DOES THE PRECISION OF GEOCODING AFFECT ASSOCIATIONS BETWEEN OUTDOOR AIR POLLUTION AND LUNG FUNCTION IN ADULTS?

Benedicte Jacquemin, Inserm, CESP U1018, Respiratory and Environmental epidemiology team & Univ Paris 11, UMRS 1018, Villejuif, France
Nino Küntzli, Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute and Basel University, Basel, Switzerland
Sofia Temam, Inserm, CESP U1018, Respiratory and Environmental epidemiology team & Univ Paris 11, UMRS 1018, Villejuif, France
Anne Boudier, Inserm, U823, Centre de recherche Albert Bonniet & Univ Joseph Fourier Grenoble, France
Caroline Arnould, Inserm, U823, Centre de recherche Albert Bonniet & Univ Joseph Fourier Grenoble, France
Isabelle Rios, ASCOPARG, Grenoble, France
Claire Chappaz, ASCOPARG, Grenoble, France
Johanna Lepeule, Inserm, U823, Centre de recherche Albert Bonniet & Univ Joseph Fourier Grenoble, France
Xavier Morelli, Inserm, U823, Centre de recherche Albert Bonniet & Univ Joseph Fourier Grenoble, France
Francine Kauffmann, Inserm, CESP U1018, Respiratory and Environmental epidemiology team & Univ Paris 11, UMRS 1018, Villejuif, France
Isabelle Pin, Inserm, U823, Centre de recherche Albert Bonniet & Univ Joseph Fourier & Pediatric department, CHU, Grenoble, France
Rémy Slama, Inserm, U823, Centre de recherche Albert Bonniet & Univ Joseph Fourier Grenoble, France
Valérie Siroux, Inserm, U823, Centre de recherche Albert Bonniet & Univ Joseph Fourier Grenoble, France

Background and aims: Different techniques of geocoding can lead to important differences in distance between the true and the geocoded location. To which extent such differences can impact the estimates of air pollution effects on health outcomes has not been studied. The objective is to assess the differences in health estimates of home outdoor air pollution on lung function using 2 geocoding techniques (spatial interpolation versus parcel matching).

Methods: FEV1% predicted was assessed between 2001-2007 for 393 adults living in Grenoble, France, from the follow-up of the Epidemiological study on the Genetics and Environment on Asthma (EGEA) and the European Community Respiratory Health Survey (ECRHS). Home addresses were geocoded automatically using a map developed with spatial interpolation technique and manually using the cadastral map and geocoding the building’s center. Annual concentrations of NO$_2$ (2004) and PM$_{10}$ (2008) estimated at the home addresses, using a dispersion model with a 10m$^2$ grid, were combined to time-specific measures from the permanent air quality monitoring stations to capture temporal variations in exposure. Linear regressions, adjusted for sex, age, BMI, active smoking, ETS, occupational group, atopy and asthma were conducted.

Results: Medians concentrations (µg/m$^3$) were 34 (IQR 31-38) for NO$_2$ and 31 (29-33) for PM$_{10}$ using the automatic geocodes and 33 (31-36) for NO$_2$ and 30 (29-32) for PM$_{10}$ using the manual geocodes. The median distance in meters between the two techniques was 29 (IQR 14-59). For a 10µg/m$^3$ increase in NO$_2$ and PM$_{10}$, FEV1% predicted decreased by 2.42 (p=0.06) and 8.96 (p=0.05) using the automatic geocodes, and by 2.71 (p=0.09) and 12.32 (p=0.02) respectively using the manual geocodes.

Conclusion: These first results suggest that a more precise geocoding technique has a minimal impact on the assessment of NO$_2$ and PM$_{10}$ effects in lung function.

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