

AWERNESS OF POLISH CARDIOLOGISTS ABOUT THE IMPACT OF AIR POLLUTION ON HEALTH

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Long-term exposure to PM_{2.5} is associated with mortality from cardiovascular disease (particularly ischemic heart disease). The European Environment Agency indicates that in Poland due to ambient PM_{2.5} air pollution over 42,000 people die prematurely each year. It is the highest quantity in the European Union relative to the population of the country. This is largely due to the carbon-based economy as the primary source of energy. The aim of the study was to assess the awareness of Polish cardiologists about the impact of air pollution on health, the sources of their knowledge and how this knowledge is used in clinical practice. The study was based on a voluntary and anonymous questionnaire created for this study. The study included 173 cardiologists from Warsaw. There were 47% men and 53% women aged 28-75 years. Only 25% of cardiologists think that their knowledge on the impact of air pollution on health is sufficient, however only in 3% they were right. The main source of this knowledge were the internet and medical press. Only 13% of cardiologists know what air pollution concentrations are acceptable in Poland. Forty two percent of cardiologists follow the levels of air pollution in their region, however only 3% of them inform their patients about exceeded air pollution permissible limits. The majority of cardiologists (70%) do not know what are the main air pollutants in their city. The knowledge of cardiologists on the impact of air pollution on health is not sufficient and they need professional education in this area.

Key words: air pollution, health impact, knowledge, education, cardiologist