

Festival tents at marksmen's festivals in North Rhine-Westphalia: More tobacco smoke pollution than in pubs and bars

Breathing air in festival tents is heavily polluted by contaminants from tobacco smoke. This is the result of measurements which are now made available to the public in a new report. Commissioned by the German Cancer Research Center (Deutsches Krebsforschungszentrum, DKFZ), the measurements were taken at marksmen's festivals in North Rhine-Westphalia. Tobacco smoke pollution measured in the marquees was even higher than values taken previously in pubs and discotheques.

Measurements were taken from late August until mid-September at two village marksmen's festivals as well as at the "Bürgerschützenfest" in Neuss and the "Bundesschützenfest" in Hürth. On average, the concentration of inhalable particles in the festival tents was more than fifty times higher than in the open air. There were some places in the tents where tobacco smoke pollution reached peak values equaling those measured in heavily smoke-filled train bistros in 2005, i.e., before the non-smoker protection act was enforced throughout the country.

Entrances and windows were open the whole time while measurements were taken. If doors and windows are closed, the level of contaminants in the tents is certain to be considerably higher. The measurements were commissioned by DKFZ to the environmental engineering company Biomess (Korschenbroich) and were funded by the Dieter Mennekes Environmental Foundation.

"Marksmen's festivals, like carnival parties, are festivities for the whole family," says Martina Pötschke-Langer of DKFZ. "Children were present even during measurements at evening events. It is unacceptable and must no longer be accepted for children to be exposed unprotected to tobacco smoke in festival tents." The head of DKFZ's Division of Cancer Prevention therefore emphatically supports North Rhine-Westphalia state government's plans to abolish existing legal exceptions for festival marquees and historical customs events.

The current study confirms a criticism that was voiced already several years ago by the North Rhine-Westphalian Association of Hotels and Catering Establishments (Dehoga NRW). In October 2007, Dehoga NRW stated: "It is not evident why smoking should be allowed in festival tents – even if they are erected only temporarily, which does not make pollution any less – where more families with children are found than you would find in pubs or bars."

The publication by DKFZ entitled "Tabakrauchbelastung in Festzelten – Messergebnisse aus Nordrhein-Westfalen" (Tobacco smoke pollution in festival tents – Measurement results from North Rhine Westphalia) can be ordered from the Division of Cancer Prevention at: who_cc@dkfz.de

It is also available for download at:

http://www.dkfz.de/de/tabakkontrolle/download/Publikationen/AdWfP/AdWfP_Tabakrauchbelastung_in_Festzelten.pdf

The German Cancer Research Center (Deutsches Krebsforschungszentrum, DKFZ) with its more than 2,500 employees is the largest biomedical research institute in Germany. At DKFZ, more than 1,000 scientists investigate how cancer develops, identify cancer risk factors and endeavor to find new strategies to prevent people from getting cancer. They develop novel approaches to make tumor diagnosis more precise and treatment

of cancer patients more successful. Jointly with Heidelberg University Hospital, DKFZ has established the National Center for Tumor Diseases (NCT) Heidelberg where promising approaches from cancer research are translated into the clinic. The staff of the Cancer Information Service (KID) offers information about the widespread disease of cancer for patients, their families, and the general public. The center is a member of the Helmholtz Association of National Research Centers. Ninety percent of its funding comes from the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research and the remaining ten percent from the State of Baden-Württemberg.

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