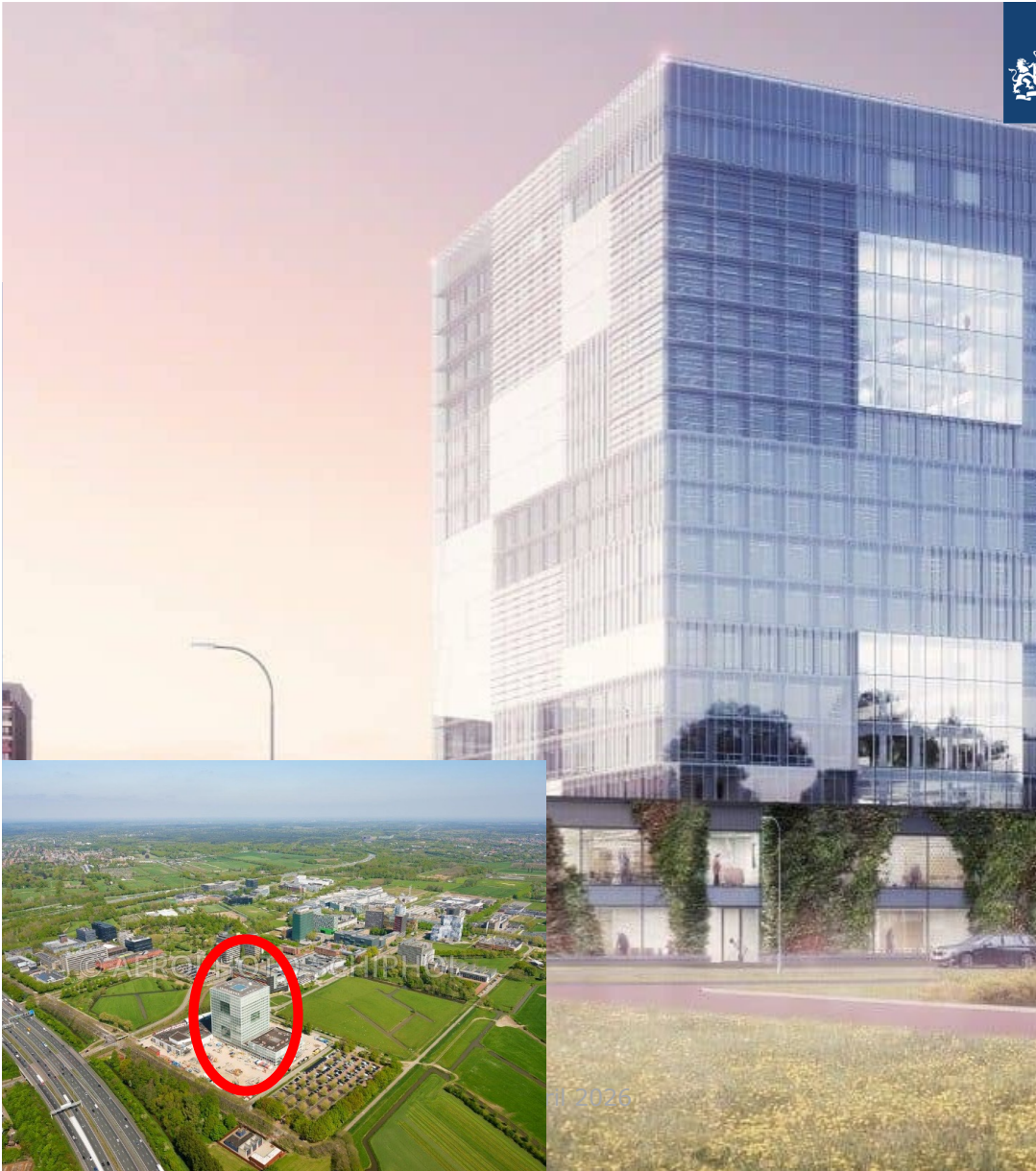




Luchtverontreiniging nog een probleem?

Flemming R. Cassee, PhD ERT







Air pollution and mortality



World-wide air pollution is responsible for over 7 million premature deaths every single year

Estimates and 25-year trends of the global burden of disease attributable to ambient air pollution: an analysis of data from the Global Burden of Diseases Study 2015

Aaron J Cohen, Michael Brauer*, Richard Burnett, H Ross A Lalit Dandona, Rakhi Dandona, Valery Feigin, Greg Freedma Lidia Morawska, C Arden Pope III, Hwashin Shin, Kurt Straif, Theo Vos, Christopher J L Murray, Mohammad H Forouzanf*

2015 rank

- 1 High systolic blood pressure
- 2 Smoking
- 3 High fasting plasma glucose
- 4 High total cholesterol
- 5 Ambient particulate matter pollution
- 6 Diet high in sodium
- 7 High body-mass index
- 8 Diet low in whole grains
- 9 Diet low in fruits
- 10 Household air pollution from solid fuels
- 11 Impaired kidney function
- 12 Alcohol use
- 13 Diet low in nuts and seeds
- 14 Diet low in vegetables
- 15 Low physical activity
- 16 Diet low in seafood omega3 fatty acids
- 17 Unsafe sex
- 18 Childhood undernutrition
- 19 Unsafe water source
- 20 No handwashing with soap



Outdoor air pollution



Systemic effects of air pollution (II)

Schraufnagel et al. 2019. Air Pollution and non-communicable diseases, Part 1: Chest 155 : 409-41

Schraufnagel et al. 2019. Air Pollution and non-communicable diseases, Part 2: Chest 155 : 417-42

Brain: Stroke, Dementia, Parkinson's Disease

Eye: Conjunctivitis, Cataracts, Glaucoma, Uveitis, Scleritis, Keratitis, Endophthalmitis

Heart: changes in heart rate, BP, and vascular tone; reduced heart rate variability; conduction defects

Lung: Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease, Asthma, Lung Cancer, Chronic Laryngitis, Acute and Chronic Bronchitis

Blood and blood vessels: endothelial dysfunction, atherosclerosis, thrombosis, impaired hemoglobin formation; carboxyhemoglobinemia

Liver: Hepatic Steatosis, Fibrosis, Cirrhosis

Blood: Leukemia, Intravascular Coagulation, Anemia, Sickle Cell Pain Crises

Fat: Metabolic Syndrome, Obesity

Pancreas: Type I and II Diabetes

Gastrointestinal: Gastric Cancer, Colorectal Cancer, Inflammatory Bowel Disease, Crohn's Disease, Appendicitis

Urogenital: Bladder Cancer, Kidney Cancer, Prostate Hyperplasia

Joints: Rheumatic Diseases

Bones: Osteoporosis, Fractures

Nose: Allergic Rhinitis

Skin: Atopic Skin Disease, Skin Aging, Urticaria, Dermographism, Seborrhea, Acne



Air pollution and mortality



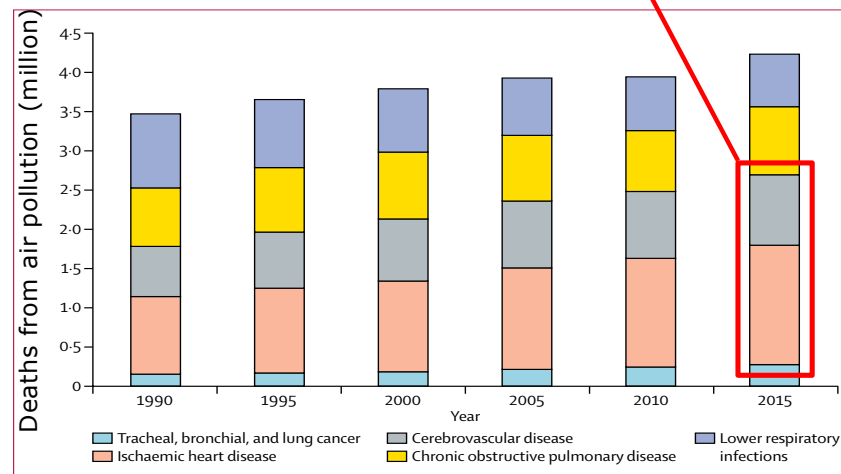
World-wide air pollution is responsible for over 7 million early deaths every single year

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Aaron J Cohen*,
Lalit Dandona, R
Lidia Morawska,
Theo Vos, Christ

- 2015 rank
- 1 High systolic blood pressure
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 - 16 Diet low in seafood omega3 fatty acids
 - 17 Unsafe sex
 - 18 Childhood undernutrition
 - 19 Unsafe water source
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Cardiovascular disease



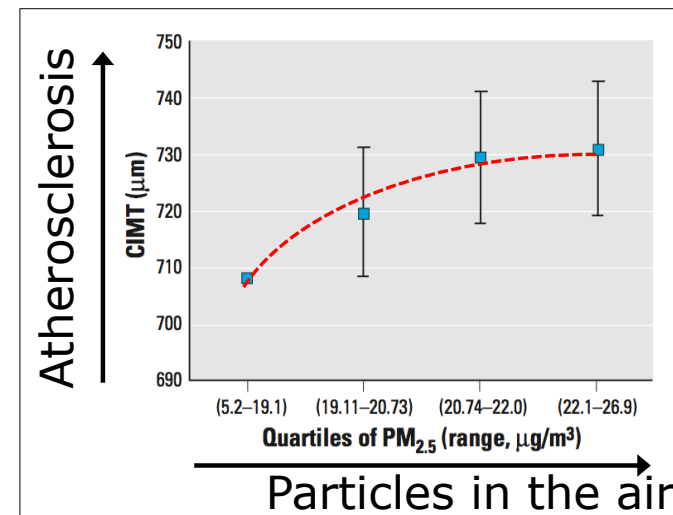
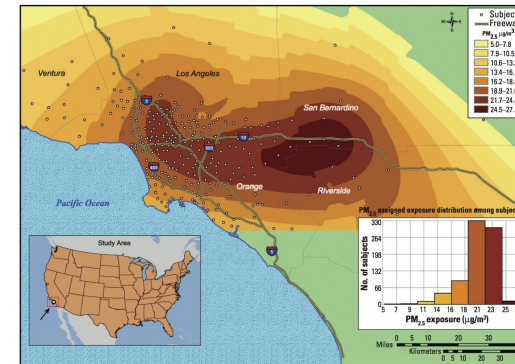
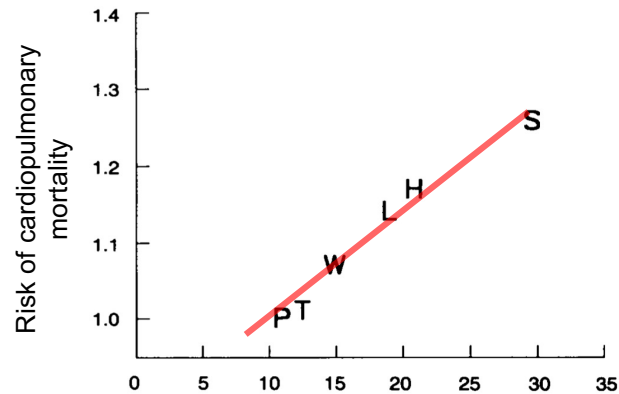
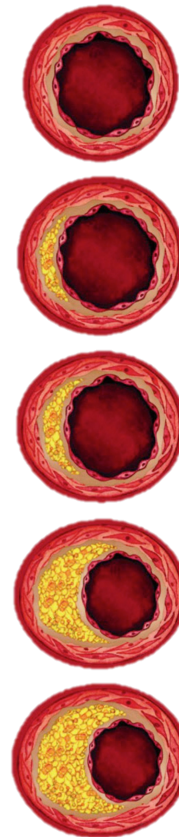
F.R. Cassee, SYMPOSIUM H2M, 3 april 2026

Cohen et al. 2017. Lancet 389: 1907-18

Particulate air pollution and cardiovascular mortality and morbidity



The Six Cities Study (1993)



F.R. Cassee, SYMPOSIUM H2M, 3 april 2026

Dockery (1993) *N Engl J Med*

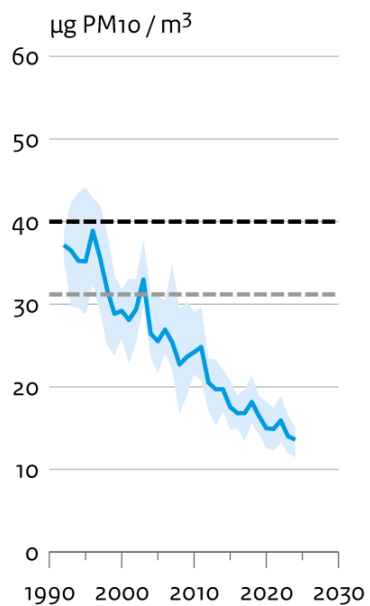
Kunzli (2005) *Environ Health Perspect* 113



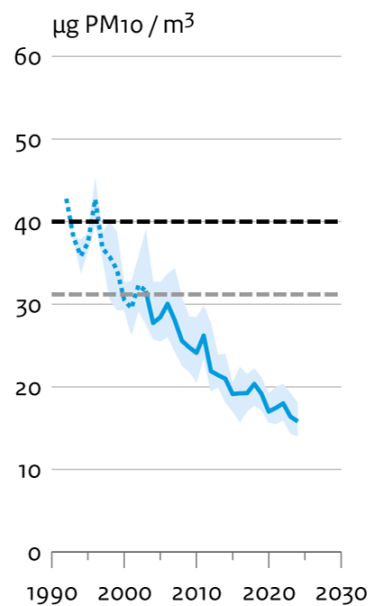
Hoe staan we er voor?

