Quasi-Experimental Approaches to Evaluating the Impact of Air Pollution on Children's Health

ABSTRACT: Many human studies have shown a correlation between air pollution and poor children’s health. This paper focuses on studies that employ quasi-experimental designs to study the effects of air pollution on specific populations in an effort to isolate the causes and minimize the effect of confounding factors. Human studies of many and varied designs have found that exposure to some pollutants adversely impacts health even at levels below regulatory thresholds. Our review of quasi-experimental studies adds additional support to these findings. Together, the research suggests that lowering the thresholds for acceptable air pollution levels may be a prudent and necessary step to improve population health, especially among the most vulnerable members of society, infants and children. Policy makers should also consider providing specific information to pregnant women and families about when and where the risk of pollution exposure is highest so that they can avoid or minimize their exposure.

http://www.healthaffairs.org/