

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

Binational Surveillance of Diseases Related to Air Pollution
in Imperial County and the Municipality of Mexicali

Start Date: October, 2005

Completion Date: September, 2006 (tentative)

Project Purpose:

One of the goals of the Imperial-Mexicali Air Quality Task Force (IMAQTF), Health Workgroup is to encourage the formation of a binational environmental health surveillance system for diseases associated with air contamination. This is important both to 1) assess the cardiopulmonary health of residents of the common air basin and 2) measure the health effects of air quality improvements. The latter goal would be accomplished in conjunction with on-going air monitoring efforts. The current proposal is to extend the BIDS model to the realm of air pollution, establishing standards of clinical data collection for the binational Imperial/Mexicali air basin.

Project Description:

The Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment, the Universidad Autónoma de Baja California-Mexicali, San Diego State University, and the Instituto de Salud Publica del Estado de Baja California (ISESALUD), the three former of which have representation on the IMAQTF, have worked closely together from January 2005 through the present to accomplish the project goals. The collected information is serving to illuminate the steps necessary to accomplish the ultimate goal of the IMAQTF Health Workgroup: the formation of a common cross-border respiratory disease reporting system.

Accomplishments to Date:

- We have characterized existing surveillance of diseases related to air pollution in Imperial County and the municipality of Mexicali, including data reporting requirements, data availability and format, and the possibility for binational compatibility.
- We have identified the public health institutions responsible for disease tracking as well as the major health care providers that would be required to engage in disease reporting.
- We have scheduled a meeting of the appropriate experts to develop a methodology for binational collection of respiratory illness data for both Imperial County and Mexicali. We have invited government officials, hospital officials, and disease surveillance experts at the state and local levels, all carefully selected for their pertinent expertise either in current binational disease surveillance efforts and/or environmental health disease tracking. The meeting will take place on May 18, 2006, in Mexicali, Mexico; simultaneous translation will be provided.

Remaining Tasks:

- During the expert forum, identify what existing obstacles, possible solutions, and recommendations would apply for the goal of achieving binational surveillance for respiratory diseases.
- Recommend a disease or diseases affected by air pollution that would be most appropriate for binational surveillance.

· Based on the results of individual interviews and the meeting of experts, generate a final needs assessment with recommendations as to the most effective way to accomplish a surveillance system for the disease(s) of interest.

Specific deliverables resulting from this project will be:

1) written summaries of existing surveillance of diseases related to air pollution in Imperial County and the municipality of Mexicali to serve as a basis of discussion in the expert forum, 2) the recommendations garnered from the forum, and 3) a written final report and recommendations.

Presentations or Publications: TBD.

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