Concentratie fijn stof in lucht

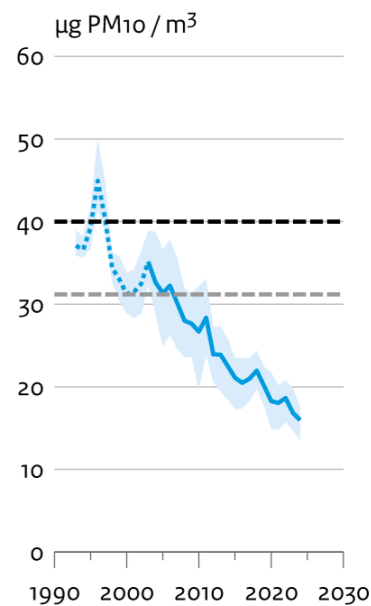
Regionale achtergrond



Stedelijke achtergrond



Verkeersbelast

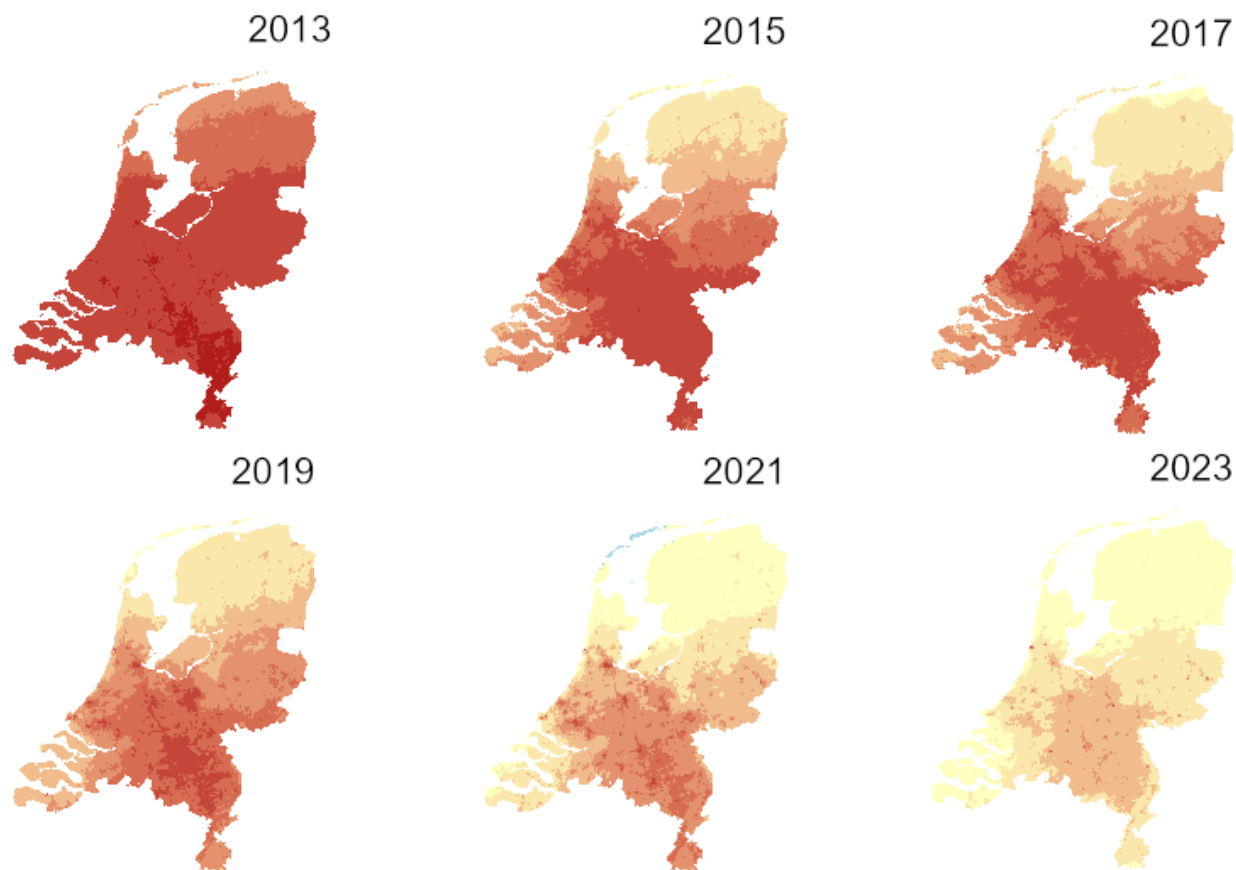


— Gemiddelde

--- Grenswaarde jaargemiddelde

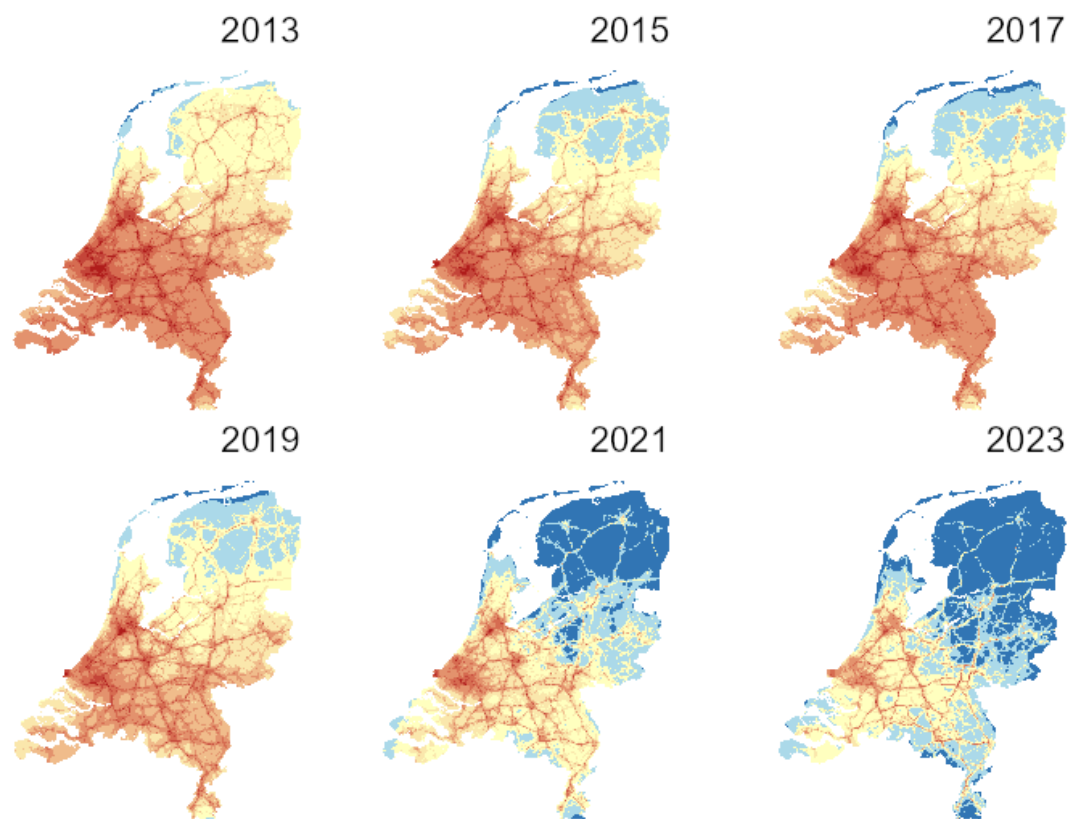
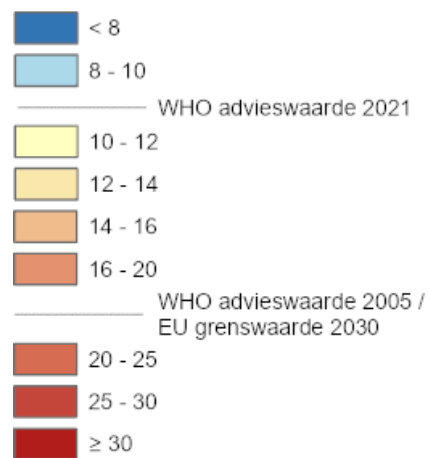


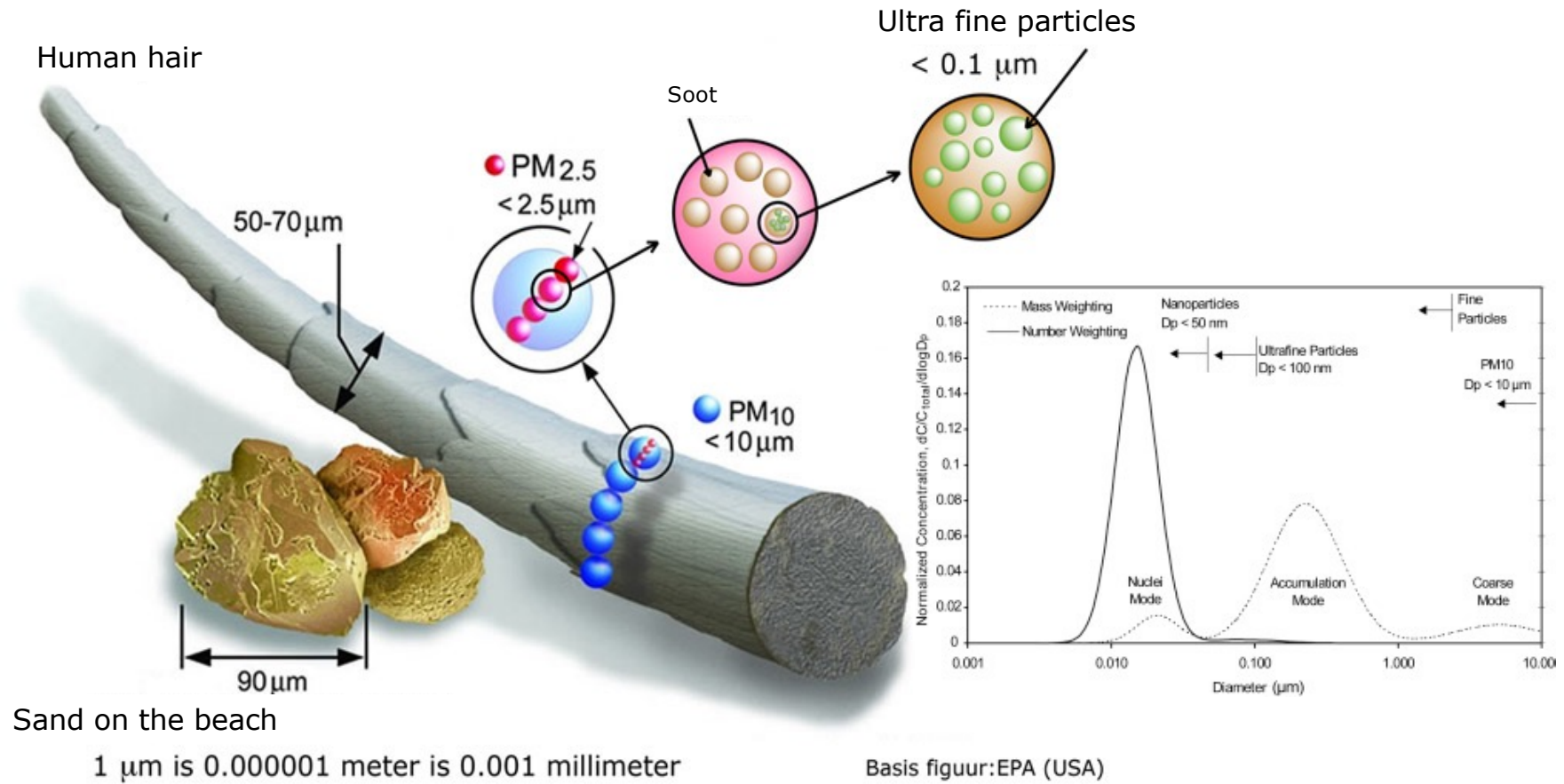
Fijnstof ($\mu\text{g PM}_{2,5}/\text{m}^3$)





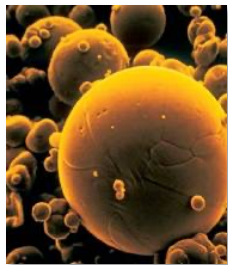
Stikstofdioxide ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$)



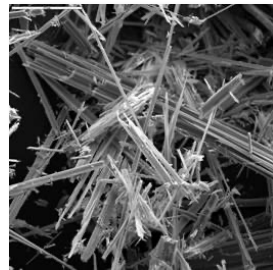




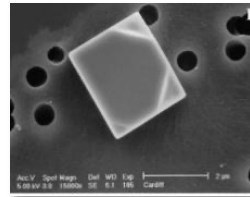
What can be detected in air?



