

# Air pollution damages intelligence, says study

1st September, 2018

Harder

Scientists have revealed that air pollution may be responsible for a significant reduction in intelligence. Research conducted for the World Health Organization (WHO) in China showed that air pollution was responsible for notable falls in student test scores for languages and arithmetic. The Chinese study is called, "The impact of exposure to air pollution on cognitive performance". It was published in a journal called, "Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences". The study took place over a period of four years. Researchers analyzed verbal and arithmetic tests taken by 20,000 people of all ages. They said: "Polluted air may impede cognitive ability as people become older."

Researchers say their study is a warning to the rest of the world, especially to those who live in cities. The WHO says over 91 per cent of the world population live in areas with toxic air. Air pollution is currently the fourth highest cause of deaths worldwide. The researchers discovered that the longer people were exposed to polluted air, the greater was the damage to their intelligence. They equated the impact of air pollution to losing a year's worth of education. For those aged over 60, this could be the equivalent of several years of lost education. Researcher Dr Xi Chen warned: "There is no shortcut to solve this issue. Governments really need to take concrete measures to reduce air pollution."



## Sources

- <https://www.independent.co.uk/environment/air-pollution-intelligence-cognitive-ability-arithmetic-verbal-skills-a8510431.html>
- <https://www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20180828/world/air-pollution-could-make-you-stupid-new-research-warns.687798>
- <https://news.sky.com/story/air-pollution-causes-huge-reduction-in-intelligence-study-suggests-11484039>



1. Scientists say air pollution leads to big reductions in intelligence. T/F
2. Scientists said pollution reduced language and arithmetic test scores. T/F
3. Scientists conducted the research over a four-year period. T/F
4. Scientists said air pollution caused a loss of 10 years' education. T/F
5. A researcher said there were plenty of shortcuts to solve this problem. T/F



1. What is the air quality like where you live?
2. How worried are you about air pollution?
3. What is your government doing about air pollution?
4. What 'concrete measures' can governments take to cut air pollution?
5. What problems does air pollution cause?