



**REVIEW OF PARTICULATE EMISSIONS
PRODUCED FROM THE SMALL SCALE
SOLID FUEL COMBUSTION**

Summary and Key messages
of Action A2 report

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**Real-LIFE
Emissions**

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REVIEW OF PARTICULATE EMISSIONS PRODUCED FROM THE SMALL-SCALE SOLID FUEL COMBUSTION

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Background

Small scale combustions in households emit large quantities of gaseous and particulate emissions mainly due to poor combustion in traditional combustion appliances. Wood is the major fuel (about 43%) but pellets, peat, charcoal, coal and anthracite are also used in the residential combustion in Europe (1). The emissions produced from small scale solid fuel combustion (SSSFC) can be primary and secondary in nature.

Primary particulate matter (PM) includes black carbon (BC), also called elemental carbon (EC) or soot, organic matter (OM), and inorganic species (20,21, 22). Primary organic matter include e.g. polycyclic aromatic compounds (PAHs), sugar compounds (e.g. anhydrosugars), phenolic species, resin acids, oxygenated monoaromatics, dioxins and furans such as polychlorinated dibenzo-dioxins (PCDD/Fs), nitrophenols, dicarboxylic acids (oxalic acid, succinic acid etc.), polyol, multifunctional acids/anhydrides (fumaric acid, malic acid etc.) and fatty acids (oleic acid, decanoic acid) (4,5). The main inorganic species of the particulate emissions are metal oxides (e.g. ZnO) and alkali salts such as potassium chloride (KCl), potassium sulphate (K_2SO_4), potassium carbonate (K_2CO_3) which are formed from volatile ash constitutes (6,7).

Primary gaseous emissions from complete combustion are carbon dioxide (CO_2), nitrogen oxide (NO_x), sulphur dioxide (SO_2) and hydrochloric acid (HCl), whereas pollutants from incomplete combustion are carbon monoxide (CO) and volatile organic compounds (VOCs, total amount is defined as organic gaseous carbon (OGC) or total hydrocarbons (THC). The most primary organic compounds in atmosphere are dominated by semi-volatile compounds and undergo gas-to-particle conversion when the exhaust cools down (2). There is also the production of other chlorine (Cl) compounds such as hexachlorobenzene (HCB), and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) but depends on the types of fuels (8–10).

In addition, secondary organic aerosols (SOAs) are formed in atmosphere via various physical and chemical processes such as cooling and dilution, oxidation and photochemical aging of VOCs precursors (2,5,11,12). Secondary inorganic aerosols (SIAs) are also formed due to the gas to particle conversion of precursors such as SO_2 and NO_x (2,13,14).

Furthermore, particles have also physical properties such as particle mass, number, size, size distribution, surface area, volume, density, morphology and optical properties (e.g. light absorption, adsorption, and light scattering). PM and number concentration and their size distributions are widely used in literature to assess health and environmental effects (3,15). To evaluate the important components of emissions from SSSFC, it is imperative that all released emissions from combustion sources are measured with appropriate measurement techniques. At the moment, not all emissions (e.g. condensables, SOAs, some important PAHs) are not measured by individual member countries. Thus, particle emissions in the atmosphere is poorly represented in existing emission data (2). The most important issue is the exclusion of some of the health and climate affecting particulate emission components and accounting of real-life emissions. The purposes of this literature review are: a) to provide an overview of the particulate and gaseous emission components generated from SSSFC appliances, b) to understand the health and environmental effects of PM emission components and physical parameters from SSSFC, c) to evaluate and select the most important combustion emission components to be measured based on their adverse effects on health and environment.

Health effects

Concerning the health effects of gaseous emissions, exposure to SO₂ can cause inflammation and irritation of the respiratory system can affect lung function, worsen asthma attacks, and worsen existing heart disease in sensitive groups (16). With high concentration, CO can limit the transport of oxygen in human body which can result in dizziness, over unconsciousness to eventually death (17). Exposure to NO_x can result in respiratory tract irritation (17). VOCs can cause symptoms such as irritations of the nose, throat, and eyes, cause headaches, nausea, dizziness, impaired concentration, and allergic skin reactions. In the case of chlorinated compounds, HCl is corrosive to skins, possibly carcinogenic and toxic to humans (18–20).

