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Title: Associations between Personal Exposures to VOCs and Alterations in Cardiovascular Physiology: Detroit Exposure and Aerosol Research Study (DEARS)

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List of Abbreviations

- DEARS, Detroit Exposure Aerosol Research Study
- EPA, Environmental Protection Agency
- CV, cardiovascular
- ETS, environmental tobacco smoke
- SBP, systolic blood pressure
- DBP, diastolic blood pressure
- HR, heart rate
- BAD, brachial artery diameter
- FMD, flow mediated dilatation
- NMD, nitroglycerin mediated dilatation
- VOC, volatile organic compound
- PCA, principal component analysis
- PC, principal component
- PM_{2.5}, Fine particulate matter
- NO₂, nitrogen dioxide
- BMI, body mass index
- FDR, false discovery rate

50 **Abstract**

51

52 **Background:** An adult cohort consisting of 63 participants engaged in the US EPA's recent
53 Detroit Exposure and Aerosol Research Study (DEARS) and a University of Michigan
54 cardiovascular sub-study conducted during summer and winter periods over 3 years between
55 2004 and 2007 (5 seasons in total). Through all participants' wearing of a monitoring vest,
56 personal exposures to various air pollutants were measured.

57 **Purpose:** The study objective was to identify the association between personal exposure to
58 volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and six cardiovascular health endpoints in an adult non-
59 smoking cohort of the DEARS.

60 **Methods:** Twenty five VOCs were collected using the DEARS exposure vest incorporating
61 advanced passive diffusion tube. Six cardiovascular health endpoints including systolic and
62 diastolic blood pressure (SBP, DBP), heart rate (HR), brachial artery diameter (BAD), brachial
63 artery flow-mediated dilatation (FMD) and nitroglycerin-mediated arterial dilatation (NMD) were
64 collected by novel, in-home clinical examinations. To reduce the number of personal VOCs
65 highly correlated to each other, a principal component analysis was conducted. Accounting for
66 more individual variations in association between personal VOCs and cardiovascular health
67 endpoints, a linear mixed model was employed, where cohort subjects were not necessarily to
68 have the same linear association.

69 **Results:** Applying the principal component analysis, 3 out of 12 components were retained,
70 which appeared to involve a petroleum source (1st component), a 1-3 butadiene source (2nd
71 component), and an ambient (Freon) source (3rd component). Petroleum related VOCs were
72 associated with increases in FMD and showed mixed relationships with NMD (lag 0-1 day
73 increased NMD, lag 2 days decreased NMD). Butadiene related VOCs decreased DBP but
74 increased HR and BAD. Freon (ambient background) related VOCs increased HR.

75 **Conclusions:** We observed mixed and variable results in this first study to evaluate the
76 relationships between personal exposures to VOCs of different origin on cardiovascular
77 physiology. In sum, the findings suggest that VOCs may have rapid impacts upon the human
78 cardiovascular system; however, understanding the health implications and the mechanisms
79 responsible is beyond the scope of this investigation.

80

81

82 **Keywords:** cardiovascular, exposure assessment, volatile organic compounds, principal
83 component analysis, DEARS, linear mixed model

84

85 **1. Introduction**

86

87 The Detroit Exposure and Aerosol Research Study (DEARS) has proven to be a tremendous
88 resource in defining critical spatial and temporal variability of particulate matter, criteria gas
89 pollutants, volatile organic compounds (VOCs), and other important pollutants at the personal,
90 residential and ambient spatial settings (Stevens et al., 2014; Hammond et al., 2013; Bereznicki
91 et al., 2012; Williams et al., 2012; Duval et al., 2012; Williams et al., 2012a; George et al., 2011;
92 Brook et al., 2011a). Collecting nearly 36,000 individual (24-hr) based exposure measures, its
93 depth has provided the ability to critically examine how humans are exposed to various
94 pollutants and, in many situations, the impact of these exposure sources upon observable
95 health effects. In particular, DEARS findings have revealed the highly variable nature of PM_{2.5}
96 and criteria gas (O₃, SO₂, NO₂) species across spatial settings and in some instances defined
97 source impacts upon cardiovascular-related health outcomes (Brook et al., 2011b; Rodes et al.,
98 2010; Williams et al., 2009).

