

AIR POLLUTION 'RAISES RISK OF SUICIDE IN MIDDLE AGED MEN'

Air pollution raises the risk of suicide among middle aged men, suggests new research.

A US study of more than 1,500 people who took their lives in Salt Lake County, Utah, U.S., found males aged between 36 and 64 were most prone after breathing in smog caused by factories and cars.

After exposure to increased levels of nitrogen dioxide in the two to three days before their deaths, they were in 25 per cent more danger than normal.

Exposure to air pollution particles raised the risk of suicide by six per cent.

And those exposed to pollution were more likely to use violent means to end their lives.

The findings published in the American Journal of Epidemiology are particularly alarming as middle aged men already have the highest risk for suicide.

While they do not show pollution causes people to kill themselves, they suggest it may interact with other factors, such as depression or pollen allergies, to make people more suicidal.

ORIGINAL REPORT:

In summary, we identified an increased risk of suicide associated with acute exposure to nitrogen dioxide and PM_{2.5} during the days preceding suicide in Salt Lake County, Utah. Previous studies of completed suicide focused largely on the relationship with particulate matter, and to our knowledge this was the first study to explicitly explore nitrogen dioxide's role. In the context of prior studies of air pollution and suicide, findings of overall positive associations between air pollution and suicide are consistent. Thus, the observed association appears to be present across environments with different meteorological conditions, geographical features, and population attributes.

FOR THE COMPLETE SCIENTIFIC STUDY SEE:

<https://academic.oup.com/aje/article/181/5/295/195518>