Particle emissions are very important in terms of health effects. PM_{2.5} is regarded as the most detrimental factor of the PM emissions as it can be breathed more deeply into the lungs and remains suspended for a longer period of time (3,21,22). Particle size influence lung deposition, with nano-sized particles accumulating in the cells at a faster rate than larger particles (23,24). With high particle number concentrations, acute toxicity has also been reported in murine macrophages (25–27). Lung deposition surface area (LDSA) is important parameter as many harmful constituents are on the surface of particles (28). Similarly, particle shape plays an important role in describing particle behavior at the cell membrane and inside the cell (29).

Recent studies have shown that inhalation of BC (e.g. diesel soot) is associated with production of reactive oxygen species (ROS), inflammation, respiratory and cardiovascular disease and cancer (4)(30). PAH constituents have detrimental health effects such as DNA damage, cell damage, different type of cancers and cardiopulmonary mortality (22). In short-term, PAHs can cause eye and skin irritation, nausea, vomiting and inflammation (26,31,32). Eight PAHs considered as possible carcinogens are: benzo(a)anthracene, chrysene, benzo(b)fluoranthene, benzo(k)fluoranthene, benzo(a)pyrene (B(a)P), dibenzo (a,h)anthracene, indeno (1,2,3-cd)pyrene and benzo (g,h,i) perylene (33). At the moment, the EMEP guidebook includes only four PAHs.

With regard to health effects of heavy metals and alkali salts, these substances can be responsible for both inflammatory responses and cell death in epithelial cells (31,34). Some metals such as Fe, Cu, Cr, Va, and Zn can act as catalyst to form ROS (26,32). Some other metals such as Fe and Al are related to genotoxicity (35) while Zn is also associated with cardiovascular mortality and morbidity (30). Dioxins, furans and chlorinated compounds (PCDD/Fs, PCBs) have several carcinogenic, genotoxic and dermatological effects (36).

There is complexity in the determination of health effects of SSSFC emissions. It is not easy to determine the exposure effects of individual compounds in real life due to mixing of different physical and chemical properties of PM. Most studies show that the PM_{2.5} mass fraction is mainly connected to health effects. Exposure of high daily PM_{2.5} concentrations from SSFC can easily show irritation symptoms to people with respiratory diseases, elders and small children. It can worsen the cardiovascular and respiratory symptoms and infections to heart and respiratory patients requiring hospitalization. Exposure to smoke for several years or decades increases the risk of developing chronic heart and respiratory diseases and increases premature deaths among those suffering from these long-term diseases. With continuous high concentration of particles for few days can even cause deaths related to heart and respiratory diseases such as asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). The health effects of wood smoke are similar to that of traffic exhaust and cigarette smoke, which is very similar in composition to smoke from incomplete combustion. It has not been possible to determine a concentration for particles below which health hazards would no longer occur.

Environmental effects

The pollutants from SSSFC have a lot of detrimental environmental effects. CO₂ causes acidification of sea water and affects the photosynthesis process (25). It is the most potent radiative/climate forcing greenhouse gas and strongest contributor to current global warming and climate change. N₂O shows warming effects in the atmosphere. NO_x react with VOCs resulting to the formation of tropospheric ozone (O₃) (17,37) but it can destruct the stratospheric ozone layer (17,25). NO_x also contributes to acidification, eutrophication, and photochemical smog (17,25). SO₂ has a cooling effect as it forms light reflecting particles in the atmosphere that reduces radiative forcing (38). SO₂ also induces acidification (e.g. H₂SO₄), and ozone (O₃) emissions which adversely affect on vegetation and contribute to global warming and climate change (25,39). CO does not have climate effects directly but its presence in the atmosphere can help in the production of greenhouse gases such as methane (CH₄) and CO₂ (40). VOCs can play an important role in the formation of ozone and growth of PM_{2.5} concentration by photochemical smog (39). Methane is a greenhouse gas having significant warming impacts [GWP (CH₄) = 25 x (CO₂)] and a precursor of ground level ozone (25). The ground level ozone causes oxidative damage in vegetation (39). PAHs emitted in the atmosphere partition between gas and particulate phases and undergo atmospheric depositions on plants and soils (41,42).

