

EXPOSURE TO WILDFIRE SMOKE LINKED TO HIGHER COVID-19



Issue

A new research by Desert Research Institute (DRI) of US has found that inhaling gases emitted during wildfires can make an individual susceptible to Covid-19.

Background

As the disease is ravaging the globe, new research regarding it is emerging. This has given new insights into working of human body.

Details

- The research primarily focused on the wildfire smokes of western US that took place in 2020. There was a study to identify any effect on rise in cases in Nevada,
- The study also made efforts to find relation between PM 2.5 present in wildfire smoke with high SARS CoV-2 positivity rate.
- It is assumed that the material in the smoke was responsible for 17.7 percent increase in Covid-19 cases that took place in the region.
- The increase in PM 2.5 was evident in metropolitan cities of San Francisco. However, the duration and intensity was lower in comparison.

PM 2.5

- Pollutant particles that are 2.5 microns or smaller in size are called as Particulate Matter (PM) 2.5. Their source can be both natural and anthropogenic.

- These particles will have large impact on human health, precipitation, climate, food security, temperature and other phenomenon.

Sources

- Dust storms blowing from deserts and dry areas.
- Smoke from unburned fuel coming out of fossil fuel engines.
- Burning of stubble in fields.
- Volcanic eruptions.
- Forest fires and dumpyard fires.

Wildfires

- It is an unplanned and unwanted burning of vegetation in a forested area. It may take place naturally like lightning or human actions.
- They are most common in dry areas such as savannahs, bushlands of Australia and some dry deciduous areas of India and rest of the world.

NOTES

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