High COPD prevalence at high altitude: does household air pollution play a role?

COPD prevalence appeared to be three times higher in mountainous areas compared to low altitude areas in rural Kyrgyzstan, as recently reported in the European Respiratory Journal. The authors suggest that particularly exposure to household air pollution explains the difference in prevalence. In the study, both lung function and household air pollution concentrations were measured objectively by spirometry and PM2.5 concentrations. These PM2.5 concentrations largely exceeded limits as stated by the WHO air quality guidelines, especially in the highlands. In the highlands, temperatures can be -20°C in winter, while the entire highland population relies on solid fuel for heating and cooking. Although generalizability of these findings remains to be assessed, awareness and (preventive) interventions by policy makers and healthcare workers seems warranted.


Editorial: Basagaña X, Household air pollution as an important factor in the complex relationship between altitude and COPD. Eur Respir J. 2019 Feb, 7;53(2).
**GARD Newsletter, Vol 2, No. 1, March 2019**

**In the Community**

**March 16-17, 2019**

Game jam with young adults who live with CF, by Breathing Games - Necker hospital, Paris, France.

**March 20-24, 2019**

Workshops to co-create games for respiratory health by Breathing Games - OpenGeneva Festival, Geneva, Switzerland.

**Announcement**

We are looking for researchers to test how easy our open source game controller can be reproduced. Interested? Write us at info@breathinggames.net

**Resources**

FRESHAIR newsletter and infographic summarizing learning are now available here:  
https://www.theipcrg.org/freshair/newsletter/fresh-air-newsletter-february-2019  
https://www.theipcrg.org/freshair/resources-publications

**GARD Executives**

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**Publications by GARD Members & Teams**

**Vilnius Declaration on Chronic Respiratory Diseases**

A meeting was held in Vilnius, Lithuania (March 23, 2018) under the patronage of the Ministry of Health and several scientific societies to propose multisectoral care pathways embedding guided self-management, mHealth and air pollution in selected chronic respiratory diseases (rhinitis, chronic rhinosinusitis, asthma and COPD). The meeting resulted in the Vilnius Declaration that was developed by the participants of the EU Summit on chronic respiratory diseases under the leadership of EUFOREA. The Vilnius Declaration represents an important step for the fight against air pollution in chronic respiratory diseases globally and has a clear strategic relevance with regard to the EU Health Strategy as it will add clear added value to the existing public health knowledge.


**Damaging Effects of Air Pollution**

The Forum of International Respiratory Societies’ Environmental Committee has recently published a two-part article on Air Pollution and Non-communicable Diseases. The Damaging Effects of Air Pollution and Air Pollution and Organ Systems emphasize the deleterious effects of air pollution on many organ systems. The goal of these articles is to mobilize all health-care organizations and workers in the fight for clean air. FIRS is dedicated to raising public commitment to clean air by calling on health policy influencers to educate and advocate in their community and state.


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**Summary of Country Activities of GARD: Focus Presentations at the 11th GARD General Meeting, Brussels.**