99

100 Many studies have concluded that personal exposures may not be adequately represented by
101 ambient or outdoor measures of VOCs (Stocco et al., 2008; Sexton et al., 2004a, b; Adgate et
102 al., 2004). DEARS participants had the potential to be exposed to numerous VOCs and VOC
103 sources. As we have reported elsewhere (Bereznicki et al., 2013), numerous VOC sources at
104 the ambient setting would appear to exist in the Detroit metropolitan area. The current report
105 defines the personal exposure of DEARS participants to 25 common VOCs, their potential
106 sources, and resulting health outcomes linked to these exposures. To our knowledge, this effort
107 represents the most extensive examination of these inter-related issues involving non-
108 occupational exposures in the scientific literature.

109

110 The study objective was to identify the association between personal exposure to VOCs and
111 cardiovascular (CV) health outcomes in an adult non-smoking cohort of the DEARS. Six CV
112 health endpoints such as systolic and diastolic blood pressure (SBP, DBP), heart rate (HR),
113 brachial artery diameter (BAD), brachial artery flow-mediated dilatation (FMD) and nitroglycerin-
114 mediated arterial dilatation (NMD) were collected by novel, in-home clinical examinations.

115

116 Section 2 describes data collection method and process of the 25 personal VOCs, 6
117 cardiovascular health outcomes, and demographic and medical background of the participants.
118 In Section 3, we discuss statistical approaches with standardizing VOCs, principal component

119 analysis, and liner mixed models. Results from the models are reported and compared for each
 120 CV health outcome in Section 4 followed by discussions and conclusions in Section 5 and 6,
 121 respectively.

122

123 **2. Data and Materials**

124

125 All participants were pledged to be non-smokers living in a non-smoking household, at least 18
 126 years old and capable of following the study protocol. Informed consent was obtained prior to
 127 all participation activities. A summary of participant recruitment activities and their respective
 128 characteristics have been previously defined (Phillips et al., 2010). The main DEARS protocol
 129 has been reported in depth (Williams et al., 2009) and supporting information is available at the
 130 study’s website (www.epa.gov/dears). To avoid any unexpected biases, we collected data with
 131 no exclusion criteria for race, gender, occupation, medications, or health status. VOC data at
 132 community (ambient) and residential (outdoor through site monitoring devices) levels were
 133 collected, which occurred within 6 Detroit area neighborhoods during summer and winter
 134 periods over 3 years between 2004 and 2007 (total 6 seasons).

135

136 DEARS exposure study participants were invited also to participate in the CV sub-study while it
 137 was occurring (during seasons 2-6). Note that the VOC data were available for all seasons 1-6,
 138 whereas the CV data were for seasons 2-6. The study results are therefore based on 5
 139 seasons. Overall, most subjects participated in 3-5 study days in total (not necessarily in
 140 consecutive days, but all within the same week), and the number of participants for the number
 141 of study days by season is summarized in Table 1.

142

143 Table 1: Number of participants for total study days by season

		Number of participants				
		2005	2006		2007	
		winter	summer	winter	summer	winter
Number of study days (per season)	season 2	season 3	season 4	season 5	season 6	
5	2	5	13	18	7	
4	2	8	5	5	4	

3	4		3	1	2
2	1			1	

144

145 **2.1 Personal VOC Exposure Assessments**

146 While both ambient and outdoor VOC measurements were also collected in the DEARS, our
 147 focus here is on reporting personal VOC exposures involving 24-hour based monitoring periods
 148 obtained from participants associated with season 2 (2005 winter) through season 6 (2007
 149 winter). Personal VOC monitors were fixed in the breathing zone on nylon exposure vests
 150 which the participants wore at all times except during periods of napping, bathing or night sleep.
 151 Samples for VOCs analyses were collected passively using stainless steel diffusion tubes
 152 containing Carboxpack X (40/60 mesh, Supelco, Bellefonte, PA) and then thermally desorbed
 153 and analyzed by GC-MS as described elsewhere (McClenny et al., 2005a, 2005b). Additional
 154 information on the collection and analysis of VOC samples have been reported in depth
 155 elsewhere (George et al. 2011; Bereznicki et al., 2012; Johnson et al, 2010).