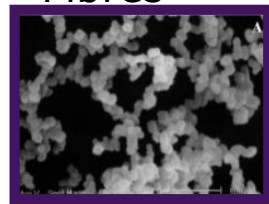
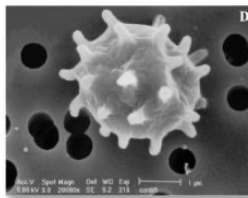
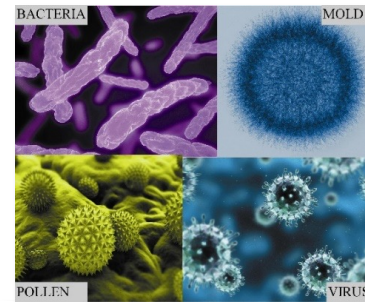
Metal



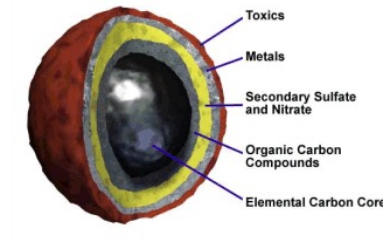
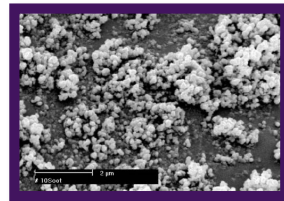
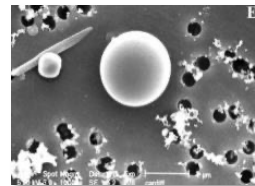
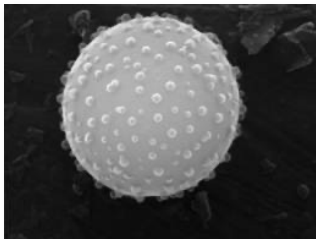
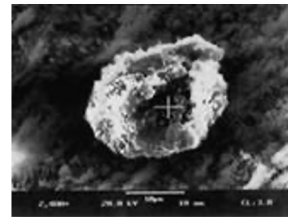
Fibres



Sea salt

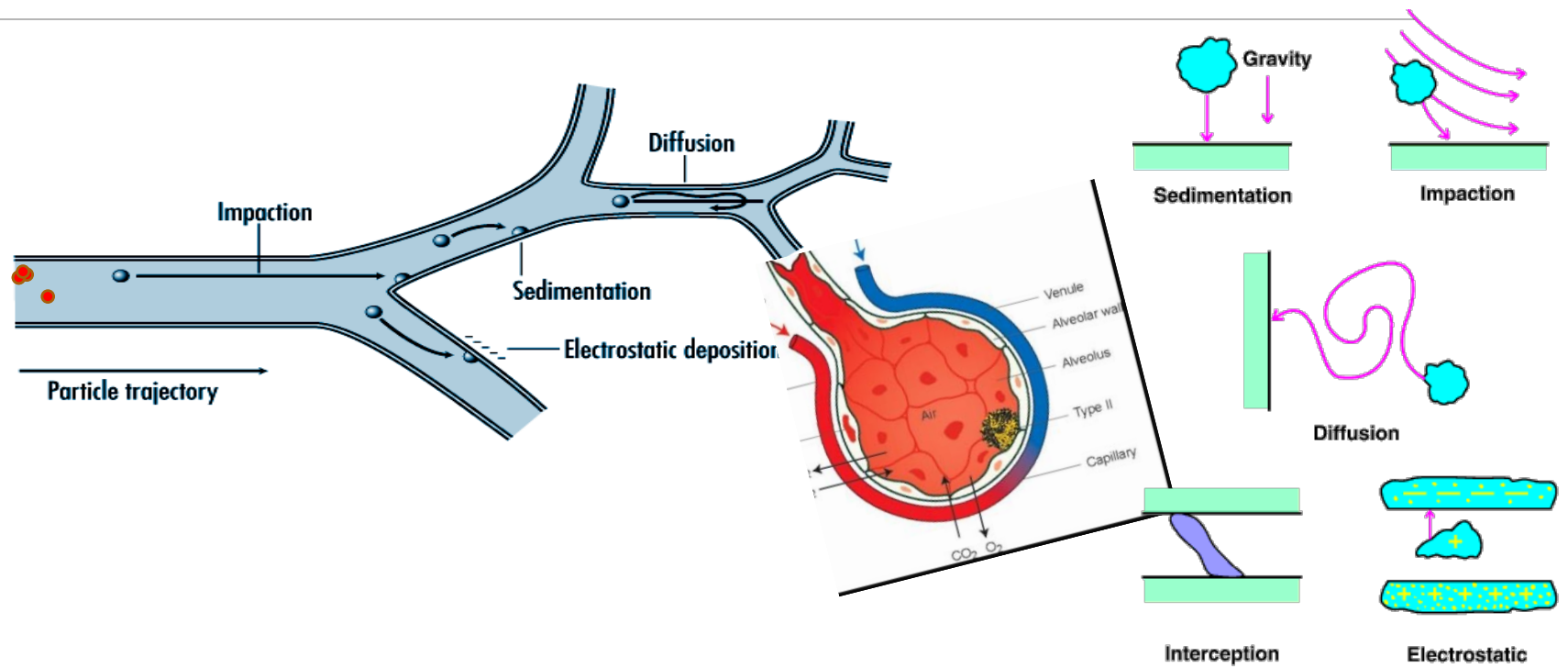


Soot



Plastics

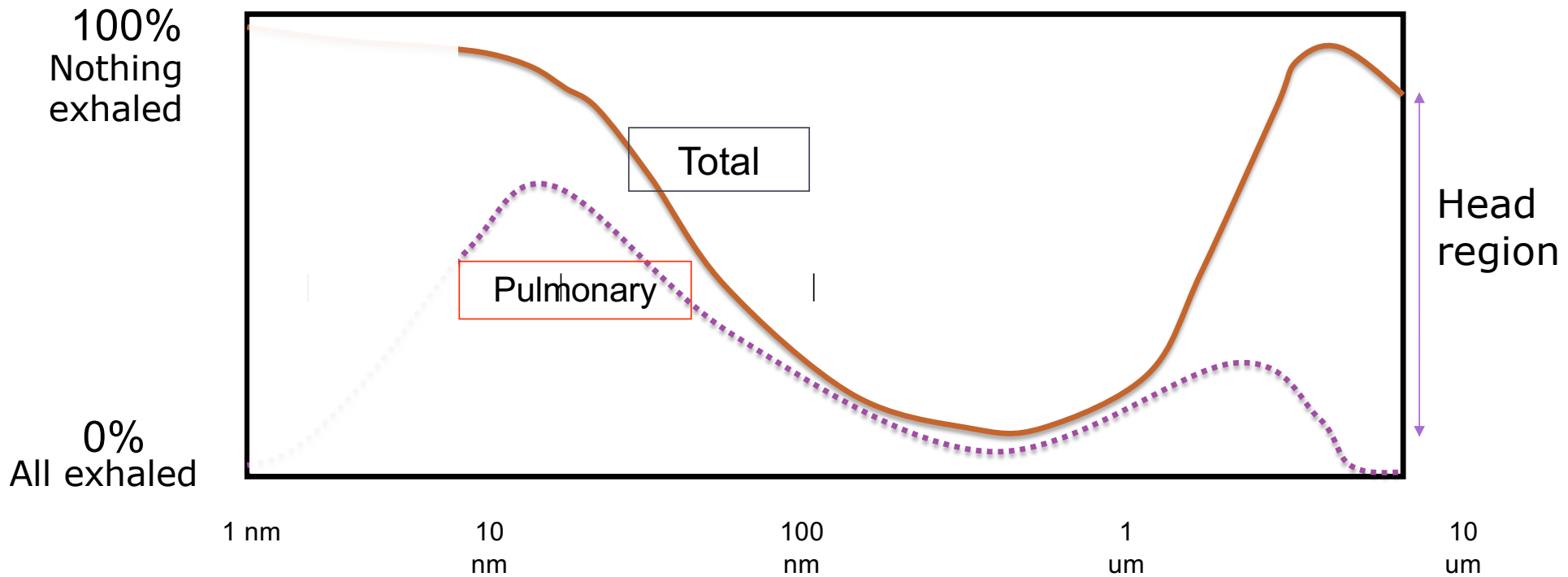
Mechanisms of particle deposition in the lung





MPPD
MULTIPLE-PATH PARTICLE DOSIMETRY MODEL
VERSION 2.0
Co-developed RIVM
v 3.04

Deposition after inhalation



Size affects the internal dose... and the choice of the in vitro model

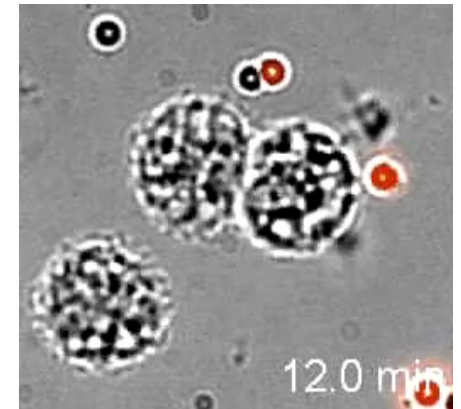
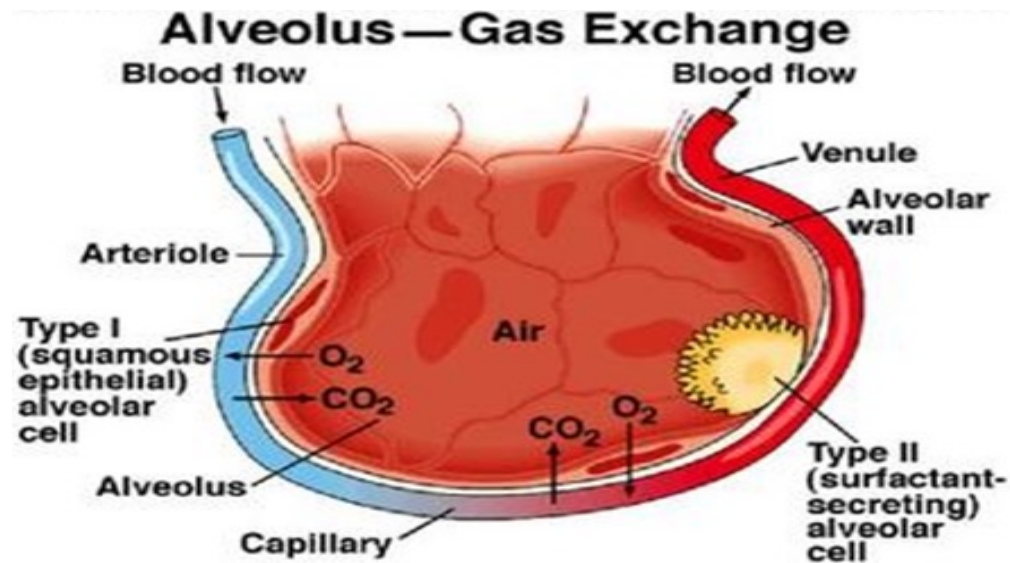
P

P



Size matters: micro particle external concentration x mg/m³

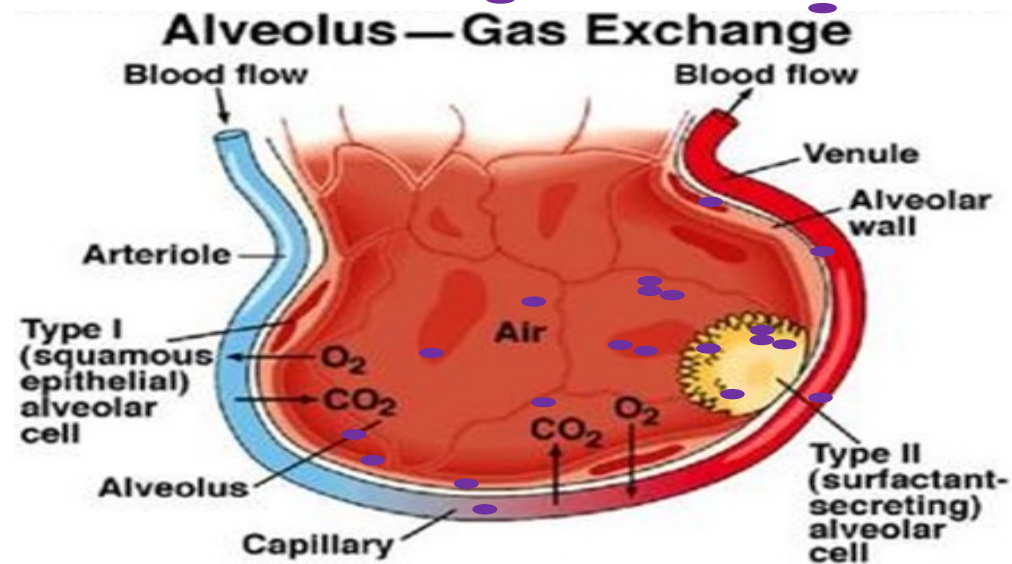
P



Clearance **micro-size** particles within 6-14 hr



Size matters: nanoparticle: also external concentration \times mg/m³



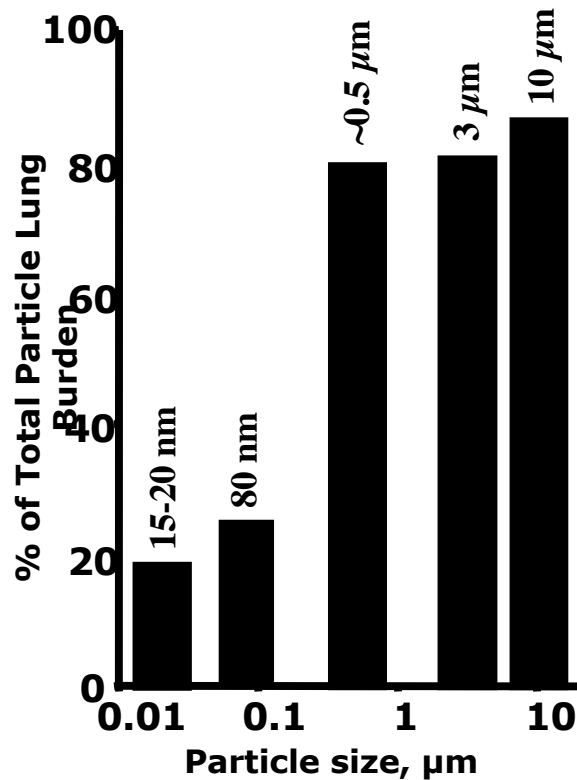
Ultrafine particle uptake by epithelial cells + interstitial translocation +
lack of macrophage recognition