Physical properties of PM impact greatly on cloud formation, absorption and refraction of the radiation and formation of condensation sink. The shape of the particles affect various climatic parameters such as optical properties and lifetime in the atmosphere (29). Optical properties of particles are also important parameters to determine the absorbing capacity of the specific particulate emissions (e.g. BC and EC) that are directly linked to climate forcing (43,44). Ultrafine particles (< 100 nm) may affect the cloud formation and other climatic activities. Regarding particle number concentration, there is no clear answer for its direct impact to climate but in some literature it is described as an important parameter for cloud formation processes through cloud condensation nuclei (45–47).

BC particles in the atmosphere absorb sunlight and emit heat radiation to the surroundings (38). It can also alter the atmospheric temperatures profile and cloud distribution, thereby, influencing the brown cloud formation, droplet formation, and microphysical properties and precipitation of the atmosphere (38,48–50). Deposition of BC on ice or snow in cryosphere decreases the albedo of the surface which stimulates the sunlight absorption and accelerate the melting of glaciers and ice sheet (38,51). Regarding other organics, BrC is potent to light absorption (5). It also changes the optical properties and chemical composition of aerosols that can affect cloud formation (52). Organic aerosols can contribute significantly to both visibility degradation and direct aerosol climate forcing due to its effective light scattering property and play an important role in various aerosol-cloud interactions due to its water-soluble property (53,54). During the atmospheric transformation and SOA formation processes, organic aerosols are transformed which poses environmental risks extensively (55,56). It is not clearly understood about the health and environmental effects of SOAs but some studies urge SOA particles can have negative impact on the environment.

Similarly, presence of sulfate, nitrate and ammonium compounds mainly of intermediate sizes in SIAs can modify the properties of clouds and affect the climate (14). Inorganic aerosols in phase reactions with other pollutants can cause severe environmental degradations such as ozone layer depletion, air quality deterioration, smoke-fog related accidents and acid rain formation (14). For chlorinated compounds, HCl causes environmental degradation due to its acidic nature which affects food and ecosystem. In addition, HCl can also damage the combustion appliance due to corrosion.

Key Messages

Based on the literature review, it can be stated that residential combustion produces significant amount of atmospheric emissions which cause several health and environmental effects. Key points of the report are below:

- The most important emission components to be measured concerning adverse health and environmental effects are PM_{2.5}, black carbon (BC) or alternatively elemental carbon (EC), volatile organic compounds (VOCs), polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), particle number, particle size distribution, lung deposition surface area (LDSA) concentration, and secondary aerosols (SOAs + SIAs). All these emission compounds can be measured with available measurement systems but a single set up for the measurement needs to be established.
- PCDD/F, PCB, and HCB emissions from residential combustion in the EU are emitted in very low concentrations, this can sometimes make difficulty in measurement. Nevertheless, PCDD/F and HCB emissions have already been included in the EU guidebook.
- Only four single PAH compounds have been included in the EMEP guidebook 2019 although several other PAH elements are also harmful for health and environment which should be included in future measurement standards.
- In the case of particle number and size distribution, these are important in terms of health and environmental effects, but the particle number concentration is not correlated to other physical and chemical properties of emission compounds and cannot be used as predictors (57). Yet, particle mass concentration (PM_{2.5}) and size distribution (e.g. ultrafine particles are important) should be reported.
- Surface area concentration/lung deposition surface area (LDSA) and optical properties (e.g. Absorption Angstrom Exponent (AAE) and single scatter albedo (SSA)) are also important parameters for determining the health and environmental effects of residential combustion emissions.
- Physical and chemical properties of the particles are mixed which makes it difficult to differentiate the effects of single properties.
- SOAs enhance the concentration of PM in the atmosphere which simultaneously increases the impacts on health and environment. However, SOA precursors and its formation process are not understood well. Thus, SOAs should be studied more extensively in research, be measured in the laboratory simultaneously with other emissions, and be included in future emission inventories.
- All targeted emissions except SOAs can be measured with various available instruments in the market, but which instruments are the best for the measurement in terms of maturity and efficacy of the technology and the costs associated with it are important.
- For short term, measurement of only particulate matter (PM) including gaseous compounds THC, NO_x and CO is appropriate for legislation but for long term, secondary aerosols or SOA formation potential via VOC precursors should be included. However, for other needs (e.g. inventory, modelling), the list of EMEP compounds, particle number and particle size, and the conversion factor for old appliances (i.e. portion of condensables of total PM) should be included for the measurement and reporting.

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Harmonizing reliable test procedures representing real-LIFE air pollution from solid fuel heating appliances - **Real-LIFE Emissions** project.

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