156

157 Each sample had a 24 (+/- 2 hour) duration period and were obtained on a Tuesday through
 158 Saturday schedule. Representative field and laboratory blanks as well as field and laboratory
 159 controls were utilized during the DEARS to allow for careful determination of VOC levels as
 160 defined in the Study Design (www.epa.gov/dears). A total of 25 VOCs were examined in the
 161 study and included common species such as benzene, toluene and freon 113 among others.
 162 Ultimately, and as defined in Section 3, a smaller number of VOCs (12) were incorporated into
 163 the final statistical analysis based on data availability.

164

165 We have previously reported upon the impact of protocol compliance in the determination of
 166 true personal exposure monitoring (the wearing of personal exposure monitoring devices as
 167 defined by the study design) in both Rodes et al. (2010) and Lawless et al. (2012). In particular
 168 we defined personal monitoring compliance here with the adherence of wearing the monitoring
 169 vest a minimum of 60% of non-sleep hours and being exposed to a maximum of 1.5 µg/m³ of
 170 PM_{2.5}-related environmental tobacco smoke (ETS) during each 24 hour period. A total of four
 171 non-exclusive, participant categories have been distinguished in the DEARS relative to the
 172 protocol compliance and ETS exposure characteristics, (Williams et al., 2012b). These include
 173 an “all-subject” category where no censoring of data relative to their ETS exposure or full
 174 compliance in wearing the monitoring vest took place. The “vest” category is a subgroup
 175 indicative of participants who fully complied with wearing the vest and therefore their data is

176 expected to be a good measure of true “personal” exposure. The “low” subgroup represents
177 participants who had low ETS exposure but might not have fully complied with wearing the
178 monitoring vest as requested. The final category, “vest-low” represents data for participants
179 who both fully complied and had very low levels of ETS. ETS was an important consideration
180 as it is a potential source of many air pollutants, including VOCs. Of the full subject population,
181 overall the distribution of the total sampling population falling within the four categories (all-
182 subject; vest; low; vest-low) were 100%, 70%, 60%, and 40%, respectively. Data findings
183 associated with all four participant groups are presented in this report relative to observable
184 health outcomes (Table 7).

185

186 **2.2 Cardiovascular Endpoint Assessments**

187 In parallel with the personal VOC sampling, CV study visits were performed at the participant’s
188 home for up to 5 consecutive evenings, Tuesday through Saturday, between 4 and 7 PM as
189 previously defined (Brook et al., 2011a,b). These visits took place on concurrent days while
190 subjects wore the vest monitors. There were 6 CV outcomes: blood pressure (SBP and DBP),
191 heart beat (HR), indicative of basal arterial tone (BAD), indicative of endothelial-dependent
192 vasodilatation (FMD), and indicative of non-endothelial dependent vasodilatation including
193 smooth muscle function (NMD). Details regarding the methods involved in determining the
194 health outcomes are described in prior manuscripts (Brook et al., 2011a).

195

196 Volunteers crossing over into the CV study underwent an additional visit at which time written
197 informed consent was obtained and the average of the 2nd and 3rd of three seated blood
198 pressure measurements using an automated oscillometric device as previously described
199 (Brook et al., 2011a) was determined along with a fasting lipid profile and glucose (Cholestech
200 LDX analyzer, Cholestech Corp).