Compartmentalized Retention of Particles in Rat Lungs

24 hrs post-exposure, extensive lavage

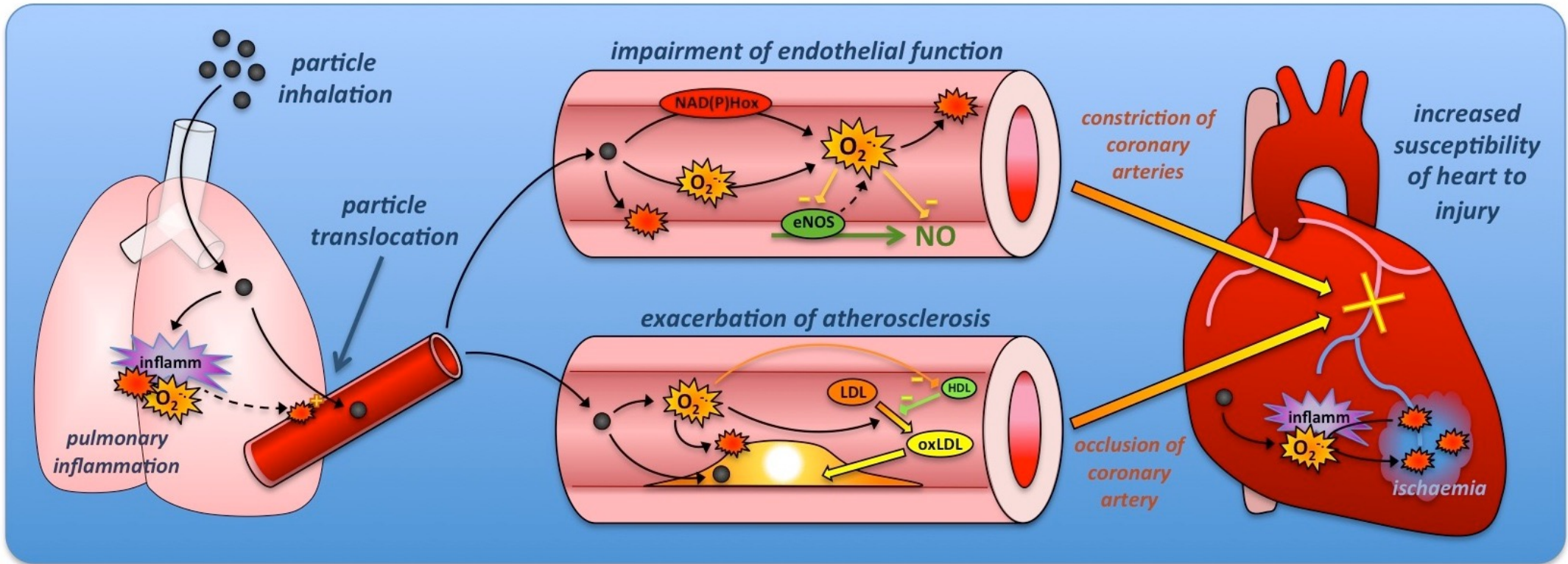
Alveolar Macrophages



m Oberdörster, 2004



1. Cardiovascular



Courtesy Mark Miller,
Miller (2014). Biochem Soc Trans 42:1006-11



Diesel, particle trap and thrombus formation

A study in volunteers

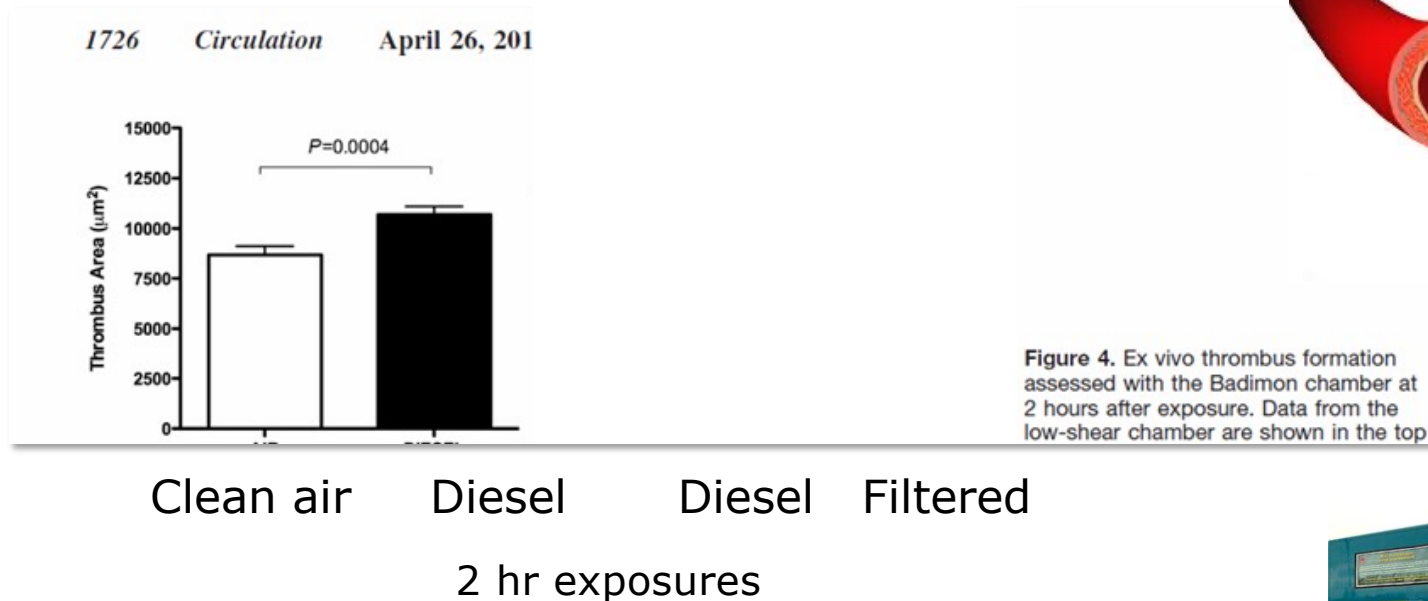
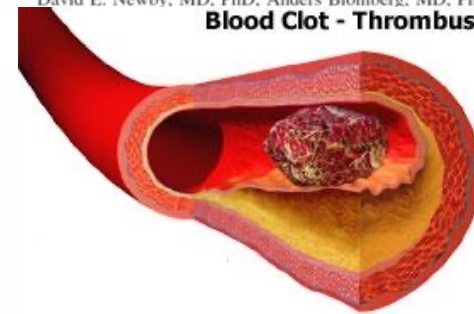
Increase thrombus

Decrease thrombus

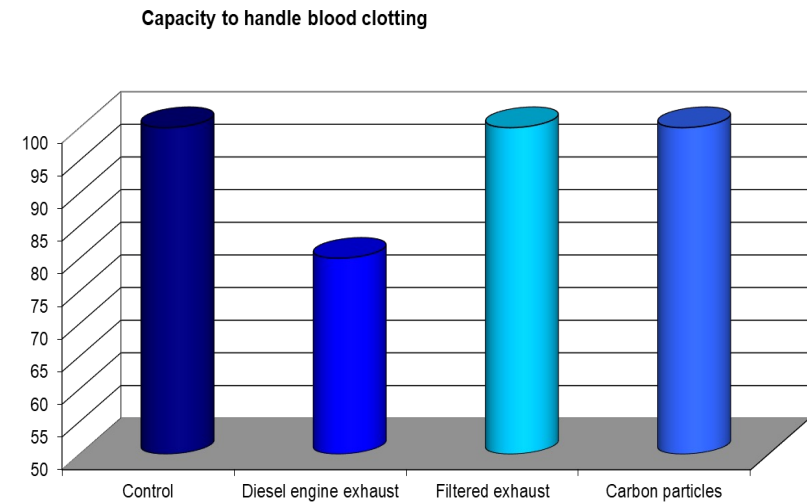
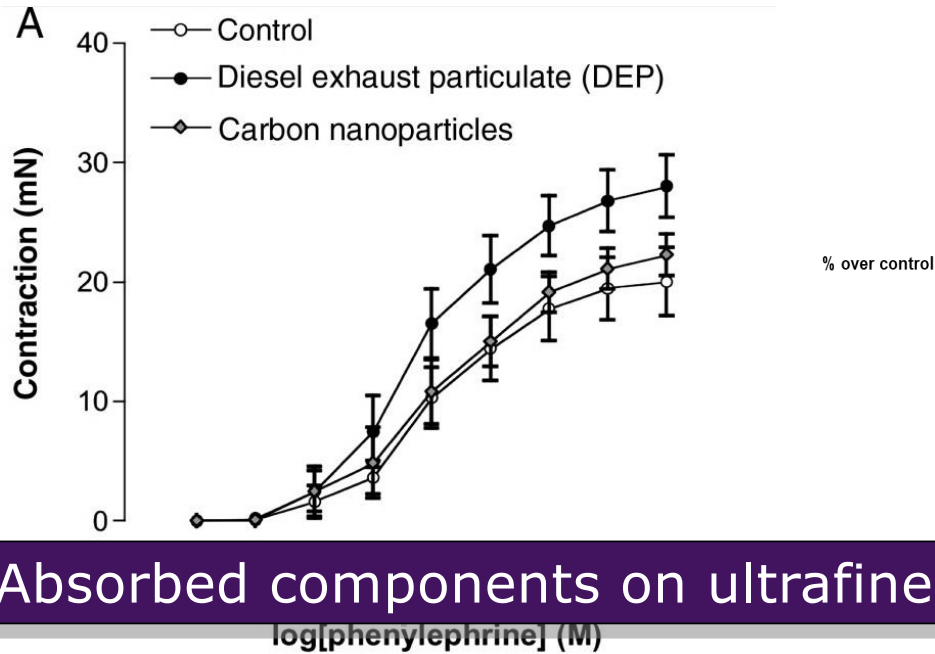
Particle Traps Prevent Adverse Vascular and Prothrombotic Effects of Diesel Engine Exhaust Inhalation in Men

Andrew J. Lucking, MD^{*}; Magnus Lundbäck, MD, PhD^{*};
Stefan L. Barath, MD; Nicholas L. Mills, MD, PhD; Manjit K. Sidhu, MD;
Jeremy P. Langrish, MD; Nicholas A. Boon, MD; Jamshid Pourazar, PhD;
Juan J. Badimon, MD, PhD; Miriam E. Gerlofs-Nijland, PhD; Flemming R. Cassee, PhD;
Christoffer Boman, PhD; Kenneth Donaldson, PhD; Thomas Sandstrom, MD, PhD;
David E. Newby, MD, PhD; Anders Blomberg, MD, PhD

Blood Clot - Thrombus



Contraction of blood vessel (ex vivo)



Similar observations arterial stiffness

Absorbed components on ultrafineparticles seem to drive the response

Characterization of exposure conditions

2 hr exposures

	Filtered air	Diesel exhaust	Filtered exhaust	Carbon
PM (teflon filter), $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$	<1	348 \pm 64	6 \pm 16	70 \pm 28
Particle number, $\times 1000/\text{cm}^3$	<1	1198 \pm 204	2 \pm 4	3865 \pm 424
Particle diameter, nm	-	67 \pm 4	-	37 \pm 4

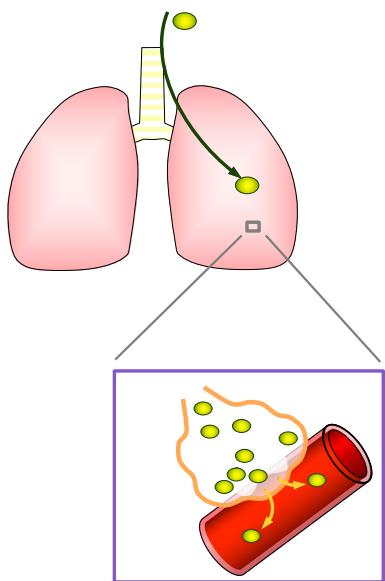
F.R. Cassee, SYMPOSIUM H2M, 3 april 2026



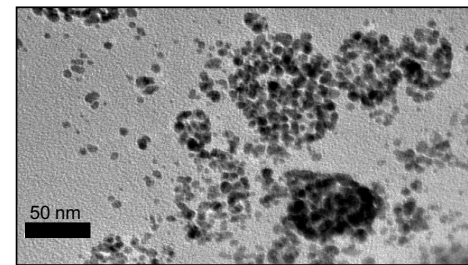
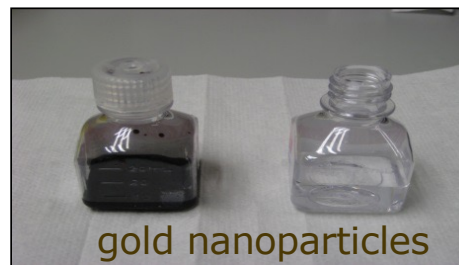
Mills et al., *Eur Heart J.* 2011 Nov; 32(21): 2660–2671.



Waar gaan de ultrafijne deeltjes naar toe?



Soot hard to trace



Why use gold?

