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Environmental Protection Agency

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Little or no knowledge of the toxicity of particulate effluvia

Relative Toxicity and Role of Sources and Copollutants

One of the biggest gaps in our knowledge relates to what specific air pollutants, combination of pollutants, sources of pollutants, and characteristics of pollutants are most responsible for the observed health effects. Although the literature provides little evidence that a single major or trace component of PM is responsible for the observed health effects,⁴⁷³ various general characteristics may affect the relative toxicity of PM pollution. For example, with regard to particle size, the epidemiological, physiological, and toxicological evidence suggests that fine particles (indicated by $PM_{2.5}$) playa substantial role in affecting human health. These fine particles can be breathed



Micro '98 – London Wed 8th July 1998

"Particulate Aerosols – Physical, Chemical & Bio-pathological Properties"

organised by the

Royal Microscopical Society

ISBN 1-85996-172-X



Royal Society Discussion Meeting 15th & 16th March 2000.

"Ultrafine Particles in the Atmosphere"

Organised by L.M.Brown, N. Collings, R.M.Harrison, A.D.Maynard & R.L.Maynard



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Pulmonary defence mechanisms

- Nose, pharynx & larynx: impaction
- Trachea & bronchi: muco-ciliary escalator and ingestion
- Terminal bronchi and alveolar air space: alveolar macrophages, engulf particles and transport to lymphatics. They do not easily recognise particles of < 65 nm and are easily overwhelmed by large numbers





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to coagulation after 3.5 min of ageing.

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Figure 2. Lung lavage parameters of rats 4 h after a 50 min exposure to fresh and aged PTFE fumes. The percentage of neutrophils of the total lavage cells and the lavage protein content are shown. (N = 4 per group; mean \pm SD; *, significantly different from sham and aged (ANOVA, p < 0.05).)



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Mechanisms of nanoparticle cytotoxicity

· Catalysis

Often oxidative damage

- Membrane perturbation
 - Lipid peroxidation
 - Surfactant effects
- Chaperone effects on proteins
 - Pathological effects on folding
- Physical damage
 - · Accumulation at extracellular or intracellular sites

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Outcomes of protein-nanoparticle interaction

- Nanoparticles stabilised as monodisperse suspension
- Aggregation of nanoparticles minimised
- Protein adsorbed onto nanoparticle surface
 - Protein conformation and function unaltered (e.g. antibody label)
 - Protein conformation altered with loss of function (molten globule)
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