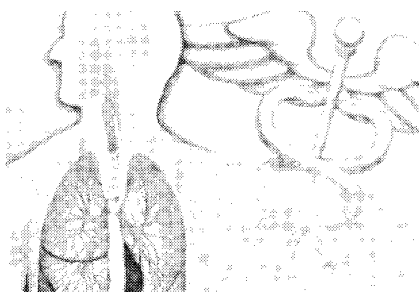


# DELHI SPECIAL

## Air pollution can lead to lung cancer

— Dr Amit Bhargava —



**LONG-TERM EXPOSURE** to the air pollution significantly raises the risk of dying of lung cancer and is about as dangerous as living with a smoker. The risk is from what scientists call combustion-related fine particulate matter — soot emitted by cars and trucks, coal-fired power plants and factories.

Scientists have found that outdoor air pollution and occupational pollution increases the risk of lung cancer Malignant Pleural Mesothelioma.

Outdoor pollution is a collection of many different gases and chemicals. The ones that have the strongest impact on cancer risk are: Nitrogen dioxide, a brownish-yellow gas and airborne particles (also known as particulate matter or PM), that are small enough to be inhaled into the lungs.

Nitrogen dioxide can cause serious damage to our DNA. Vehicle exhaust is the main source of nitrogen dioxide and can account for three quarters of emissions in large cities.

PM consists of a wide variety of different chemicals, such as soot. Some of these can have direct harmful effects, but the main problem comes from other can-

cer-causing chemicals that stick on their surface. These can then be inhaled into the lungs.

Air and water pollution combined with widespread use of food additives and pesticides made cancer the top killer in India last year, according to a recent government survey.

Cancer topped the list of the 10 most lethal diseases for urban residents last year, followed by cerebrovascular diseases and heart ailments, according to the survey in 30 cities and 78 counties released by the ministry of health.

The main reason behind the rising number of cancer cases is that pollution of the environment, water and air is getting worse day by day.

Many chemical and industrial enterprises are built along rivers so that they can dump the waste into water easily. Excessive use of fertilisers and pesticides also pollute underground water.

The contaminated water has directly affected soil, crops and food. Air pollution is a major cause of lung cancers, as harmful granules enter the lungs and cannot be discharged.

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