- > Very small size available
- > Safe to use
- > Techniques to measure very low levels
- > Low levels of gold in the body (background)

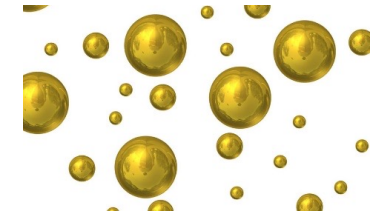


Inhalation of gold nanoparticles

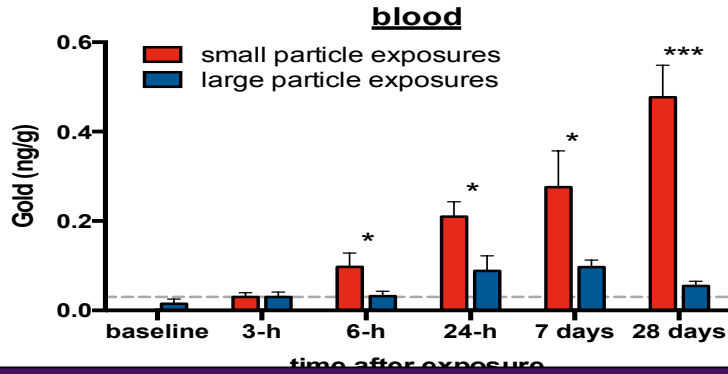


- 16 healthy volunteers
- 2-hour inhalation of gold nanoparticles : 5-15 nm; $5 \cdot 10^6$ per cc
- Measure gold in blood and urine after the exposure
- Parallel study in mice: more sizes, IT

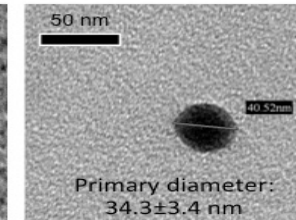
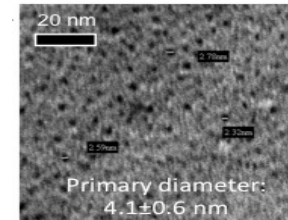
Using gold particles for tracing



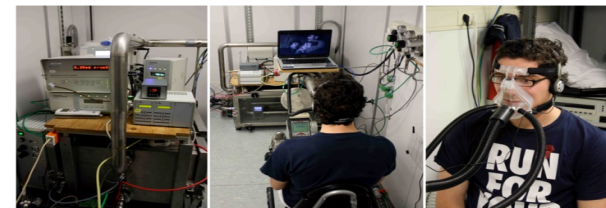
Clinical



17.8 ± 1.2
52.4 ± 1.4

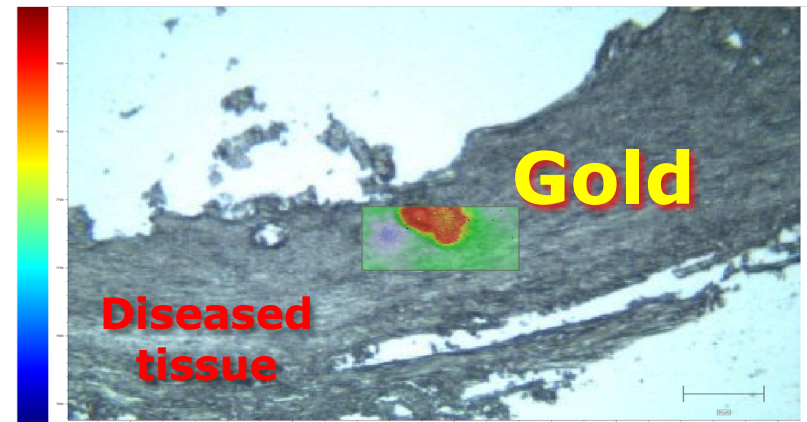
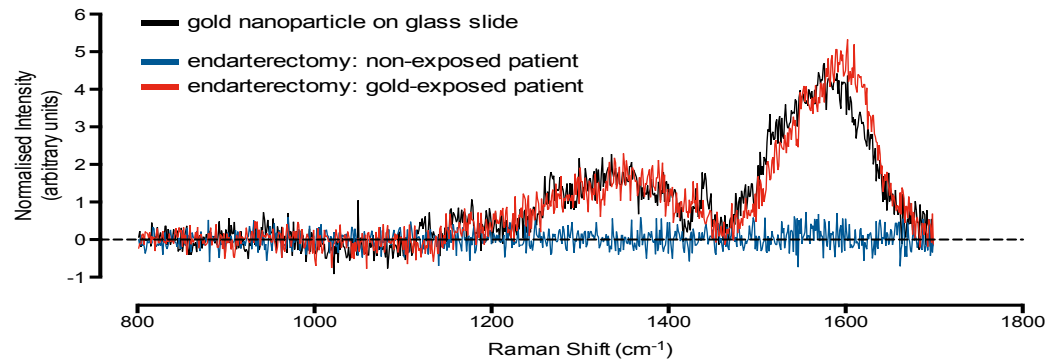
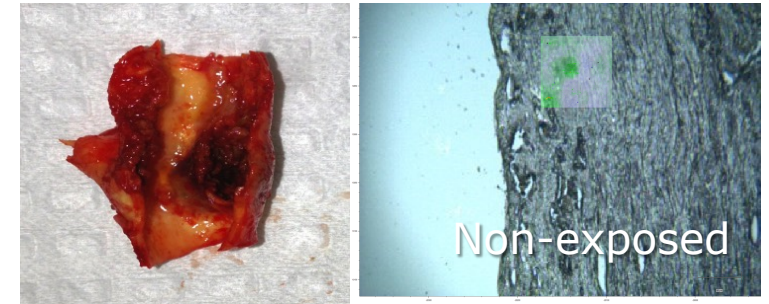
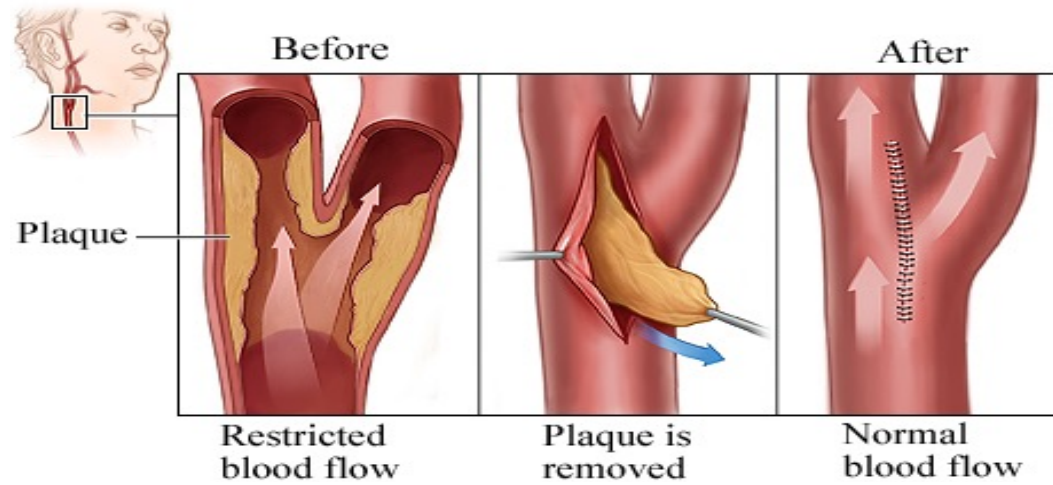


Size dependent particle translocation from the lung



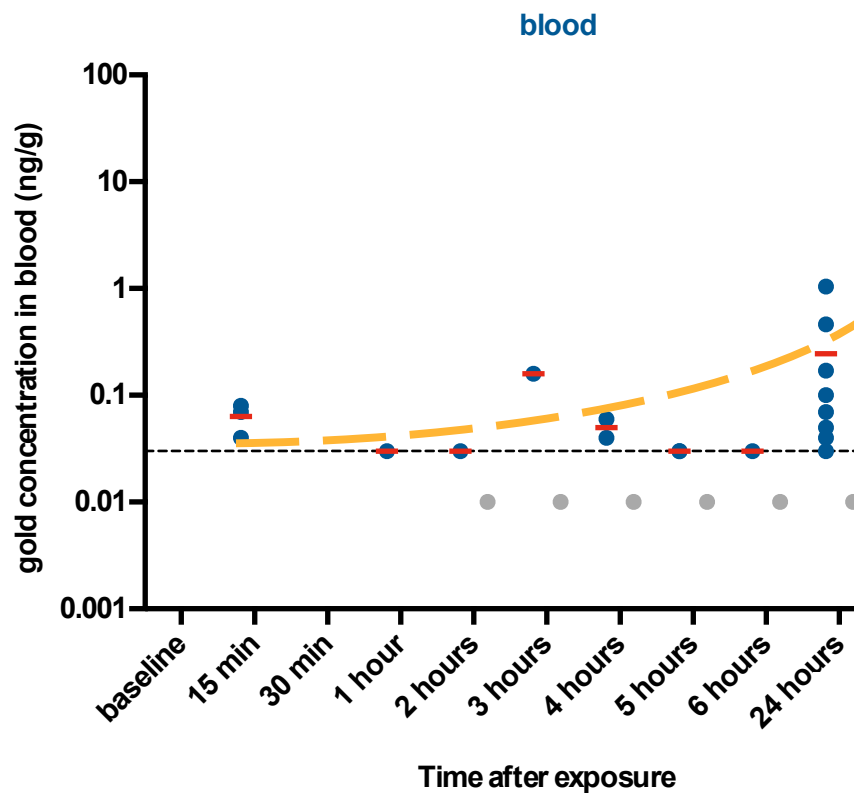


Gold nanoparticles reach areas of vascular disease



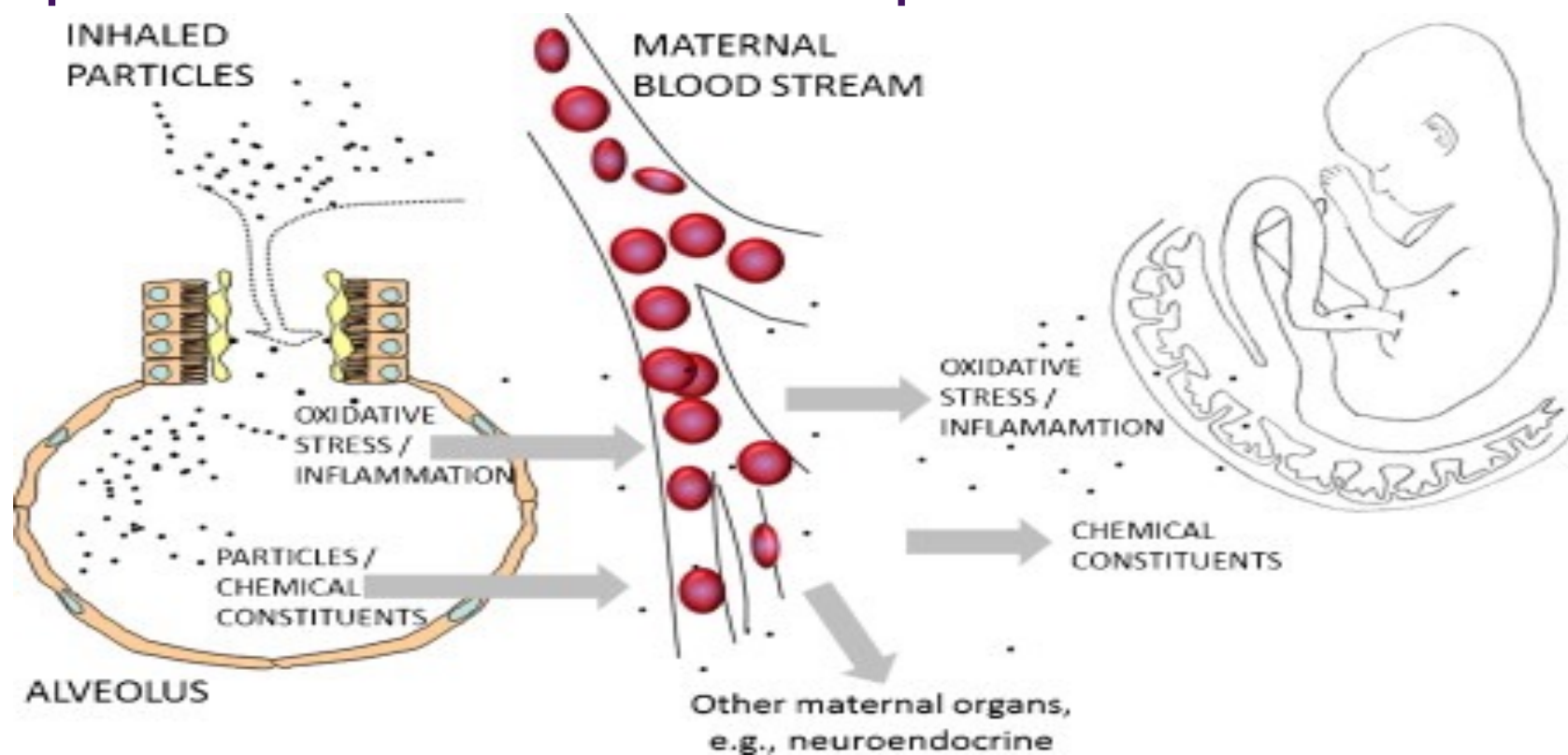


Gold nanoparticles reach the systemic circulation





2. Reproduction and development



ARTICLE

<https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-019-11654-3> OPEN

Ambient black carbon particles reach the fetal side of human placenta

Hannelore Bové^{1,2,3,6}, Eva Bongaerts^{1,6}, Eli Slenders², Esmée M. Bijmens¹, Nelly D. Saenen¹, Wilfried Gyselaers⁴, Peter Van Eyken⁴, Michelle Plusquin¹, Maarten B.J. Roeflaers³, Marcel Ameloot² & Tim S. Nawrot^{1,5}

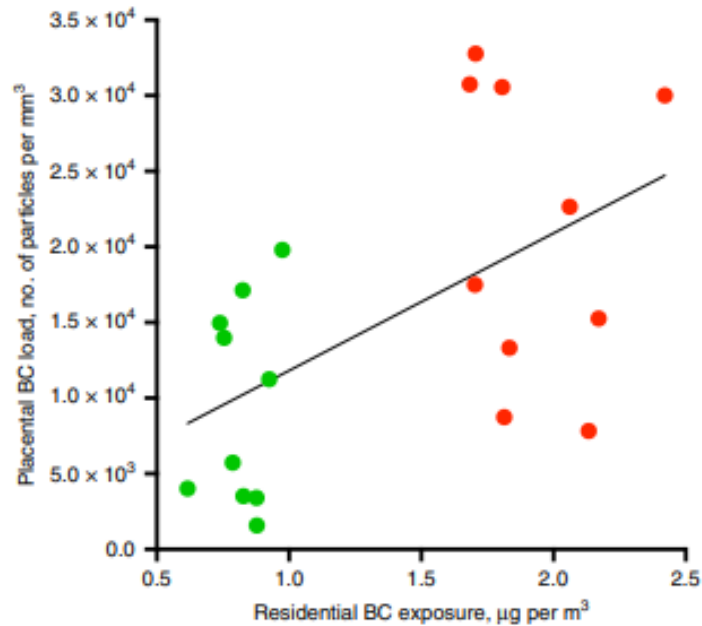


Fig. 4 Correlation between placental BC load and residential BC exposure averaged over the whole pregnancy. The line is the regression line. Green and red dots indicate low ($n = 10$ mothers) and high ($n = 10$ mothers) exposed mothers. Pearson correlation $r = 0.55$, $P = 0.012$ and corresponding Spearman's Rank correlation $r = 0.43$, $P = 0.06$. Source data are provided as a Source Data file

