SEQAP
air quality perception and representation by french population : epidemiological and sociological approaches

Coordinateur : Claire Segala - SEPIA-Santé

Objectives: The SEQAP project aims to construct and validate a scale to measure quality of air perception (PAQ) in order to study the relation between perception and pollution and the representations and risk associated to pollution, using epidemiological and sociological approaches.

Methods: PAQ scale (including sensory perceptions, symptoms and risk perception) was built and validate using psychometric methods in a pre-study. 2 522 inhabitants were questioned from May 2006 to June 2007 in 8 French towns. Relations between PAQ and potential explicative factors were investigated by linear regression. For sociological study, 30 respondents were reinterviewed.

Results: After adjustment for the PAQ determinants (sex, pathologies, quality of life, vehicle, town, meteorology), an effect of PM10 (p=0,003) and ozone in summer (p=0,001) were observed. Both approaches epidemiology and sociology aggred that air quality representations are based on risk and sensory perceptions. Main factors linked to these representations are health, importance of life place and socio-economic fragility.

Conclusion: Objective pollutant measures and PAQ score are linked, suggesting a pretty good coherence between real and perceived pollution. This work allows us to build and validate a scale of measurement of air quality perception and to carry out a multicentric epidemiologic investigation which highlights a relation between air quality perception and the levels of pollutants. About half of the population expresses nuisances with respect to the air pollution and these nuisances are related to the level of pollution, whereas many factors are taken into account. Groups of population more sensitive to air pollution were identified.