

Not in Your Backyard



The locations with the most active airports aren't always the ones that suffer the biggest health impacts, the study suggests.

When a plane flies at cruising altitude above the clouds, wind currents can whisk the pollution far away so that prevailing winds cause the pollution to fall from the sky about 6,000 miles (10,000 kilometers) to the east of the plane's route.

The United States incurs about 450 deaths each year from airplane emissions—only about one-seventh the number of deaths that would be expected if the pollution fell straight to the ground from planes, the study said.

In India, on the other hand, there are an estimated 1,640 deaths per year from airplane emissions—about seven times more deaths than would be expected based on the number of flights that start or finish in the country.

Most of these deaths are caused not by flights over India but from emissions in Europe and North America at high altitude, which then blow across Asia, according to the study, published in the October issue of *Environmental Science & Technology*.