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Microplastics and its Harmful Effects on Humans: A Review

Sujithra K.*, Jayanthi K., Babu M. and Ashok K.

Department of Microbiology and Biotechnology, Faculty of Arts and Science, Bharath Institute of Higher Education and Research, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India

**Corresponding Author*

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Abstract: Aerosolized plastic particles (IMP) can penetrate deep into human tissue, such that the body itself can no longer remove them. Loaded with phthalates, bisphenol, it is likely to enter the bloodstream, lead the microparticles to coronary diseases, or difficulties in the brain's blood vessel, as well as to impairment of the immune system and neurological system. Radiation exposure can potentially cause cancer (CA). Ambient air microplastic contamination poses a greater harm to children than to adults (MPP). As a result, they inhale roughly twice as much air per kilogramme of body weight as a person would. Airborne toxins have become considerably harder for kids. As such, the body of an infant is even more responsive. Contaminants, such as microplastics (MP's), which degrade only steadily, may have a substantially longer-term harmful impact. Besides, children also play on the floor and crawl, where they can collect MP dust.

Keywords: Microplastic, Cancer, Air pollution, Health impacts, Plastic waste

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Introduction

The result of plastic waste (PW) in the atmosphere is MP's, small fragments of plastic (PL) smaller than 5 mm (0.2 inch) in length (Huang *et al*., 2020). In a range of items, from cosmetics to PL tools and bottles, MP's are present. Many of these items are readily in rubbish. The MP's include atoms bonded together in polymer chains of carbon (C) and hydrogen (H_2). Often usually present in the MP industry are other contaminants, such as phthalate esters ($C_8H_4O_4^{-2}$), polybrominated diphenyl ethers [$C_{12}H_{(10-x)}Br_xO$ (x = 1, 2, ..., 10 = $m + n$)], and tetrabromobiphenol A ($C_{15}H_{12}Br_4O_2$), all of which release from the plastic after it enters the atmosphere (Prata, 2018).

Primary and secondary microplastics (MP's):

There are two groups of MP's -- main and secondary. Examples of main MP include microbeads in personal care materials, plastic pellets or nurdle in agricultural production and plastic fibres (PLF) for synthetic textiles (e.g. nylon) (Chen *et al.,* 2020). Primary MP's reach the environment through a variety of sources, such as product use (e.g. washing of personal care items into household waste water system), accidental waste during production or transportation, or waste washing (e.g. laundering of clothing made with synthetic textiles) (Vianello *et al.,* 2019). Secondary MP's are generally derived by breaking down of large PL. They mostly occur as large plastics and are weathered, for example from exposure to wave, wind and ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun.

Environmental and health impacts:

Main and secondary MP's thus degraded and persists in the environment (Bi *et al*., 2020). In a range of habitats, including oceans and coastal ecosystems, MP's were detected. Annual PL contamination in the sea alone by all kinds of PL's was measured in the early 21st century at between 4 million and 14 million tonnes. The air contamination of MP's is also a cause of dust and fibrous particles in the air. There are unexplained health risks of inhaled MP's (Enyoh *et al*., 2019).

MP's were present in more than 114 aquatic organisms in marine and freshwater environments together (Wang *et al*., 2021). MP products are present in various invertebrates, including crustaceans, and in digestive tracts and tissues of marine mammals (Akanyange *et al*., 2021). Fish and birds would probably eat MP's that float on the surface of the water and make a mistake for food. Ingestion of MP's can lead to less food intake by aquatic species and thus less energy in life and lead to neurological and reproductive toxicity (Schwabl *et al*., 2019; Prata *et al.,* 2020). It has been suspected that MP's are developing in aquatic food chains, from zooplankton, small fish, to massive naval predators. In drinking water, beer and food products, including seafood and table salt, MP's were found. MP's was recovered from each participant's stool samples in a pilot project involving eight people from eight countries (Wright *et al*., 2020). MP's in human tissues and organs have also been observed by scientists. The consequences for human health of these results are unclear (Cox *et al*., 2019).

Reducing MPP:

About 6,300 million tonnes of PW were produced between 1950 and 2015. The bulk of the waste, almost 4.9 million tonnes, ended up in waste sites and the atmosphere. Based on developments over the same period, scientists predicted that plastic waste would exceed 12,000 million metric tonnes by 2050 in sites and the atmosphere. However, governments and policymakers have remained relatively unaware of the possible risks of escalating plastics waste, in particular MP contamination (Gasperi *et al.,* 2018). Organizations such as the UN Environmental Program Expert Panel, have participated in advocacy programmes in over 100 countries to raise awareness of waste from PL products and encourage recycling and reuse (Stanton *et al.,* 2019). Further international cooperation programmes, including MP emissions, have been developed to fix aquatic wastes. In 2015, the USA passed the Microbead-Free Waters Act which prohibits rinse-off cosmetics products containing PL microbeads. In other nations, microbeads were also banned (Mbachu *et al*., 2020).

