



Research article

# Impacts of PM<sub>10</sub> exposure on hospitalization for acute bronchitis in Ankara, Türkiye

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## Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between PM<sub>10</sub> exposure and acute bronchitis admissions in Ankara, Türkiye. PM<sub>10</sub> data and daily acute bronchitis admissions were obtained in Ankara for 2020-2021. A generalized additive model was applied to estimate the effects of daily PM<sub>10</sub> concentration on hospital admissions for acute bronchitis. The Distributed Lag Non-linear Model was utilized to evaluate the lagged effects of PM<sub>10</sub> concentration. Additionally, the model was adjusted for stratified analyses according to gender and age groups. Relative risks with corresponding 95% confidence intervals (CIs) were obtained for each 10 µg/m<sup>3</sup> increment in PM<sub>10</sub> values. A rise of 10 µg/m<sup>3</sup> in PM<sub>10</sub> concentrations was significantly linked with an elevated risk of acute bronchitis with relative risks observed at lag3 (RR: 1.010, 95% CI: 1.001-1.019) and lag4 (RR: 1.010, 95% CI: 1.002-1.019). There were associations for middle-aged individuals (45 to 64 years), with a 0.5% increase in risk at lag3 (RR: 1.005; 95% CI: 1.001-1.009) and lag4 (RR: 1.005; 95% CI: 1.001-1.010). PM<sub>10</sub> exposure could increase the risk of acute bronchitis and better air quality would be beneficial to human health.

**Keywords:** Acute bronchitis; Ankara; generalized additive model; PM<sub>10</sub>; Türkiye

## 1. Introduction

Air pollution refers to the presence of various chemical, physical, or biological substances that lead to contamination of both outdoor and indoor atmosphere (WHO, 2021). Air pollution originates from a range of sources, both anthropogenic and naturally occurring. Natural sources of air pollution include desert dust, wildfires, and volcanic emissions (Baltaci et al., 2022; Arslan, 2023), whereas anthropogenic sources of air pollution include industrial sites, power plants, transportation, agriculture, residential and commercial heating, cooking, waste disposal, construction, mining, and oil and gas production (Castagna et al., 2021; Zhou et al., 2021; Lestari et al., 2022; Arslan and Toltar, 2023). Air pollution can also be transported over long distances by winds, which can make it difficult to

identify the sources of certain pollutants in a specific location (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, 2021). This has numerous adverse impacts on human health and harms the environment by reducing visibility, causing acid rain, and damaging forests (Mohajan, 2018; Saxena and Sonwani, 2019; Shammass et al., 2020; Savita, 2021).

Particulate matter (PM) is one of the criteria for air pollutants that can pose risks to human health (Arslan et al., 2022; Baltaci et al., 2022; Chung et al., 2023; He et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2023). Different sizes and types of PM can have varying health impacts, and the duration and level of exposure can also affect the severity of health problems. For instance, PM<sub>10</sub> is identified as inhalable particles which can cause health issues. Epidemiological studies have revealed that being exposed to PM<sub>10</sub> may result in increased incidence of hospital

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admissions for respiratory disease (Leung et al., 2021; WHO, 2021; Arslan et al., 2022; Baltaci et al., 2022; Shams et al., 2023). Guo et al. (2014) found that every  $10 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  increment in  $\text{PM}_{10}$  values corresponded to a rise of 0.94% (95% CI: 0.83%-1.05%) in hospitalizations for acute bronchitis at lag6 in Shanghai, China. Similarly, in southwestern China, Zhang and Zhou (2022) found that  $\text{PM}_{2.5}$  and  $\text{PM}_{10}$  exposure was found to contribute to increased hospital admissions for acute bronchitis. In another study, Capraz and Deniz (2021) found that a  $10 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  increment in  $\text{PM}_{2.5}$  values led to an 8.06% rise (95 % CI: 3.36-19.4 %) in admission rates for acute bronchitis at lag9 in Istanbul, Türkiye.

