



Balancing the risks of air pollution and physical inactivity

by

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5 Sassoon Road**

Abstract:

An emerging public health issue in Taiwan: when is the harms of air pollution outweigh the benefits of physical activity?

School kids in Taiwan were asked to stay indoors for physical education classes and marathon race activities were cancelled when air pollution with PM2.5 as an indicator exceeding certain limits in Taiwan. These are becoming the society norms, but are they justified? To understand the issue, walking through the following steps is needed to put this issue into proper perspective:

- 1) The current state of air pollution in Taiwan and the secular trend: from governmental statement and calculated PM2.5 prevalence data
- 2) Literature and research linking PM2.5 and health outcome
- 3) Limitations and pitfalls in the use of PM2.5 as a surrogate exposure index
- 4) Mortality risk of air pollution when compared with other risks, as an individual and as a society: ranking of health risks
- 5) The rising lung cancer cases among nonsmoking women in Taiwan
- 6) Comparison of the risks from air pollution and smoking
- 7) The literature on the benefits of physical activity
- 8) Risks and benefits of modeling studies
- 9) US EPA/CDC statement
- 10) Risk assessment, risk perception, risk communication and risk management: why it is much easier to scare people than to un-scare them

Bio-sketch:

Professor CP Wen graduated from the National Taiwan University with MD in 1959, an MPH and DrPH in 1969 and 1972 respectively from the Harvard University. He was Assistant Professor in the Michigan State University during 1972-1976, and Clinical Professor during 1979-1998 and Adjunct Professor during 1979-2000 in the University of Texas at Houston. Since 2001, Professor CP Wen was Research Fellow/Visiting Professor/Distinguishing Professor in the Taiwan National Health Research Institutes (NHRI), and Chair Professor in the China Medical University Hospital, Taiwan. His awards from NHRI included Best NRHI Research Achievement Award 2003, from the Taiwan Department of Health included The Article of the Year Award 2004 and Best Recommendation Book of Health Book, Taiwan Cancer Atlas 2005.

Professor Wen's research interests are on epidemiology and control of chronic diseases with a focus on tobacco control, physical activity and air pollution. He is principal investigator of one of the largest epidemiological cohort studies in Taiwan. He has published over 100 papers in international peer reviewed journals, including *Lancet*, *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)* and *British Medical Journal*.