



SCIENCE

New analysis focuses on pollution as global killer

BY DEEPASHRI VARADHARAJAN *June 15, 2014 at 4:40 PM EDT*

Pollution causes three times as many deaths as malaria, HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis combined, according to a Global Alliance on Health and Pollution (GAHP) analysis released this week.

In a [press release](#), Richard Fuller, president of the New York-based non-profit Blacksmith Institute said, “There is a reason why pollution is sometimes called the invisible killer.”

“While it is the single largest risk factor, unfortunately, its impact is difficult to track because health statistics measure disease, not pollution.”

Earlier this year, the World Health Organization released [data](#) linking nearly seven million premature deaths to air pollution in 2012, accounting for one in eight of global deaths.

In a separate [statement](#), it noted that “air quality in most cities worldwide... fails to meet WHO guidelines for safe levels.”

“The problem is that the current SDGs [Sustainable Development Goals of the U.N.] include mention only of air pollution in the health goal and ignore other causes like chemicals and waste,” said Fernando Lugris, ambassador and deputy director of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Uruguay.

The GAHP, an international collaborative focusing on toxic pollution in developing countries, based its analysis on data from WHO and attributed an additional one million deaths to toxic chemical and industrial wastes in poor countries.

The organization said that 8.4 million people die annually due to pollution, making it the largest factor in disease and death in the developing world.

Apart from causing disability and disease, pollution also can pose a threat to future generations. Neurotoxins threaten babies in utero and can impact the reproductive health of women.

Members of the GAHP will meet the [Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals](#) next week in New York City to urge the U.N. to give pollution a priority status as a sustainable development goal.