Ankara is among the largest cities in Türkiye and is reported to experience high levels of  $\text{PM}_{10}$  due to vehicular emissions and industrial activities. High levels of particulate matter concentration pose significant threats to both the environment and public health. This research aims to examine the correlation between  $\text{PM}_{10}$  exposure and hospitalizations due to acute bronchitis in Ankara from 2020 to 2021.

## 2. Materials and methods

### 2.1. Study area

Due to the low preference for public transportation and the use of fossil fuel-consuming public vehicles, high pollutant concentrations are found in Ankara. Almost 50% of public vehicles use fossil fuels, which significantly contributes to the problem. Furthermore, compared to larger cities such as Istanbul and Izmir, Ankara has a high rate of vehicle ownership per 100 people, exacerbating the issue. As a result, the city's air quality is significantly compromised (Dark Report, 2019).

Ankara has a semi-arid central Anatolian climate characterized by hot and arid summers and cold, snowy winters. The mean temperature during summer is around  $23^\circ\text{C}$ , while in winter, the mean temperature drops to around  $2.1^\circ\text{C}$ . The hottest month is July-August, and the coldest is January. Most precipitation falls during the spring and fall months, with relatively low rainfall during the summer and winter (Akkose et al., 2021).

### 2.2. Hospital admissions and air quality data

Hourly  $\text{PM}_{10}$  concentrations data were provided by the National Air Quality and Monitoring database for 2020-2021.

Additionally, hourly temperature and relative humidity data were obtained from the Turkish State Meteorological Service (TSMS). Hospital admission numbers for acute bronchitis, based on the International Classification of Diseases-Tenth Revision, were obtained from the Etimesgut State Hospital database for 2020-2021. The daily respiratory hospital admission numbers (ICD-10: J20 for acute bronchitis) were derived by each patient's age (18-44, 45-64, and >64 years) and gender. The relationship between  $\text{PM}_{10}$  values and hospital admissions for acute bronchitis was investigated using data from the Etimesgut air quality station (Fig. 1), as it is the nearest station to the hospital.

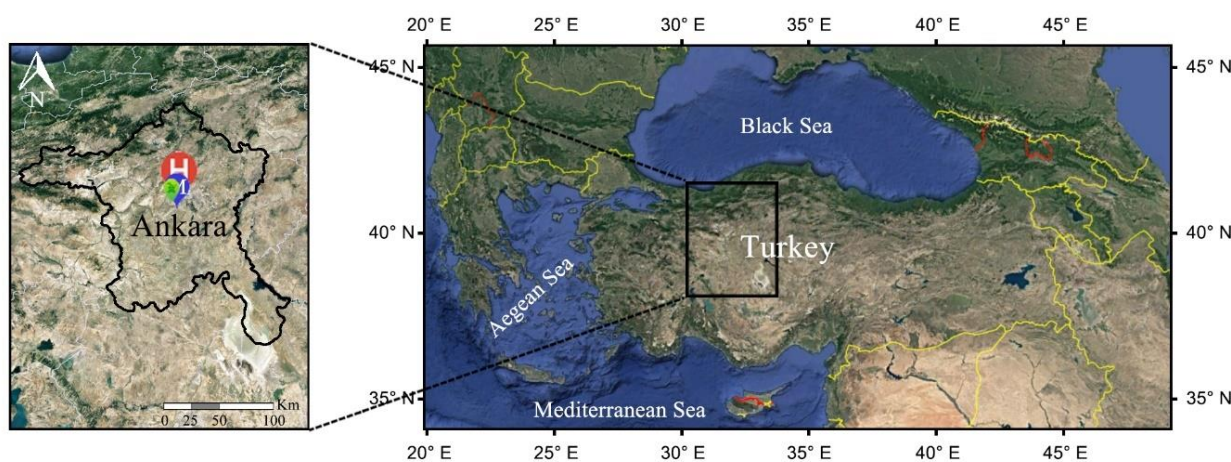
### 2.3. Statistical analysis

A generalized additive model was constructed using a quasi-Poisson link to estimate the effects of daily  $\text{PM}_{10}$  concentration on hospital admissions related to acute bronchitis. The lagged effects of  $\text{PM}_{10}$  concentration were assessed with the Distributed Lag Non-linear Model.