Another main element in the reduction of MP emissions is the remediation of MP's currently in the setting. Strategies under study included the use of synthetic MP polymers that can break down (Rist *et al*., 2018). Biodegradation capabilities are present in several species of bacterial and fungal products, including polystyrene [$(C_8H_8)_n$], polyester polyurethane ($C_3H_8N_2O$) and polyethylene [$(C_2H_4)_n$]. Such microorganisms (MO's) can be used in wastewater and other polluted areas (Campanale *et al*., 2020).

How do MP's influence people?:

One clear manner in which people eat MP is by the consumption of aquatic animals (O'Brien *et al*., 2020). And if you do not consume sea food, at some point through the drinking water or through the very air you breathe, you have come in touch with MP's. Cars and trucks emit tyre dust 0.71 ounces -which includes PL styrene-butadien- every 62 miles (100 km) of road they are travelling (Liu *et al.,* 2019).

MP in drinking water is twice the number of sampling tap water in New York (Van Cauwenberghe and Janssen, 2014). This is much more relevant as it is taken into account that MP's are found in 94% of tap water in the US. While small, these particles have penetrated many facets of human life, which makes them impossible for the ordinary person to spot or stop. In their drinking water, many countries even showed alarmingly high levels.

Kelly and Fussell (2020) suggested that human ingestions of MP's range from 39,000 to 52.00 particles per year, based on their gender and their age group. This figures only improve if we consider factors like MP's and drinking water compared to the intake of filtered water. How does MP's influence people? While we quantify the amount of MP's we consume over one year, this issue gives much less detail than the impact of materials on marine animals (Hirt and Body-Malapel, 2020). Prior reports of trusted organisations including WHO, have suggested that MP's have little significant effect on public wellbeing. Others suggest that what is most important is the kind of plastic consumed or inhaled. Bisphenol A ($C_{15}H_{16}O_2$), for example, is linked to improvements in behaviour and increases blood pressure (Henry *et al.*, 2019). Endocrines, neurodevelopmental disease and liver and kidney damage may be caused by polybrominated diphenyl ethers in humans.

Though these particles are omnipresent, various MP solutions can delay the expansion of PW at the source (De-la-Torre, 2020). Through reducing the PL use, it will contribute to the reduction of MP's in soil, atmosphere and in global wastes. Small acts add up and you do not have to make a difference with any change in your lifestyle listed here (Vandermeersch *et al.*, 2015). Only one of the following will contribute to stop the inflow of PL many days a week:

(i) Buying natural fibre clothing: natural fabrics such as biological cotton and wool over time are biodegradable instead of remaining as synthetic fibres in the natural world (Xu *et al.*, 2020), and

(ii) move any plastic threads to natural alternatives and try wool dryer balls rather than dryer sheets.

Recycled materials:

Any PL forms cannot be recycled and always go to the waste dump so that reused materials are replaced whenever possible (Wright and Kelly, 2017). PL recycling as per local directives: since you cannot reuse any PL you use, please ensure that it is recycled in accordance with your local waste management programme (Barboza *et al*., 2018). Any plants would not allow such PL materials because machines have difficulty sorting and processing them. As described earlier, car pipes add much MP dust to the environment. Use of alternative transport, Cycling or walking anywhere can reduce the tyre dust in air. Even cooking with others is considered a step towards an eco-friendly life (Akhbarizadeh *et al*., 2021).

Research demonstrates that all of our organic MP's originate from the air we ingest – not just from drinking water or consuming seafood from tainted oceans (Enyoh *et al*., 2020). MP's can be inhaled and can lead to a variety of illnesses, including infectious, cardiovascular and CA. Annual production is over 300 million tonnes of PL (Zhang *et al.*, 2020). In less than one year, half of the PL turns into garbage. Just 9 per cent of plastics are recycled, while the other 91 per cent are used as wastes in air, soil and water. Any of it ends up in our lungs. And they remain in the lung tissue or penetrate the bloodstream because the body cannot get rid of the small PL particles. Babies crawling on the floor are more vulnerable, and more often, infants are more vulnerable because of the development of their respiratory systems (Maddela *et al.,* 2022).

MPP through washing and wearing:

Up to 35% of the PL particles which pollute our oceans are produced from PL washed out from synthetic clothes. In the wastewater treatment plants that cannot filter them, any time we do the laundering, an average of 9 million microfibers arrives, which means that the fibres end up on the ocean (Prata *et al*., 2020). Furthermore, PL fibres are often emitted into the air only when wearing synthetic clothing (Abbasi *et al*., 2019). To date all literature has concentrated on the contamination of microfiber by washing the laundry. A new research reveals, however, that wearing polyester garments often pollute the atmosphere, as polyester clothing emits as many MP fibres in the air as washing (Patil *et al*., 2020).

