Estimation of Cancer Risk Due to Exposure to Airborne Particle Emission of a Commercial Three-dimensional Printer

SIR,

The three-dimensional (3D) printer is the basic office tool widely used around the world. The environmental effect due to 3D printer use is an interesting issue. Yi noted that “laser printers that emit ultrafine particles (UFP) suggest the need to characterize 3D printer emissions to enable reliable risk assessment.”[1] Stabile et al. reported that using 3D printer could produce airborne particle can spread dose up to 200 mm² in <1 h.[2] The “ultrafine particles (UFPs, particles <100 nm) are the main emitted particles by the 3D printers.”[3] The risk of cancer induced by exposed to such emitted particles is an interesting topic. Here, the authors estimated the cancer risk due to exposure to such UFP particles. Using the same method as previously published in Indian J Cancer,[4] the calculation for the cancer risk was performed. Briefly, individual lifetime cancer risk is equal to “concentration of contaminated particle in atmospheric air × lifetime unit risk factor.” There are data on individual life time cancer risk for UFP particles (average weight 0.106 ng) is previously reported by Liao et al. on risk assessment for exposure to urban environmental pollution and equal to 4.45 × 10⁻⁴.[5] According to the report by Liao et al., the calculation based on the situation of exposure to average UFP amount of 1.69 ng/m³ for 15 h/day or equal to 0.113 ng/m³/h.[5] Focusing on the data on the concentration of contaminated particle in atmospheric air is previously reported by Stephen et al.[6] According to the study by Stephen et al.,[6] the “emission rates up to 2 × 10¹⁰ particles/min.”[6] This is equal to 1.2 × 10¹² particles/h in a close room 32.7 m² or 3.67 × 10¹⁰ particles/m³/h or 0.389 × 10¹⁰ ng/m³/h was reported. Hence, the risk for carcinogenesis due to exposure to emitted 3D printers should be 3.44 times higher than simple exposure to urban environmental pollution. The estimated individual life time cancer risk equal to 4.45 × 10⁻⁴ or this mean in a life time, there will be 4.45 cancerous cases per 10,000 people exposed to 3D printer. This rate is significantly high and brings attention for further public health concern on the present widely used tool in any office, 3D printer.

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Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

References


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