

# Exposure to bushfire smoke increases risk of cardiac arrest in men over 35

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Men over 35 have an increased risk of cardiac arrest if exposed to poor quality air from bushfires, a new study has found.

Monash University research using data from Ambulance Victoria's Victorian Ambulance Cardiac Arrest Registry (VACAR) investigated the links between out-of-hospital cardiac arrests and bushfire smoke exposure in metropolitan Melbourne during the 2006-07 bushfire season.

The study, published in the latest edition of *Environmental Health*

*Perspectives*, found an association between exposure to forest fire smoke and an increase in the rate of out-of-hospital cardiac arrests.

Monash University researchers led by Dr Martine Dennekamp, Department of Epidemiology and Preventive Medicine, saw greater increases in the number of men over 35 years old experiencing cardiac arrests but did not see a significant association in women over 35.

Dr Dennekamp said exposure to smoke from forest fires was a significant health issue in many countries, and it was important to raise community awareness.

"The problem is likely to get worse in the future, as we can expect fires to become both more frequent and more severe," Dr Dennekamp said.

"It is particularly of concern in countries where bushfires occur close to large population centres, as is the case with Melbourne."

Data used in the study showed there were a total of 2046 out-of-hospital cardiac arrests in Melbourne between July 2006 and June 2007. It is estimated that forest fire smoke was responsible for 24 to 29 excess cardiac arrests in Melbourne that summer.

The Victorian Ambulance Cardiac Arrest Registry (VACAR) publishes annual cardiac arrest statistics.

It is one of the largest pre-hospital cardiac arrest registries in the world and supports a significant research program into the care of [cardiac arrest](#) patients.

Provided by Monash University

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