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Motor Vehicle Traffic Exposure and Allergic Sensitization

[Letters]

Barrass, Fiona; Miah, Rina; Ramsey, Catherine;
Sinha, Ian

Department of Epidemiology and Public Health
The Medical School
University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne
NE2 4HH, United Kingdom
(address correspondence to: Catherine A. Ramsey, c/o T.

Pless-Mullooli)

To the Editor:

Wyler *et al* report a cross-sectional study using data from two previous studies in Switzerland [1](#) (1991 Air pollution and lung diseases in adults, and 1994 National traffic census). They show that living on busy roads appears to increase risk for sensitivity to pollen. The authors address most of the weaknesses and limitations of the study, but we suggest that they overlooked the relevance of using an appropriate study population. The population studied was males and females 18–60 years of age, a group that make up the majority of the workforce and is therefore less likely to be exposed to traffic fumes at their home address during the daytime. In our view a study using either children or an elderly population would have been appropriate.

Wyler *et al* briefly mention socioeconomic status, but they do not actually measure it in the study population. People from low socioeconomic backgrounds may be more likely to live near busy roads. Additionally, they may be more likely to have houses that are damp, which could also affect allergic sensitization.

Fiona Barrass

Rina Miah

Catherine Ramsey

Ian Sinha

Reference

1. Wyler C, Braun-Fahrlander C, Kunzli N, Schindler C, Ackermann-Lieblich U, Perruchoud AP, Leuenberger P, Wuthrich B, , and the Swiss Study on Air Pollution and Lung Disease in Adults

(SALPADIA) Team. Exposure to Motor Vehicle Traffic and Allergic Sensitization. Epidemiology 2000; 4: 450–456. [\[Context Link\]](#)

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