

2010, International Year of the Lung

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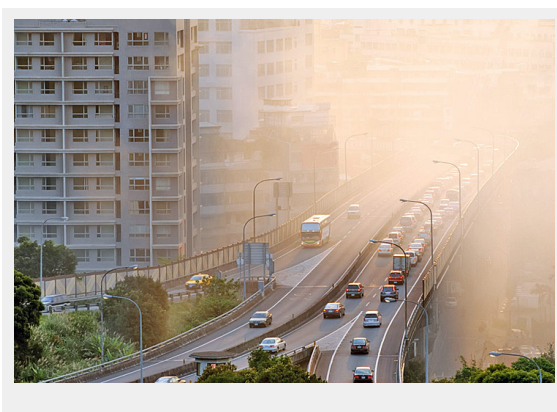
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2010 has been declared International Year of the Lung [1]. The role of pulmonary diseases in morbidity and mortality statistics is, regrettably, impressive. Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) is constantly on the increase, and according to the WHO will soon be among the commonest worldwide diseases [2]. But it is also the international year of the healthy lung. In recent years research has made major progress in identifying and quantifying the environmental factors that endanger the healthy lung. And here research has shown ways in which this danger can be lessened.

We have succeeded in winning an internationally recognised team for a review article. N. Künzli and his coauthors write in this issue on “outdoor pollution and lung health” on this theme [3]. They have conducted intensive research in this area, and the literature of recent years bears the corresponding stamp of their work. They were accordingly distinguished by the European Respiratory Society (ERS) for the authorship of her booklet *Air Quality and Health* published at the Barcelona ERS Congress in this Year of the Lung.

Künzli et al. describe the most varied short- and long-term effects of air pollution on the lungs of children and adults, a theme on which our journal has frequently repor-



ted [5–7]. Two Swiss studies – Scarpol [8] dealing with children and Sapaldia [9] with adults – are of especial relevance here. This shows that in a small country large-scale cohort studies are possible which demand a multidisciplinary research team and major financial resources.

Künzli et al. are outstanding epidemiological researchers, and their article sums up years-long work and experience. However, they do not lose sight of the fact that “translational research” is the key element for society. They brought the concept of “evidence based public health” into currency [10]. The policy makers must attain this evidence, but the road to that goal presupposes messengers. The medical community must absorb this message, accept it and pass it on. But it is also increasingly the task of the medical community to stand up for the concerns of society, the concerns of those who are still in good health.

A bon etendeur, salut!

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