

# COVID-19 Deaths More Frequent In Regions with High Air Pollution Levels

New research finds that high levels of pollution are closely associated with COVID-19 deaths. In a new study that examined 66 administrative regions in France, Italy, Spain, and Germany, researcher Yann Ogen found that 78% of deaths occurred in just 5 regions. These regions had the highest levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) emissions, a gas that accumulates as vehicle emissions get trapped by weather conditions. The gas causes an increased likelihood of respiratory problems like wheezing coughs, colds and flu, lung infections, and bronchitis.

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*The results indicate that long-term exposure to this pollutant may be one of the most important contributors to fatality caused by the Covid-19 virus in these regions and maybe across the whole world...Poisoning our environment means poisoning our own body, and when it experiences chronic respiratory stress its ability to defend itself from infections is limited."*

*Yaron Ogen, post-doctoral researcher – Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg*

Other research has found that air pollution is a potential risk factor for coronavirus in another way. Italian researchers have identified a gene-specific to COVID-19 in outdoor air pollution samples from the Bergamo province in Italy. The study has not been peer-reviewed. Additional research has found that COVID-19 can survive up to three hours suspended in airborne droplets.

## Sources:

- *Coronavirus detected on air pollution particles: report*  
– The Hill
- *Study: Small increases in air pollution make coronavirus much more deadly* – Vox