The following model is fitted:

$$\text{Log } E(Y_t) = \alpha + \beta X_{t,l} + ns(\text{time}_t, df) + ns(\text{temperature}_t, df) + ns(\text{humidity}_t, df) + \text{factor}(\text{DOW}) + \text{factor}(\text{holiday}), \quad (1)$$

$\text{Log } E(Y_t)$  is the expected number of hospitalized patients due to acute bronchitis on day  $t$ ,  $\alpha$  is the intercept,  $\beta$  is the vector of regression coefficients,  $X_t$  is the cross-basis matrix of  $\text{PM}_{10}$  concentration on day  $t$ , and  $l$  is lag days. A single-day lag between lag 0 (day of occurrence) and lag 7 (which indicated the value on the 7<sup>th</sup> day succeeding the occurrence) was used. The model is controlled for the meteorological elements, i.e., temperature and humidity, by using the natural spline ( $ns$ ) function with 3 degrees of freedom ( $df$ ). Time represents the date variable, which was defined with  $ns$  with 7  $df$  per year to check for long-term trends and seasonality (Liu and Zhai, 2022). Day of the week (DOW) (1, 2, ..., 7) and an indicator of public holiday (0/1) were used in the model as factor variables. The model was also fitted for stratified analyses according to gender and age groups. The adjusted relative risks (RRs) were calculated along with their 95% CIs per  $10 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  increase in the  $\text{PM}_{10}$  value. The statistical analyses were performed utilizing the *dlnm* package in the R 4.2.1 edition (Gasparrini et al., 2011).



**Fig. 1.** The distribution of air quality monitoring station (green circle), meteorological station (blue circle) and hospital in Ankara (red circle) (Google Maps, 2024).

### 3. Results and discussion

This research aimed to examine the association between PM<sub>10</sub> exposure and the risk of being hospitalized with acute bronchitis in Ankara from 2020 to 2021. Table 1 and Figure 2 show the relative risks (RRs), along with their corresponding 95% CIs, for hospital admissions due to acute bronchitis associated with a 10 µg/m<sup>3</sup> increment in PM<sub>10</sub> values.

The significant effects of PM<sub>10</sub> on hospital admission were found at lag3, lag4 and lag5. Although RRs are not much different than the other lag days, the RR peak of PM<sub>10</sub> is lag5, which was associated with a 1.1% (RR:1.011, 95% CI: 1.001-1.021) increase in the risk of hospitalization for acute bronchitis. An increase of 10 µg/m<sup>3</sup> in PM<sub>10</sub> value increased the risk of acute bronchitis related hospital admission by 1.0% at lag3 (RR:1.010, 95% CI: 1.001-1.019) and lag4 (RR:1.010, 95% CI: 1.002-1.019).

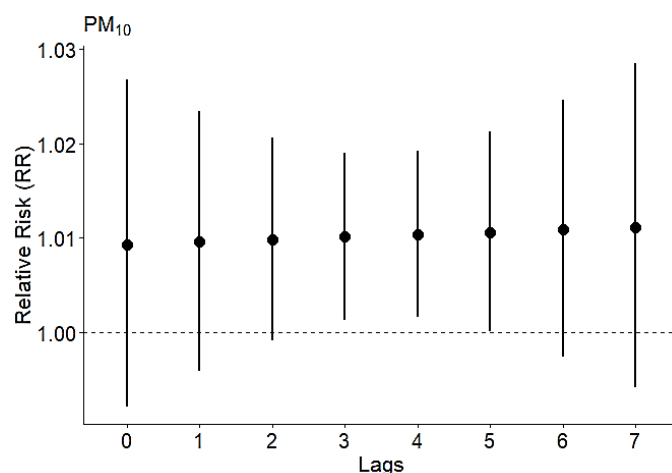
**Table 1**

Relative risk and 95% CIs of hospitalizations due to acute bronchitis with an increment of 10 µg/m<sup>3</sup> in PM<sub>10</sub> value.

