

# Bushfire smoke poses health risks

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(Medical Xpress)—Researchers are looking at how smoke from bushfires may pose risks to some people's health.

The first study believed to be conducted during a planned burning season will examine the health impacts of smoke pollution in regional communities across Victoria.

Lead researcher Dr Martine Dennekamp, from Monash University's Department of Epidemiology and [Preventive Medicine](#), said the study was currently calling for participants from the Yarra Valley region, in

particular people living in the Warburton area, to take part in the study during planned burns this month.

"Australia is at increasing risk from bushfires, and planned burning is essential to bushfire management. With increased levels of smoke, it's important to understand how exposure to smoke might affect communities," Dr Dennekamp said.

"We know that healthy people tolerate brief episodes of [smoke exposure](#) quite well. Our study is looking for changes in symptoms, lung function and inflammation that could increase risk for people, particularly those with an underlying illness."

The study will provide scope for larger clinical studies into the health impacts of bushfire smoke and inform the development of public [health planning](#) and intervention strategies.

"Most studies into the effects of bushfire smoke tend to focus on assessing [hospital admissions](#) or emergency presentations alone, but this limits the amount of information about health impacts," Dr Dennekamp said.

"For the first time, exposure to smoke both indoors and outdoors will be assessed and related to health impacts. The results will help public health managers and doctors know what sort of [medical advice](#) to give healthy people, older people, and people who might have [chronic medical conditions](#)."

The study will be conducted by Monash University, University of Tasmania and CSIRO during the Autumn season in collaboration with the Victorian Department of Sustainability and Environment, the Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre and the Victorian Department of Health and the Environment Protection Authority.

Provided by Monash University

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