

Campaigns to Improve Air Quality in Beijing in the Context of the 2008 Olympics

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With 13 rounds of air pollution control in the last decade, the air quality in Beijing has been improved significantly. Yet this improvement is being undermined by the rapid increase in the vehicle population and energy consumption. Air pollution is an increasingly serious concern in the run-up to the 2008 Olympic Games. In order to formulate an air pollution control strategy for the games, an international collaborative project CAREBEIJING (Campaigns of Air Quality Research in Beijing and Surrounding Regions) led by Peking University has been in progress from 2006 to 2008. The project has involved gathering extensive data on gaseous and particulate pollutants over two years to establish a solid database to assess exposure to air pollution before the Olympics. An important component of CAREBEIJING is CAREBEIJING-H: a health study with two panels assessing the cardiovascular and respiratory responses of susceptible populations.

Based on the findings from CAREBEIJING and other related research projects, unprecedented actions are being taken before and during the 2008 Beijing Olympics and Paralympics (July 25 – September 17, 2008) to ensure that ambient air quality in one of the world's most polluted regions will be substantially improved. This paper presents the results of CAREBEIJING-2006, CAREBEIJING-2007, and CAREBEIJING-H and discusses their implications for policy.