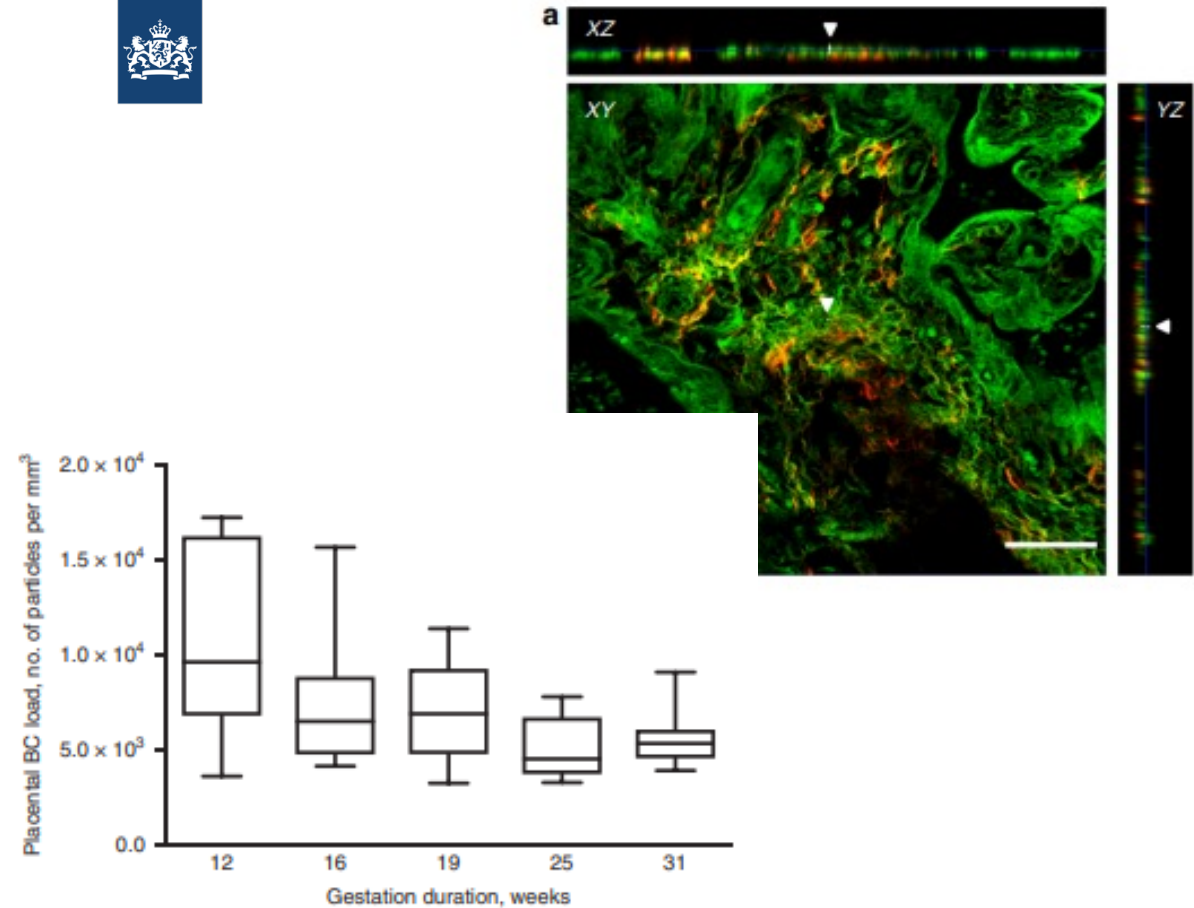


Fig. 5 BC load in placentae from spontaneous preterm births ($n = 5$). The whiskers indicate the minimum and maximum value and the box of the box plot illustrates the upper and lower quartile. The median of spreading is marked by a horizontal line within the box. Source data are provided as a Source Data file



Bongaerts et al. *Particle and Fibre Toxicology* (2023) 20:20
https://doi.org/10.1186/s12989-023-00531-z

Particle and Fibre Toxicology

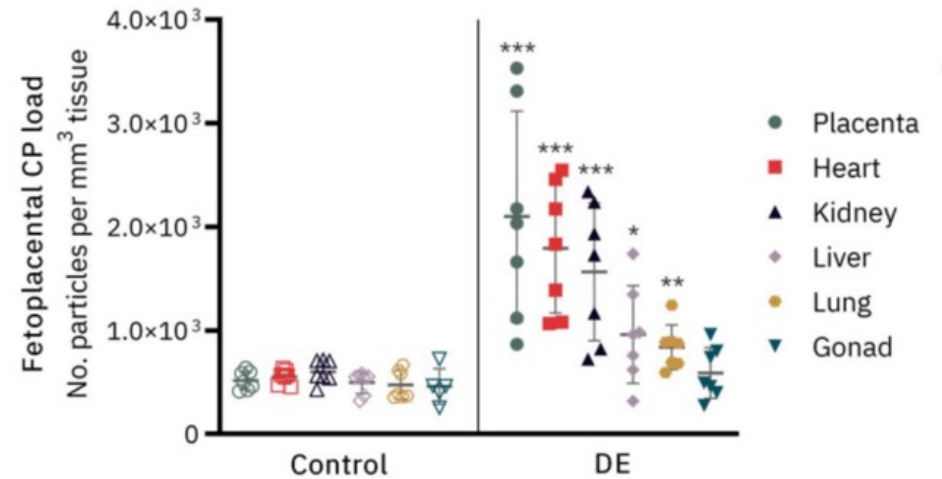
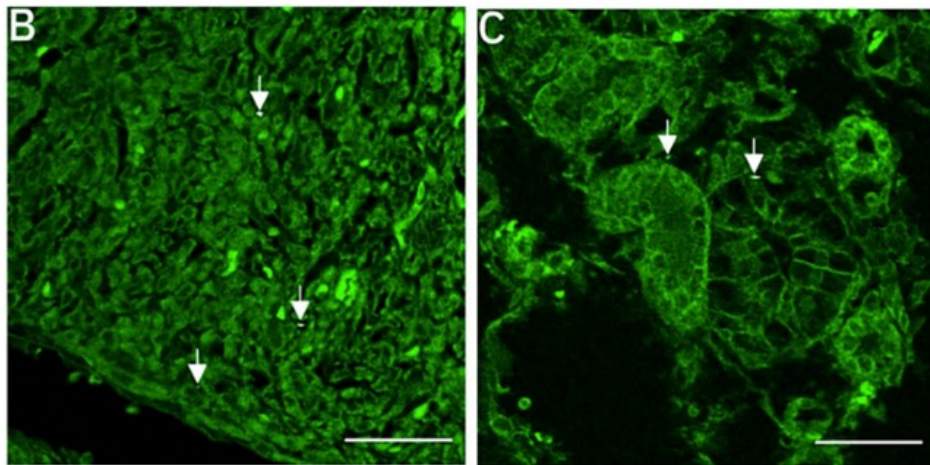
RESEARCH Open Access

Placental-fetal distribution of carbon particles in a pregnant rabbit model after repeated exposure to diluted diesel engine exhaust

Eva Bongaerts¹, Tim S Nawrot^{1,2*}, Congrong Wang¹, Marcel Ameloot³, Hannelore Bové¹, Maarten BJ Roeffaers⁴, Pascale Chavatte-Palmer^{5,6}, Anne Couturier-Tarrade^{5,6} and Flemming R Cassee^{7,8}

*Correspondence: tim.nawrot@ugent.be

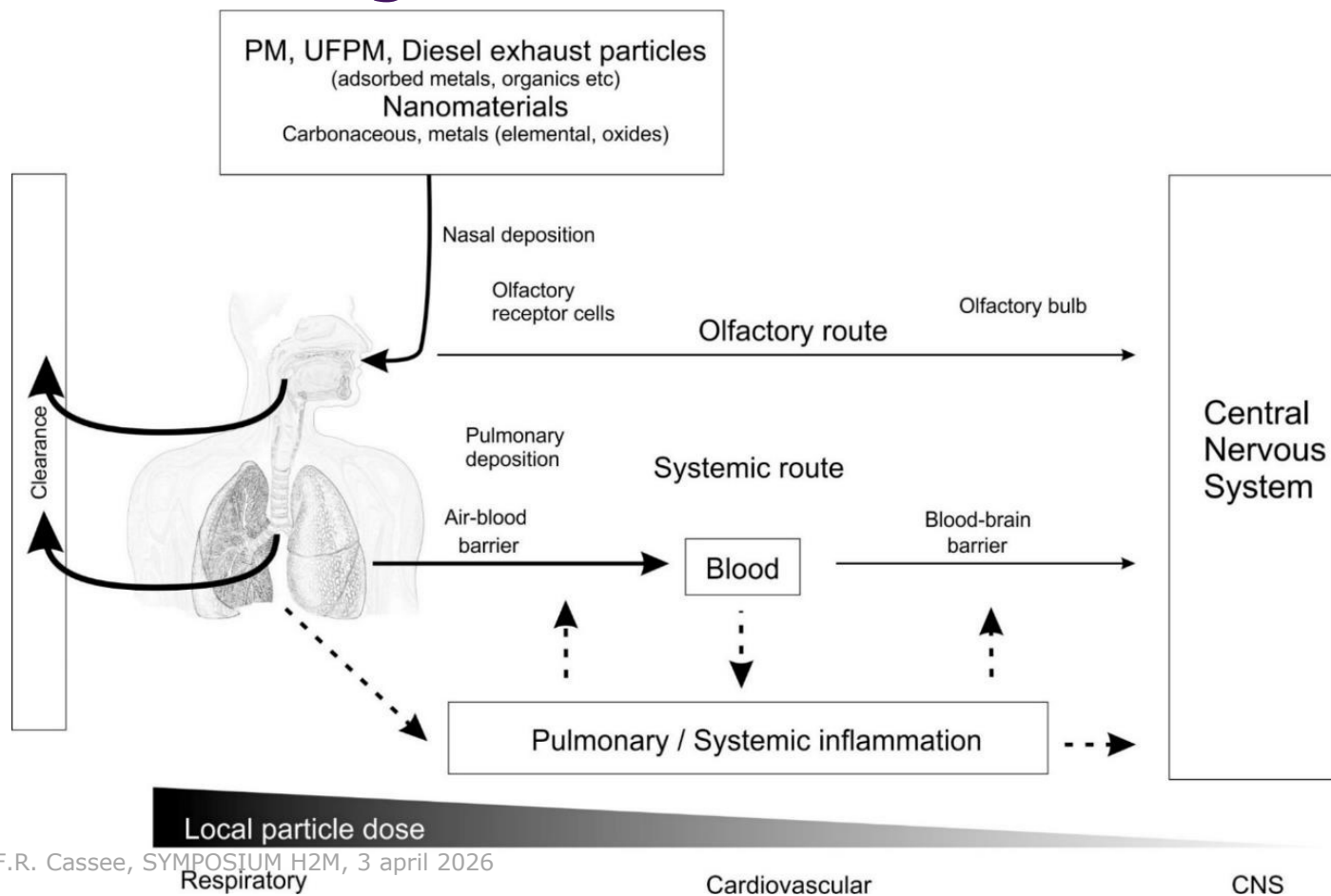
Check for updates



Carbon Particles were present (white and further indicated with white arrowhead) (B) heart, (C) kidney, Magnification x20. Scale bars: 50 μm .



3. Neurodegeneration & Alzheimer's disease



Heusinkveld HJ, Wahle T, Campbell A, Westerink RHS, Tran L, Johnston H, Stone V, Cassee FR, Schins RPF. Neurodegenerative and neurological disorders by small inhaled particles. *Neurotoxicology* 2016;56:94-106.

[doi: 10.1016/j.neuro.2016.07.007](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.neuro.2016.07.007)



Traffic-related air pollution exposure



Air inlet at a busy street.



Whole body single housing inhalation exposure units

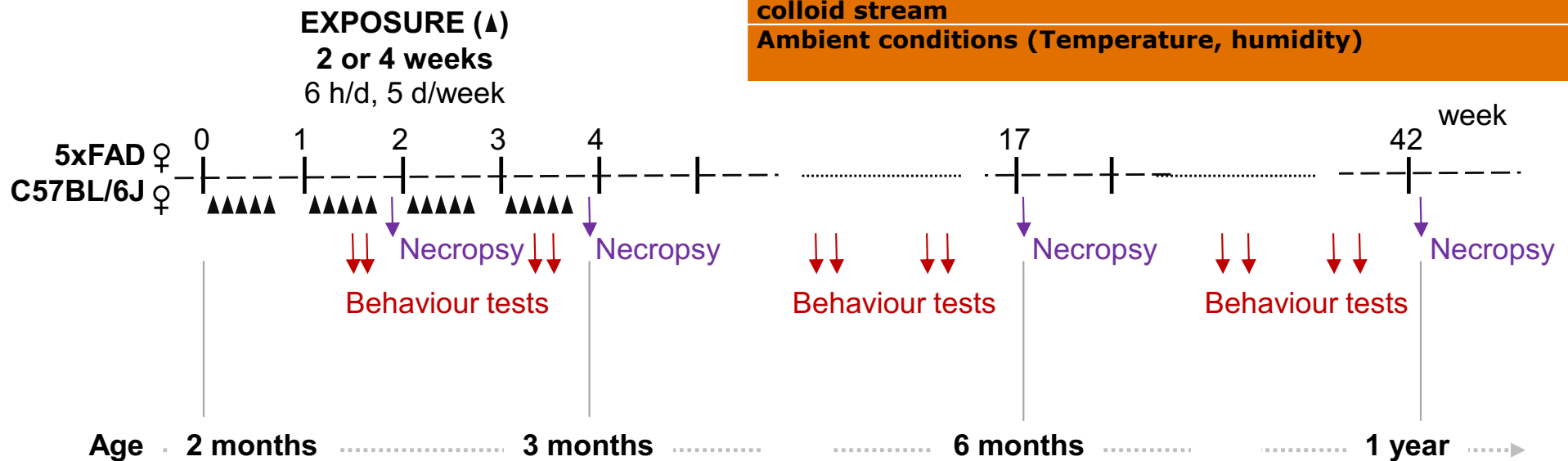
F.R. Cassee, SYMPOSIUM H2M, 3 april 2026



Alzheimer Forschung Initiative e.V.