201

202 There were originally 65 participants in this study, but two volunteers participated only one day.
203 Since at least two daily observations per subject were required for our analysis, those two
204 subjects were excluded. Of a total of 63 participants over the study period of five seasons, who
205 provided the 6 CV outcomes, 18 subjects participated two seasons of summer and winter.
206 Considering the time interval between two seasons, we considered those subjects separated,
207 which resulted in 81 subjects with 355 observations in total. George et al. (2011) clearly show
208 that seasonality plays a critical role in the exposure pattern of the DEARS participants to select

209 VOCs (e.g. benzene). In particular, Figure 3 of that reference depicts the often multi-fold
 210 difference in personal exposure as a function of seasonality. Not only do we see a high degree
 211 of variability of VOC in the outdoor environment as a function of season, but personal exposure
 212 and human exposure factors (e.g., household ventilation practices such as opening windows in
 213 the summertime versus closed windows in the winter) help drive the different seasonality traits
 214 observed for the DEARS participants. Therefore, personal exposure patterns as well as other
 215 exposure factors help drive the independent nature of the participants' exposure. Overall, the six
 216 CV outcomes had relatively high completions except for NMD: SBP, DBP and HR had
 217 completion of 99%, BAD of 90%, FMD of 82%; NMD had a low completion of 46% due to many
 218 subjects declining to take sublingual nitroglycerin which is required for this protocol.

219

220 **2.3 Demographic and medical background information**

221 Upon enrollment into the health outcome sub-study of DEARS, we performed a screening
 222 evaluation which included a brief history and physical exam, as well as the signing of a written
 223 informed consent document approved by the University of Michigan Institutional Review Board.
 224 Subjects reported to the study investigators demographic details (age, sex, race, health status
 225 information including presence of cardiovascular diseases or risk factors, and current
 226 medications). Height and weight were measured as previously described (Brook et al., 2011a).

227

228 Of the 63 participants the average age was 45 from a range between 19 and 80 with more
 229 female (78%) than male (22%). For race, most of the participants were either African-American
 230 (55%) or Caucasian (43%). Indicating the participants' overall health status, the average BMI
 231 was 31, and 27% of the participants reported taking 1 or more heart related medication as
 232 described previously (Brook et al., 2011a). A basic statistics of each CV health endpoint is
 233 summarized in Table 2.

234

235 Table 2. Subject Characteristics

Factor	N	Mean or %	SD	Minimum	Median	Maximum
Age (years)	63	45	14.7	19	44	80
Gender	63					
Female	49	78%				
Male	14	22%				

Race	63					
African American	35	55%				
Caucasian	27	43%				
American Indian	1	2%				
Body Mass Index	61	30.7	7.6	16.7	29.5	56.5
Medicine usage	63					
yes	17	27%				
no	46	73%				
Cardiovascular						
SBP (mm Hg)	350	126.6	18.2	91.0	124.0	205.0
DBP (mm Hg)	350	75.1	10.0	50.0	75.0	101.0
HR (beats/min)	349	74.3	11.0	50.0	74.0	103.0
BAD (mm)	318	4.0	0.8	2.1	4.0	6.5
FMD (%)	290	3.2	5.2	-12.2	2.9	19.7
NMD (%)	164	14.7	7.2	-6.6	14.2	36.9

236

237 **3. Methods**

238

239 **3.1 Missing data**

240 Overall, the pattern of missing samples increased for the 4th and 5th visit (Table 3), which is
241 expected due to the availability of participants during weekend periods where personal schedule
242 were less predictable. In general, participation in any monitoring event begins to decrease as
243 the study progresses (participant fatigue). Since, at most, five personal VOC observations were
244 available for each subject, imputations were not attempted. Excluding all missing data, the total
245 number of daily observations was reduced from 355 to 239. For each sample, there were 25
246 species of personal VOCs analyzed and, based on data availability, we screened out those
247 which had less than 75% availability over the whole study period. This resulted in 12 personal
248 VOCs with data availability ranged 78%-88%, which indicates there were 12%-22% of missing
249 data for those selected personal VOCs.

250

251 Table 3: Data availability by study day (day 1 to 5)

Study day	Availability (%)
1	24

2	23
3	22
4	18
5	13
Total	100

252

253 3.2 Standardized VOCs

254 Each VOC has different distribution as summarized in Table 4. Even if the unit of measurement
 255 of the VOCs is the same in parts per billion by volume ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$), all VOCs were standardized to
 256 have mean zero and standard deviation 1. This is helpful to work with standardized regression
 257 coefficients in comparing the associations between personal VOCs and CV health outcomes,
 258 which will be discussed in later section.