Lag Days	RR	PM <sub>10</sub> 95% CI
lag0	1.009	(0.992-1.027)
lag1	1.010	(0.996-1.023)
lag2	1.010	(0.999-1.021)
lag3	<b>1.010</b>	<b>(1.001-1.019)</b>
lag4	<b>1.010</b>	<b>(1.002-1.019)</b>
lag5	<b>1.011</b>	<b>(1.001-1.021)</b>
lag6	1.011	(0.997-1.025)
lag7	1.011	(0.994-1.029)

In a similar study, a connection between increased exposure to PM<sub>2.5</sub> and heightened risk of bronchitis-related hospitalizations was established (Hertz-Picciotto et al., 2007). Additionally, a positive correlation between NO<sub>2</sub>, PM<sub>10</sub>, PM<sub>2.5</sub>, and SO<sub>2</sub> levels and hospital admissions linked to acute bronchitis and COPD was identified (Muñoz and Carvalho, 2009). Furthermore, evidence supporting an increased risk of hospitalization due to bronchitis in association with PM<sub>2.5</sub> exposure was provided (Ostro et al., 2009). Studies also showed that 10 µg/m<sup>3</sup> rise in PM<sub>10</sub> led to 4% increase in hospitalizations due to acute bronchitis/bronchiolitis (Meszaros et al., 2015) and 10 µg/m<sup>3</sup> increment in PM<sub>2.5</sub> resulted in 25% and 1% increase in the rates of hospitalization due to acute bronchitis and asthma, respectively (Jo et al., 2017). Additionally, hospitalizations for childhood acute bronchitis were reported to be significantly increased by an interquartile range rise in the NO<sub>2</sub>, PM<sub>2.5</sub>, and CO concentrations, with 4-day cumulative effect estimates (RR: 1.03, 95% CI: 1.01-1.05; 1.09, 95% CI: 1.07-1.11; 1.07, 95% CI: 1.05- 1.09) (Bai et al., 2018) and 10 µg/m<sup>3</sup> rise in PM<sub>2.5</sub> values resulted in 8.06 % increment (95% CI: 3.36–19.4%) in admission rates for acute bronchitis at lag 9 (Capraz and Deniz, 2021). Moreover, particulate matter concentrations were associated with increased number of hospitalizations as 10 µg/m<sup>3</sup> increase in PM<sub>2.5</sub> was reported to cause 25% increment in acute bronchitis, 14% in allergic rhinitis, and 1% in asthma (Jo et al., 2017). Relationship between PM<sub>10</sub> exposure and the prevalence of the chronic bronchitis was also observed (Hooper et al., 2018).

The stratified analysis for gender revealed that, females were significantly at higher risk of acute bronchitis related hospital admissions from an increment in PM<sub>10</sub> at lag3 (RR: 1.009; 95% CI:1.001-1.017), lag4 (RR: 1.010; 95% CI:1.002-



**Fig. 2.** Relative risk and 95% CIs of hospitalizations due to acute bronchitis for 10 µg/m<sup>3</sup> increment in PM<sub>10</sub> concentration across the different time periods.

1.017), and lag5 (RR: 1.010; 95% CI:1.001-1.020) as shown in Table 2 and Fig. 3. In a similar study, 10 µg/m<sup>3</sup> increment in PM<sub>10</sub>, SO<sub>2</sub> and NO<sub>2</sub> values were found to correspond to 0.94% (95% CI: 0.83% to 1.05%), 11.12% (95% CI: 10.76% to 11.48%), and 4.84% (95% CI: 4.49% to 5.18%) rise in hospital admissions attributed to acute bronchitis at lag6, respectively and these correlations were significantly higher for females than males (Guo et al., 2014). Correlation between particulate matter and increased risk of respiratory hospitalizations attributed to conditions such as asthma, chronic bronchitis, and COPD was also reported in another study and their findings similarly indicated that females faced 1.5 times greater risk than males when exposed to both PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub> (Shakerkhatibi et al., 2021).

