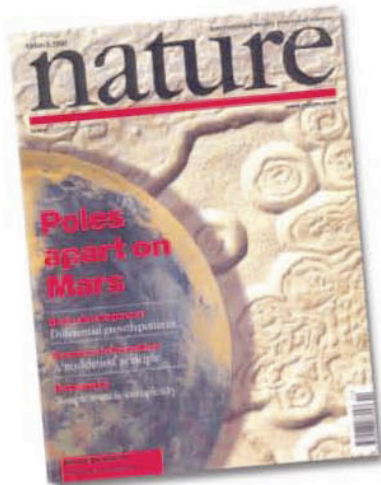


Urban benzene and population exposure

People aren't just at risk from carcinogenic benzene when they are out on city streets.



To explain these findings, we suggest that pollution indoors is caused by benzene entering from the streets outside, as shown by the good fit of respective seasonal trends (data not shown). The pollution indoors is generally higher than outdoors, possibly because of an imbalance between the flow of pollutant from outside and its removal from inside to outside. In other words, the house itself could be acting as a fly flywheel created by absorbent surfaces on walls, floors and furnishings. This idea is supported by the lower indoor pollution in southern European towns: in northern European houses, carpets, linoleum and wood surfaces are favoured, whereas tiling, marble and bare walls are typically used in southern Europe.

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