBD - 'fraction attributable' to air pollution

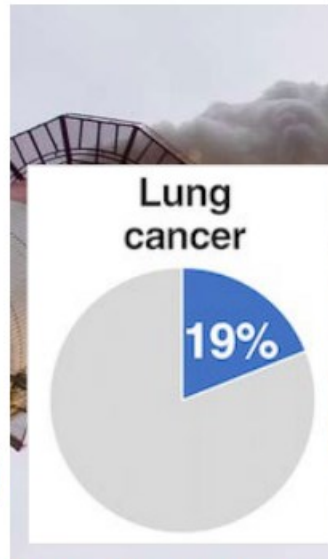
<https://www.stateofglobalair.org/>

"In 2020, while we were all fighting against the COVID-19 pandemic, many of us were fighting a silent battle. The battle against cancer. In 2020, we lost 1.3 million Europeans to this disease. And sadly, the number of cases is on the rise. This is why we present Europe's Beating Cancer Plan today. The fight of

“

Cutting pollution through the EU's Zero Pollution Action Plan and the Chemical Strategy for Sustainability as well as strong implementation of other existing EU policies would go a long way to reduce cancer cases and deaths. This would be an effective investment in our citizen's well-being.

”



NEWS

European Environment Agency



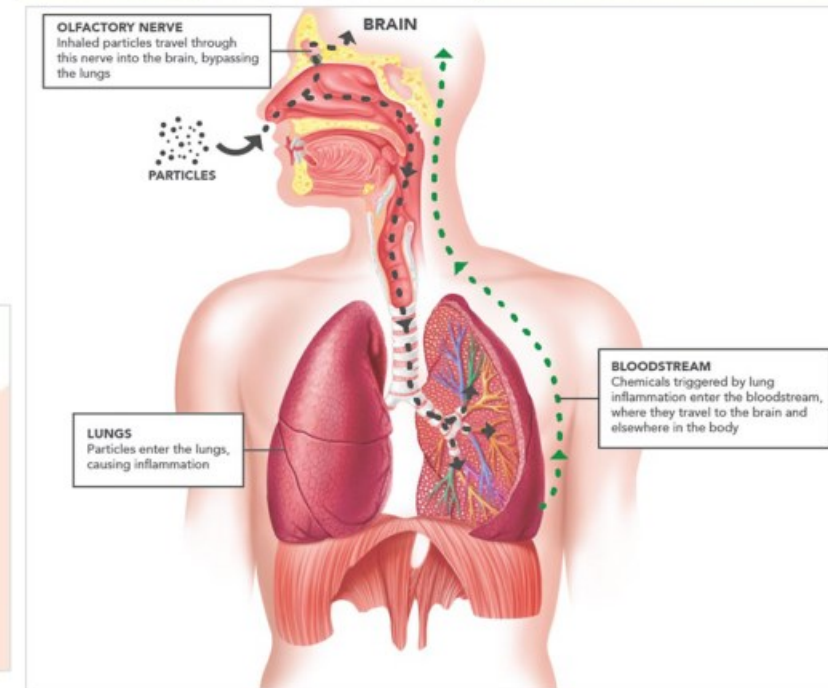
Exposure to pollution causes 10% of all cancer cases in Europe

Exposure to air pollution, second-hand smoke, radon, ultraviolet radiation, asbestos, certain chemicals and other pollutants causes over 10% of all cancer cases in Europe, according to a European Environment Agency (EEA) report published today. The good news is that these risks are preventable.

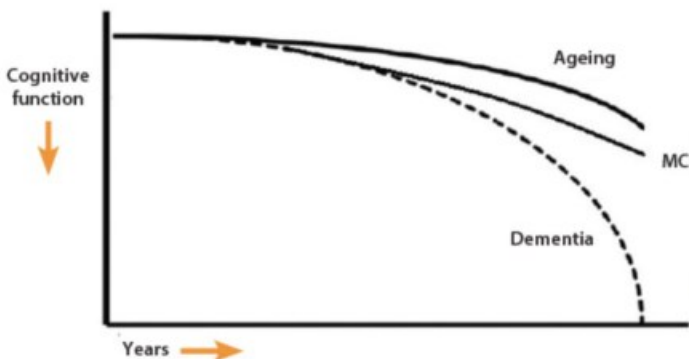
*International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) 'Air Pollution and Cancer' 2013

Emerging issues: air pollution and the brain ([REDACTED])

- Impaired neurocognitive development in children (learning difficulties, loss of IQ, ADHD, autism)
- Accelerated cognitive decline (dementia) elderly
- **Mental health (suicide, depression, anxiety)**



Early life

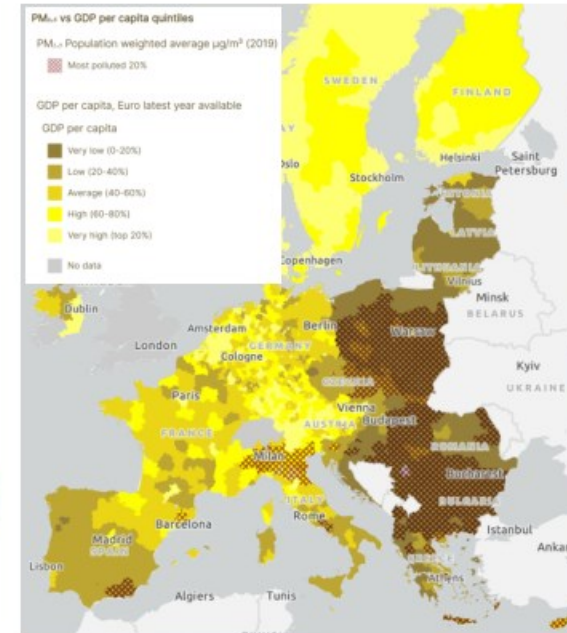


Old age



Everyone is exposed – some are more vulnerable

- Children
- Pregnant women
- Elderly
- Chronic diseases patients
- Poor (environmental inequality)



Conclusion

New AAQD, fully aligned with WHO 2021 AQG, is a major public and planetary health opportunity, that would:

1. prevent a substantial number of new cases of major NCDs
2. make EU citizens more resilient to seasonal influenza epidemics and COVID-19-like new pandemics
3. improve life of lung, heart, and other chronic disease patients
4. Indirect benefit for health - help mitigate unprecedented climate change impact on our health and our planet

Clean air as a basic civil right - no one should get sick or die from breathing





Thank You

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

'We need to ensure parents know the impact air pollution has on their children'



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V673obDHCVc>