Study design

Substance
Nitrogen oxides : NO_x, NO and NO₂
Carbon monoxide
Ozone
Particle number using a condensation particle counter
Particle mass
Temperature and humidity in the chamber
Optically absorbing ('black smoke') suspended particulates in a gas colloid stream
Ambient conditions (Temperature, humidity)

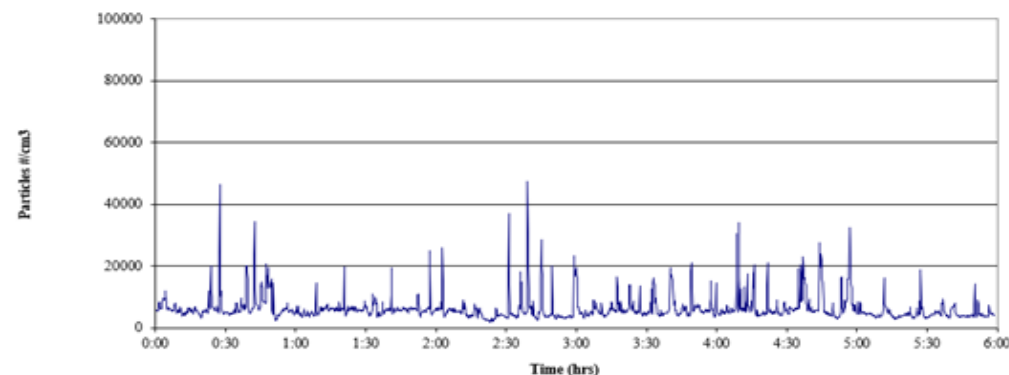
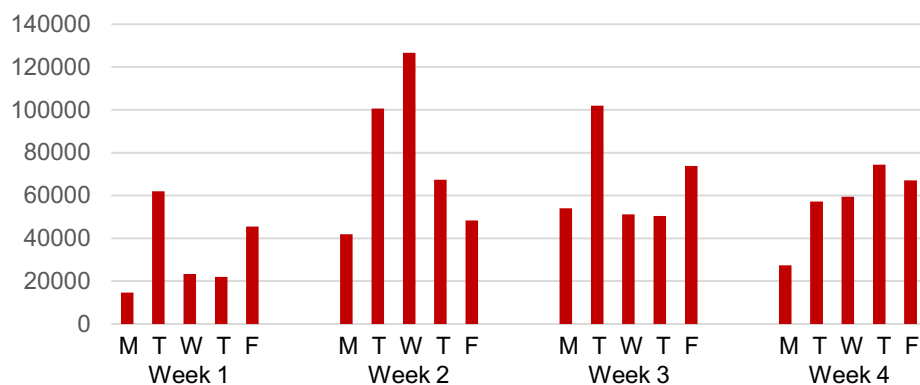




Exposure characteristics – concentrated PM

Date	Counts per cm ³	Mass μg/m ³	NO ₂ μg/m ³	O ₃ μg/m ³	temp	RH
Average	58460	109	50	35	26.1	72.6
StDev	28187	76	11	22	1.7	5.2

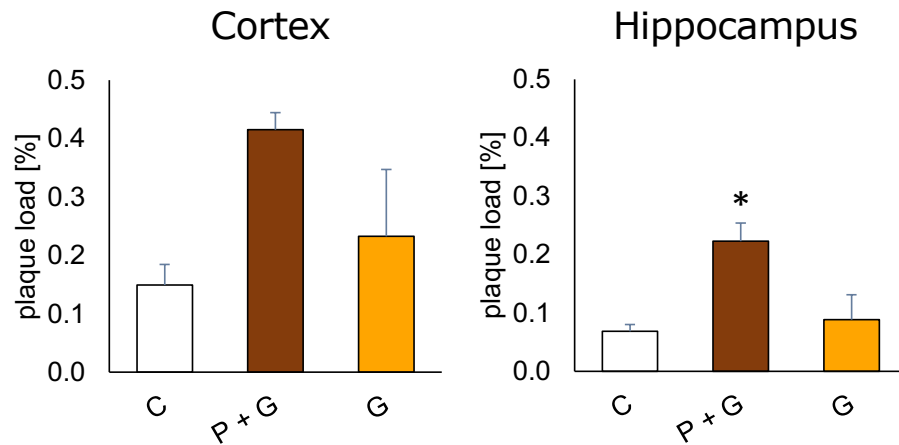
Particle number (counts/cm³)





β -Amyloid pathology

4 weeks exposure (age 3 months)



F.R. Cassee, SYMPOSIUM H2M, 3 april 2026

* $p < 0.05$ (ANOVA, Dunnett post-hoc testing).



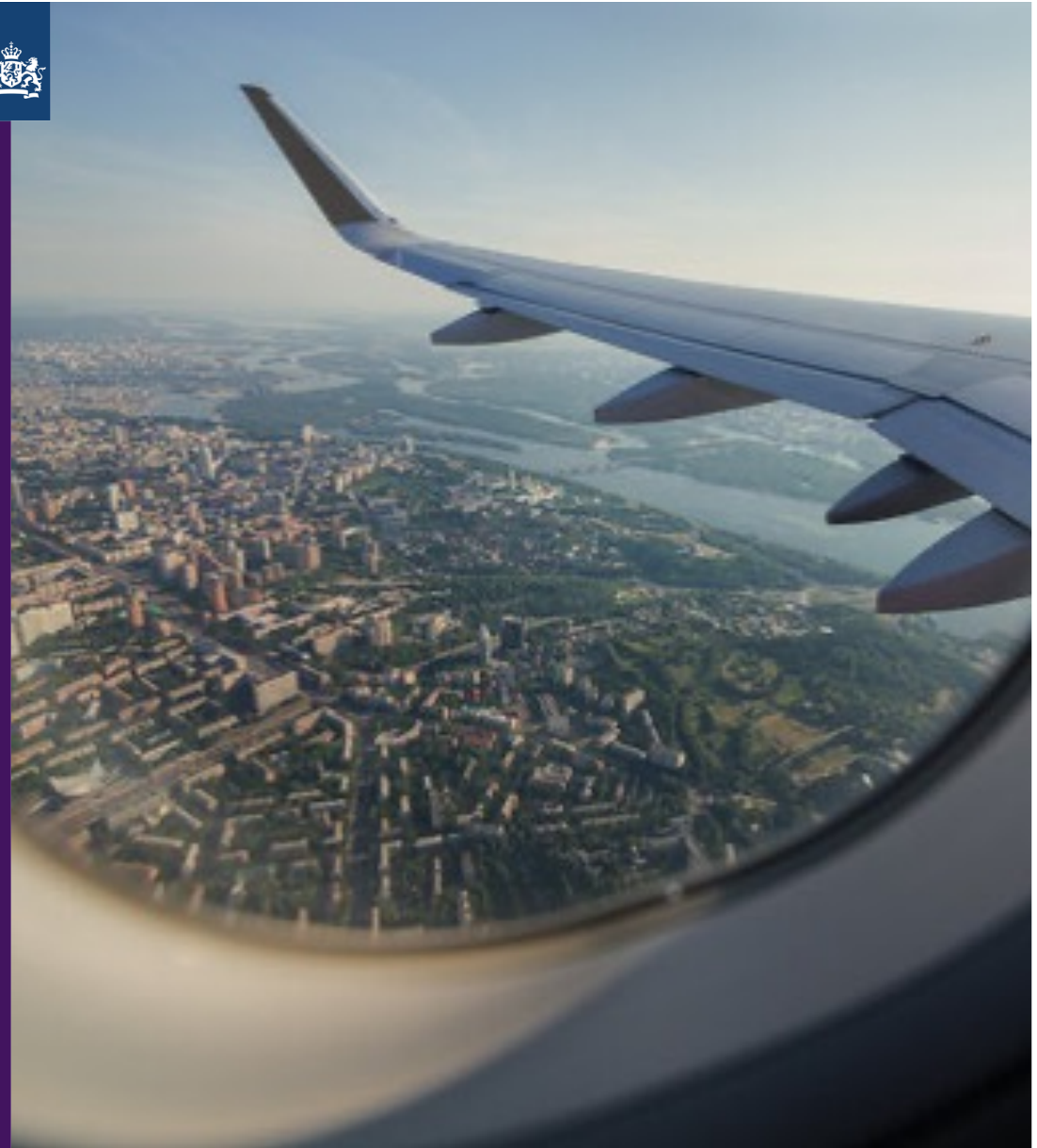
Conclusion Alzheimer's disease PM study

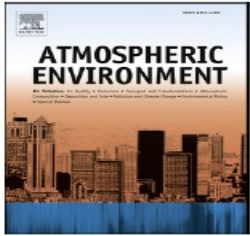
- Accelerated β -amyloid plaque formation in 5xFAD mice exposed to traffic-related air pollution **particles and gases** but not for **gases alone**

The findings of our ongoing research support a role of exposure to traffic-related air pollution particles in the pathogenesis of Alzheimer's disease



4. Aviation and UFP





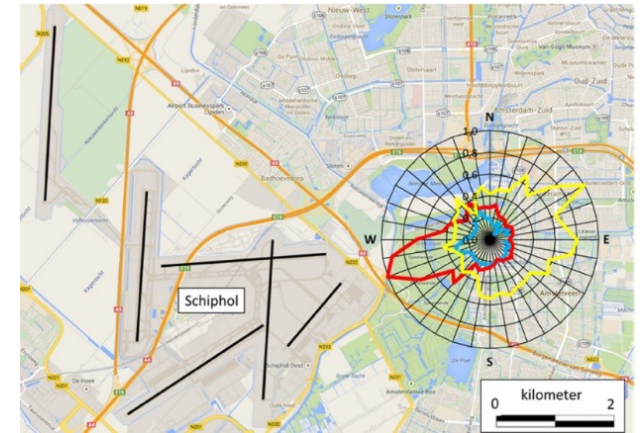
HIGHLIGHTS

- Ultrafine particles are a factor 3 elevated 7 km downwind Schiphol airport.
- The size-distribution of these particles is dominated by particles of 10–20 nm.
- 45,000/60,000 addresses exposed to 5–10,000 (annual)/10–20,000 (hourly) #/cm³.



Background

- Elevated concentrations of UFP near airports, including Schiphol Airport (Keuken et al, Atm Env 2015)
 - Little is known about the health effects of ultrafine particles from aviation.
- **5 year research program into the health risks of ultrafine particles around Schiphol Airport.**
- 1. Studies on health effects of short-term exposures**
 - 2. Measurements & modelling of long-term concentrations**
 - 3. Studies on health effects of long-term exposures**



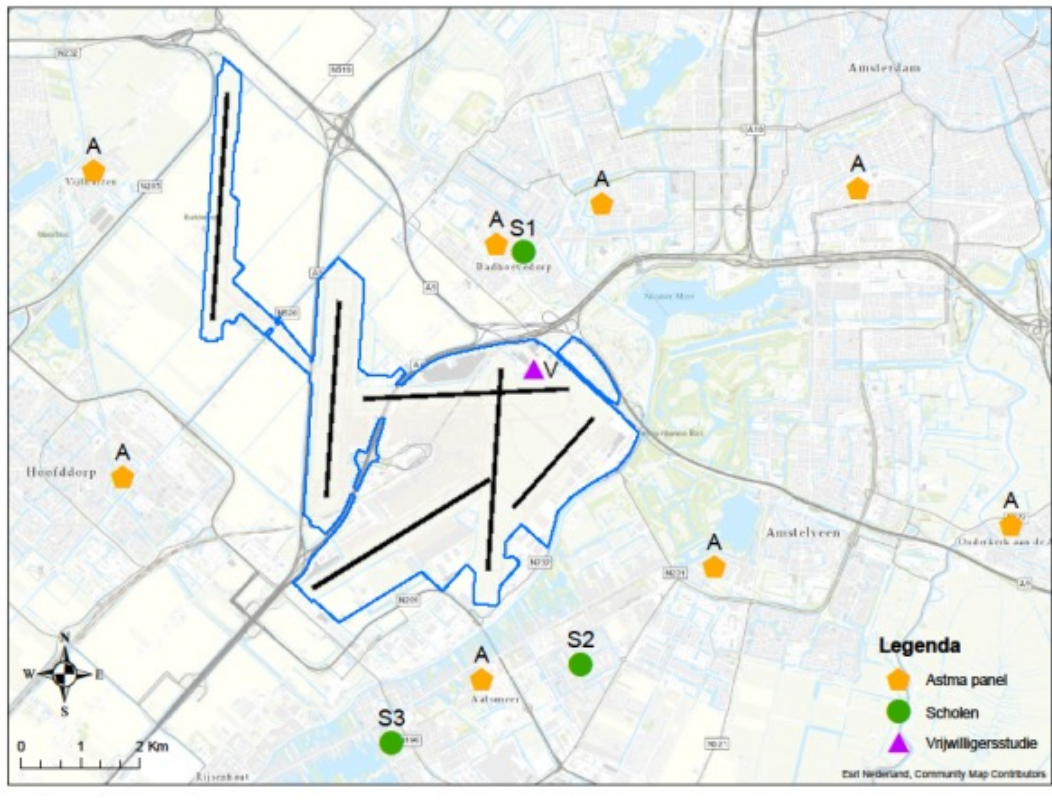
UFP (daytime) UFP (night) BC

Research questions

- 1. What are the health effects of short-term exposure to UFP in general and of UFP from aviation in particular?*
- 2. How do these effects compare to effects of UFP from other sources (mainly road traffic)?*



3 studies with varying designs



Panel study (real-life concentrations)

- 161 children from 3 schools situated in Badhoevedorp (S1) and Aalsmeer (S2+S3) (school panel)
- 30 children with asthma from the wider area around Schiphol (asthma panel).