**Table 2**

Relative risk and 95% CIs of hospitalizations due to acute bronchitis for 10 µg/m<sup>3</sup> increment in PM<sub>10</sub> concentration across genders.

PM <sub>10</sub> Lag Days	Male		Female	
	RR	95% CI	RR	95% CI
lag0	1.012	(0.989-1.035)	1.007	(0.991-1.023)
lag1	1.012	(0.994-1.030)	1.008	(0.995-1.020)
lag2	1.011	(0.997-1.026)	1.008	(0.999-1.018)
lag3	1.011	(1.000-1.023)	<b>1.009</b>	<b>(1.001-1.017)</b>
lag4	1.011	(0.999-1.023)	<b>1.010</b>	<b>(1.002-1.017)</b>
lag5	1.011	(0.997-1.025)	<b>1.010</b>	<b>(1.001-1.020)</b>
lag6	1.011	(0.993-1.029)	1.011	(0.999-1.023)
lag7	1.011	(0.988-1.034)	1.011	(0.996-1.027)

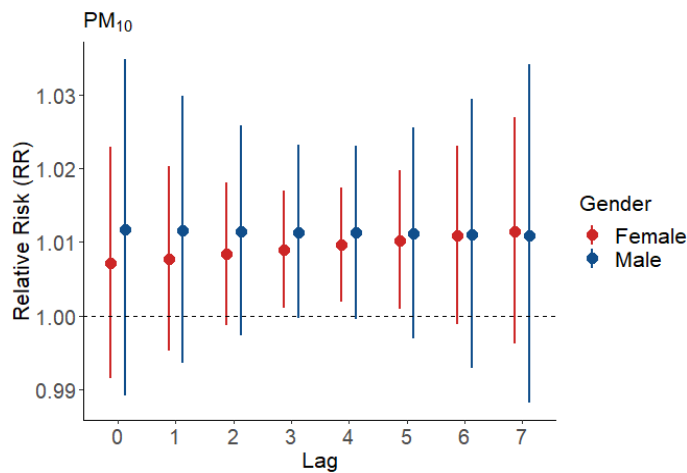
On the other hand, there are also studies that show no significant gender difference in the correlation between PM<sub>10</sub> exposure and acute bronchitis related hospitalizations (He et al., 2022).

While epidemiological research has primarily concentrated on the health impacts of PM exposure on children (Muñoz and Carvalho, 2009; Zhang and Zhou, 2021; He et al., 2022), effects of PM<sub>10</sub> on chronic bronchitis, asthma, emphysema, and COPD were reported to show no significant difference between age groups, however, there was a significant increase in health problems among the 18-60 and >60 age groups associated with PM<sub>2.5</sub> exposure (Shakerkhatibi et al., 2021). This study reveals negative impacts on the middle-aged group. Stratified analysis based on age groups at various lags was presented in Table 3 and Fig. 4. In the middle-aged group (45 to 64 years), 10 µg/m<sup>3</sup>

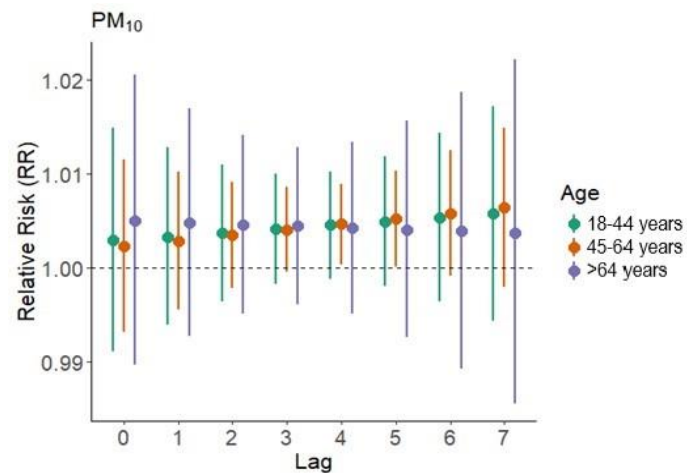
**Table 3**

Relative risk and 95% CIs of hospitalizations due to acute bronchitis for 10 µg/m<sup>3</sup> increment in PM<sub>10</sub> concentration across age groups.