Does breathing fibers damage health?:

In the 1990s, scientists studying lung tissue of patients with cancer showed their concerns that PL fibres would lead to a risk of lung CA. The existence of MP's in human lung tissue has now been apparent. Research has shown that in lungs, particularly people with lung disease, PL particles can persist (Wong *et al*., 2020). They are likely to be there for a long time while they live in the lungs because they are bio-persistent and can induce inflammation. The length of fibres also matters, since longer fibres seem to be more harmful. Particle contamination, causing damage to lung tissue, tumours, asthma and other health conditions, is known for many years (Li *et al*., 2020). These PL particles can cause similar health problems when MPI is too strong. Fabric workers in the manufacturing of nylon $[(C_{12}H_{22}N_2O_2)_n]$ and polyester $[(C_{10}H_8O_4)_n]$ fibres among other things, experienced coughing, breathing and decreased lung capacity, indicating that these workers are related to the health issues experienced by MPI (Ebere *et al*., 2019).

Finally, recent studies on the subject have shown that nylon $[(C_{12}H_{22}N_2O_2)_n]$ fibres, while polyester ((C10H8O4)n) fibres, do not prevent the development of mini lungs. Lung defence cells (macrophages), when exposed to these PL parts, often targeted nylon $((C_{12}H_{22}N_2O_2)_n)$ fibres. Researcher Fransien van Dijk presented these early findings as part of the thesis work at the University of Groningen during the first ever PL Health Summit in 2019 (Yuan *et al*., 2019).

Concentration of airborne MP's higher in indoor air:

Indoor air MP's arise from fragmenting plastic particles in our homes by pressure, heat or illumination (Yee *et al*., 2021), Toys, chairs, shopping bags, cosmetics, pasta and scrapers. The Environmental Audit Committee in Great Britain, which in January 2019 abolished microbead use, claims that showering with a single corpus scrub will flush 100,000 microplastic beads into the drainage system and into the air following the US, New Zealand and Canadians (Wang *et al*., 2020). However, the rest of the MP's products contained indoor air which come from synthetic fibres and the textiles used in home furnaces. These MP's fibres are usually longer and thus toxic when inhaled. Today, about 60% of world garment manufacturing consists of synthetic fabrics, such as acrylic $[(C5O2H8)_n]$, nylon $((C_{12}H_{22}N_2O_2)_n)$, and polyester ((C10H8O4)n) (Li *et al*., 2015).

MP fibres are released after they are washed and are finally in waste water so the filtration is not good. According to a report conducted in 2016 by the Bren School of Environmental Science and Management of the University of California, the washing of a fleece jacket for instance releases up to 250,000 MP fibres into waste water. Unfortunately, most wastewater treatment plants may not provide filters that separate MP's from sewage, either.

What does the research say?:

The scientists have created a mannequin (as in retail shops that models clothing) that has been engineered to imitate a human body and a glass and aluminium breathing device to precisely demonstrate how MP's impact the respiratory system of humans. The model had the same body temperatures of 98,6°F as a true human being. The breathing mannequin was then put into three separate apartments in the town of Aarhus, Denmark, to breathe indoor air for 24 h each (Yuan *et al*., 2019).

Up to 4% of a flat's overall air volume was polluted with airborne MP's-that means you can inhale at least some MP in one of the environments with all breath The volume of MP's in the air would vary greatly in the same atmosphere between different areas – A portion of the atmosphere could contain air that contains MP's up to 77 per cent, although the vast majority of airborne MP's come from clothing-conscious synthetic polymers and imported furniture, PL and most airborne MP's is much less than other airborne contaminants such as skin flakes, leaving them more likely to enter the airways. Everywhere MP's take up regularly from four to seventy seven per cent of the climate. Of course, that's just one study – but many other studies have corroborated these findings (Abbasi *et al*., 2019; Verla *et al*., 2019).

An analysis conducted in 2012 in a test team in London, England observed MP amounts in each air sample from a 9 floor building two times a week for a month, and found in some specimens up to 1008 MP's per square metre (Abbasi *et al*., 2019). In a 2019 analysis, high levels of MP's worldwide were found up to and including in the Alps and the Arctic, even in remote locations, such as Greenland and Svalbard (a small, isolated Norwegian island close by the Arctic) which contained as much as 1760 MP's per litre of air. Another research study by Yee *et al*. (2021) has showed that PL fibres, the world's most abundant source of airborne MP's - represent 60 million tonnes, resulting in widespread health consequences, such as lung inflammation and an increased risk of stomach infertility and CA from MP surfaces-reduced chemicals.

Conclusion

The atmospheric fallout in Greater Paris recently discovered MP's. Due to their limited dimensions, the lesions can be inhaled and caused by human resistance and particle properties in the respiratory system. While new topics are airborne MP's, multiple observer reports confirmed inhalation of PL fibres and particles, in particular in exposed personnel, frequently with airway dyspnea and interstitial inflammatory reactions. While environmental concentrations are poor, people at risk of related lesions can be susceptible. This overview reviews current information with the aim of increasing understanding and study in the field to better understand the human health risk associated with airborne MP's.

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