Volunteer study (high concentrations)

- 21 young healthy adults exposed in a mobile lab next to the airport (V)

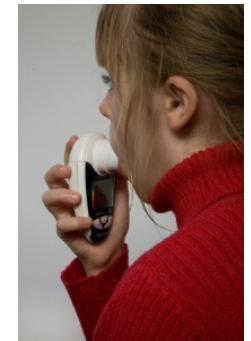
Toxicological study (in-vitro)

- Lung cells, exposed to UFP collected at the site of the volunteer study and directly from the exhaust of a turbine engine.



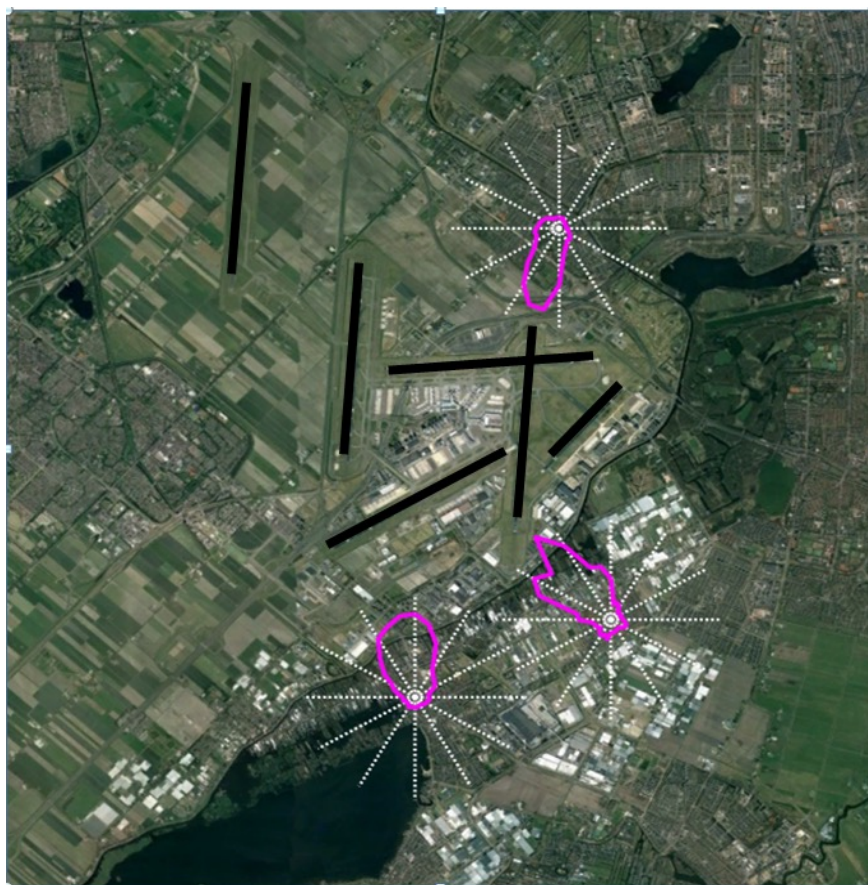
Panel study

- Wekelijkse longfunctie- en uitgeademde NO-metingen op school (161 kinderen) en dagelijkse longfunctie- en symptoomregistratie thuis (alle 191 kinderen).
- Elk kind nam twee tot drie maanden deel aan het onderzoek; 4 onderzoeksperiodes
- Continue metingen van UFP (totaal aantal deeltjes + grootteverdeling) en roet op de schoolpleinen van de scholen.
- Onderzoek of veranderingen in UFP-concentraties verband hielden met veranderingen in de gezondheid van de luchtwegen.
- Uitgedrukt als het verschil tussen een gezondheidsmeting na een periode met hoge UFP en een gezondheidsmeting na een periode met lage UFP (p5-p95-toename).

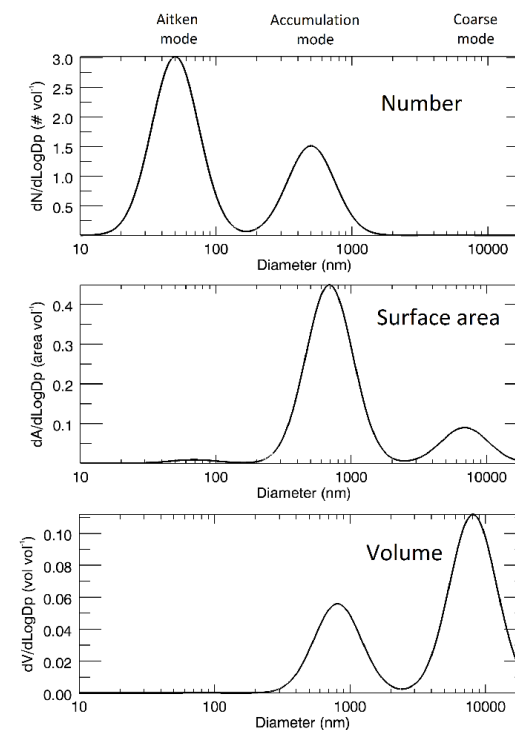




Panel study (schoolyard measurements)



- $PNC \leq 20\text{nm}$ used as an indicator for UFP mainly from aviation
- $PNC > 50\text{nm}$ used as an indicator for UFP mainly from road traffic
- $PNC =$ particle number count, all particles in air
- UFP = ultrafine particles $\sim < 100\text{ nm}$





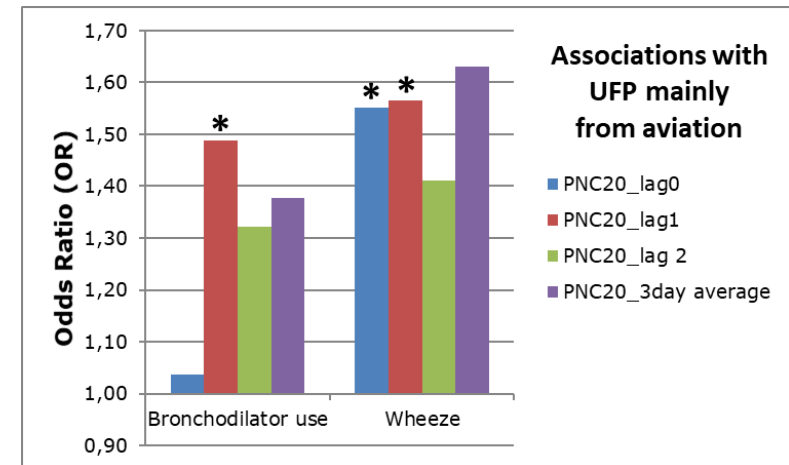
Results panel study

Respiratory symptoms and medication use

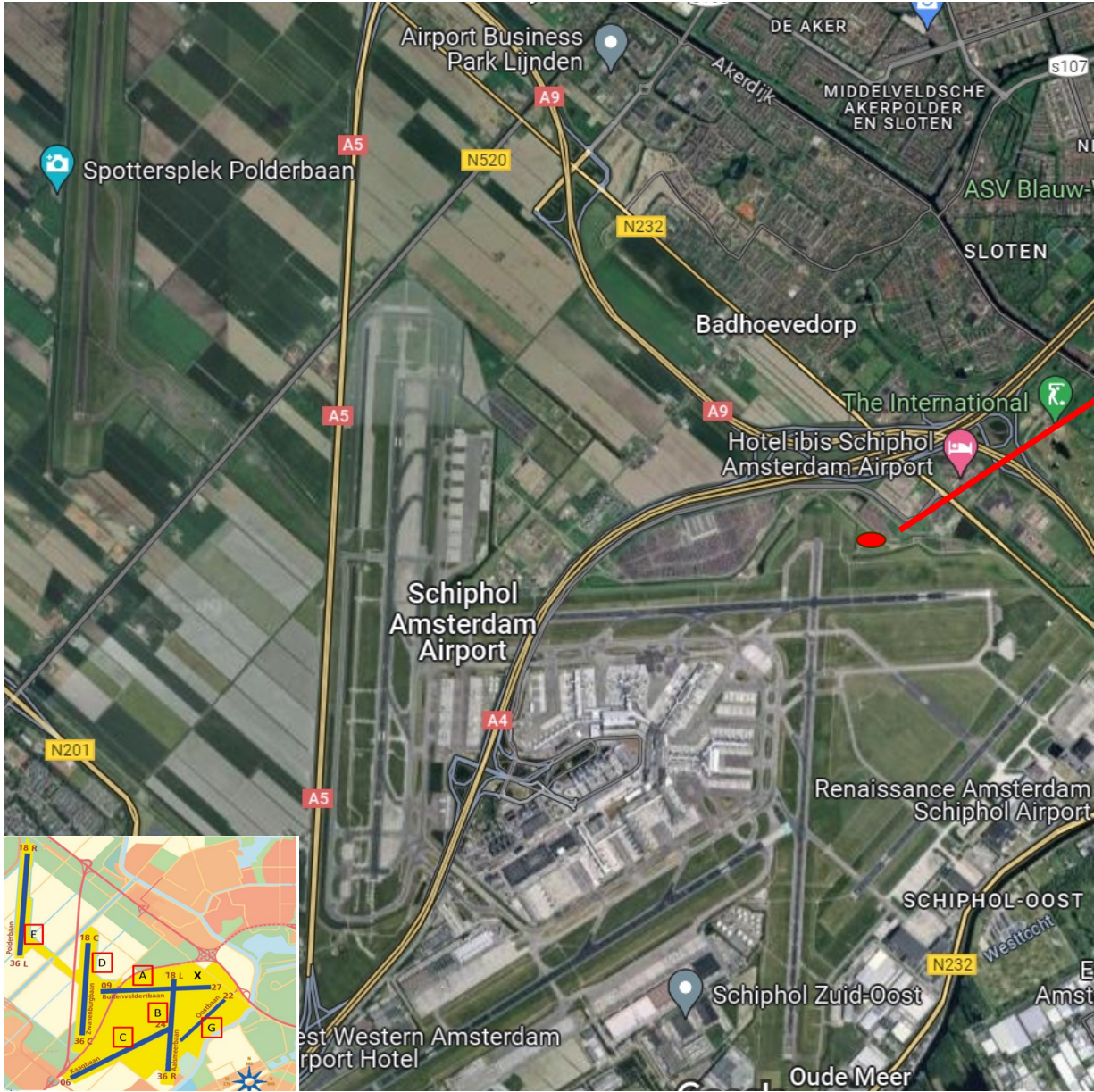
- Significant associations between exposure to UFP and an increase in daily respiratory symptoms (wheeze) and bronchodilator use.
- For total UFP, for UFP mainly from aviation and for UFP mainly from road traffic.

Lung function and exhaled NO

- No associations between variations in UFP and lung function measurements and exhaled NO (indicator inflammation)



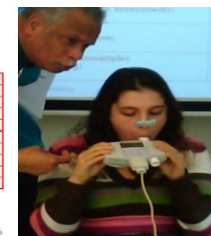
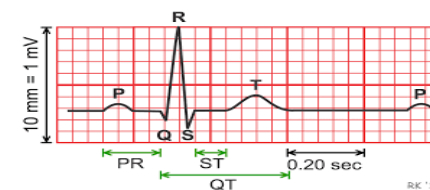
*Adjusted associations between 24-h exposure to UFP mainly from aviation (PNC20) and wheeze and bronchodilator use, combined school and asthma panel (n=191). ORs are expressed per p5-p95 increment (12.000 p/cm³ for lag0, lag1 and lag2; 9.500 p/cm³ for the 3-day average); * p<0,05*





Volunteer study

- 21 healthy volunteers exposed for 5 hours in a mobile lab next to the airport
- Measurements of UFP and other air pollutants during the exposure
- 2-5 exposure per person; 32 exposure days (total 86 exposures)
 - Large variation in UFP (10.000-170.000 #/cm³)
- Health measurements before and after the exposure (lung function, exhaled NO, ECG, blood pressure, oxygen saturation)





Results volunteer study

- Short-term (5 hour) exposure to UFP was associated with:
 - A decline in lung function (FVC)
 - A prolongation of the QTc interval (ECG)
- Both for total UFP and UFP mainly from aviation (PNC \leq 20 nm)
- UFP from road traffic (PNC > 50 nm) was significantly associated with an increase in blood pressure.
- For other lung and cardiac function parameters, exhaled NO and oxygen saturation, no statistically significant associations with UFP were observed

Effects of short-term exposures to ultrafine particles near an airport in healthy subjects

A. Lammers^a, N.A.H. Janssen^b, A.J.F. Boere^b, M. Berger^a, C. Longo^a, S.J.H. Vijverberg^a,
A.H. Neerincx^a, A.H. Maitland - van der Zee^a, F.R. Cassee^{b,c,*}

F.R. Cassee, SYMPOSIUM H2M, 3 april 2026
Environment International 141 (2020) 105779



Conclusies

Gaat steeds beter met de luchtkwaliteit

Geen grote verschillen in toxiciteit van ultrafijn stof van wegverkeer t.o.v. vliegverkeer

Kortdurende blootstelling aan hoge concentraties ultrafijnstof in verband gebracht met verminderde longfunctie en repolarisatie van het hart, oxidatieve stress en arteriële stijfheid direct na blootstelling bij volwassenen, wel reversibel.

Langdurige blootstelling aan ultrafijn stof van vliegverkeer heeft **mogelijk** effect op het hart- en vaatstelsel. In gebieden met hoge concentraties zijn bijvoorbeeld meer mensen medicijnen tegen hartaandoeningen gaan gebruiken dan in gebieden met lage concentraties.





Conclusies

Blootstelling aan ultrafijn stof is bij zwangere vrouwen **mogelijk** nadelig voor de ontwikkeling van het ongeboren kind. We spreken van mogelijk omdat er te veel onzeker is om definitief te kunnen concluderen dat er een oorzakelijk verband is.

Er is niet genoeg wetenschappelijk bewijs dat blootstelling aan ultrafijn stof van vliegverkeer effect heeft op het zenuwstelsel of diabetes veroorzaakt.

Aannemelijk dat ultrafijne deeltjes het hart en de hersenen kunnen beïnvloeden en zelfs de placenta kunnen passeren na inademing