PM <sub>10</sub> Lag Days	18-44 years		45-64 years		>64 years	
	RR	95% CI	RR	95% CI	RR	95% CI
lag0	1.003	(0.991-1.015)	1.002	(0.993-1.012)	1.005	(0.990-1.021)
lag1	1.003	(0.994-1.013)	1.003	(0.996-1.010)	1.005	(0.993-1.017)
lag2	1.004	(0.996-1.011)	1.003	(0.998-1.009)	1.005	(0.995-1.014)
lag3	1.004	(0.998-1.010)	1.004	(1.000-1.009)	1.004	(0.996-1.013)
lag4	1.005	(0.999-1.010)	<b>1.005</b>	<b>(1.001-1.009)</b>	1.004	(0.995-1.013)
lag5	1.005	(0.998-1.012)	<b>1.005</b>	<b>(1.001-1.010)</b>	1.004	(0.993-1.016)
lag6	1.005	(0.996-1.014)	1.006	(0.999-1.013)	1.004	(0.989-1.019)
lag7	1.006	(0.994-1.017)	1.006	(0.998-1.015)	1.004	(0.985-1.022)



**Fig. 3.** Relative risk and 95% CIs of hospitalizations due to acute bronchitis for 10 µg/m<sup>3</sup> increment in PM<sub>10</sub> concentration across genders at the different time periods.



**Fig. 4.** Estimated relative risk (RR) and 95% CIs of hospitalizations due to acute bronchitis for a 10 µg/m<sup>3</sup> increment in PM<sub>10</sub> concentration across age groups at the different time periods.

increment in PM<sub>10</sub> significantly raised the risk of acute bronchitis-related hospital admission by 0.5% at lag3 (RR: 1.005; 95% CI:1.001-1.009) and lag4 (RR: 1.005; 95% CI: 1.001-1.010). However, no significant correlation was found between PM<sub>10</sub> and acute bronchitis admissions in the age group

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of 18 to 45 years or over 64 years.

**4. Conclusion**

The findings of this study indicate a substantial correlation between PM<sub>10</sub> exposure and hospitalizations due to acute bronchitis. The significant impacts of PM<sub>10</sub> on hospital admission were observed at lag3, lag4, and lag5. At lag3 (RR:1.010, 95% CI: 1.001-1.019) and lag4 (RR:1.010, 95% CI: 1.002-1.019), a 10 µg/m<sup>3</sup> rise in PM<sub>10</sub> concentration increased the risk of acute bronchitis-related hospital admission by 1.0%. Also, a 10% increase in PM<sub>10</sub> concentration in the middle-aged (45 to 64 years) group substantially increased the risk of acute bronchitis-related hospital admission by 0.5% on lag 3 (RR: 1.005; 95% CI:1.001- 1.009) and lag4 (RR: 1.005; 95% CI: 1.001-1.010).

Air pollution is a significant environmental risk, posing a substantial threat to human health. The WHO Air Quality Guidelines serve as a cornerstone in setting objectives to safeguard human health against the harmful effects of air pollution. These objectives involve reducing activities such as incineration of agricultural waste and forest fires, which are prominent contributors to air pollution. Furthermore, these objectives entail enhancing the handling of household, industrial, and municipal waste, investing in power generation methods that prioritize energy efficiency, constructing environmentally conscious, energy-efficient, and compact urban areas, and establishing secure and affordable public transportation systems along with pedestrian and cyclist-friendly networks.

The findings of this study are anticipated to offer valuable insights into the health impacts of air pollution, providing policymakers with guidance for improving both health outcomes and air quality. Reducing air pollution levels has the potential to decrease the incidence of various serious health conditions, including acute bronchitis, asthma, pneumonia, lung cancer, stroke, and COPD.

**Conflict of interest:** The authors declare that they have no conflict of interests.

**Informed consent:** The authors declare that this manuscript did not involve human or animal participants and informed consent was not collected.

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