259

260 Table 4: Descriptive statistics of 12 personal VOCs (unit: $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$)

VOC* (N=239)	mean	SD	min	Q1**	median	Q3**	max
PBENZ (benzene)	5.21	5.52	0.76	2.39	3.68	5.90	56.93
PBUDI (1,3 butadiene)	1.38	1.46	0.13	0.66	0.99	1.55	14.82
PBZ13 (1,3,5-trimethylbenzene)	1.92	2.89	0.36	0.86	1.21	1.95	38.58
PETBZ (ethylbenzene)	3.90	7.29	0.60	1.36	2.29	3.67	76.09
PF113 (freon 113)	0.81	0.26	0.37	0.65	0.71	0.88	1.45
PMPXY (meta, paraxylene)	11.84	22.16	1.72	4.01	7.27	11.55	264.81
POXYL (orthoxylyene)	4.18	8.68	0.61	1.39	2.44	3.81	97.20
PPDCL (paradichlorobenzene)	19.01	48.19	0.19	1.05	1.75	5.05	357.04
PPERCL (perchloroethylene)	2.89	9.69	0.19	0.55	0.79	1.40	125.49
PPETO (para ethyl toluene)	1.38	2.00	0.21	0.57	0.89	1.38	25.24
PSTYR (styrene)	1.86	1.59	0.35	0.84	1.33	2.10	9.57
PTOLU (toluene)	19.33	17.57	3.01	8.75	14.02	23.26	108.42

261 *The first letter of each VOC's name ("P") stands for personal exposure.

262 **Q1 and Q3 represent the 25% and 75% percentile, respectively.

263

264

265 3.3 Principal Component Analysis

266 To examine the relationships among the 12 personal VOCs, we first looked at their pairwise
 267 correlations (Pearson). Five out of 12 VOCs had very high correlations up to 0.98-0.99, and this

268 implies that not all five of those VOCs would be necessary to estimate the associations between
269 VOCs and CV health endpoints.

270
271 To reduce the number of personal VOCs, we employed Principal Component (PC) analysis.
272 Since there are 12 personal VOCs (original data), there are also 12 PCs (new data), which are
273 linear combinations of weighted VOCs. The weights (called loadings) are optimized
274 representing the correlation between the VOCs and PCs. We examine the weights and then
275 determine what PCs would be retained based on the following three criteria among various rules
276 of thumb proposed to date (Fekedulegn et al., 2002; Hair et al., 2005):

- 277 • Eigenvalue-one criterion
- 278 • Proportion of variance accounted for
- 279 • Interpretability

280
281 The eigenvalue is a measure of how much of the variation of the 12 personal VOCs (total
282 variance) each component explains. We include components, whose eigenvalues are larger
283 than or close to 1, accounting for at least **10%** of the total variance. The total number of PCs
284 retained would be determined where the cumulative percent of variance accounted for at least
285 **70%** of the total variance. The interpretability criterion requires that each PC should contribute
286 with relatively high loadings (typically **40%**) on only one PC and near zero loadings on the other
287 PCs.

288
289 There were four eigenvalues in order 5.87, 1.45, 1.37, and 0.98, which were larger than or close
290 to 1. When using 4 PCs corresponding to these four eigenvalues, 81% of total variance was
291 explained. However, one VOC (PF113) violated the criterion on interpretability that each VOC
292 should contribute to one particular PC as it contributed to two PCs over 40%. We thus decided
293 to retain the first three PCs, by which 72% of total variance was explained, and none the criteria
294 discussed above were violated.

295

296 **3.4 Linear Mixed Model**

297 The participants of the DEARS cohort were assumed to be randomly selected from the target
298 population of pre-selected neighborhoods as described in more detail elsewhere (Williams,
299 2005; Brook et al., 2011b; Williams et al., 2012). Within subject, the associations between each
300 of the CV health outcomes (response) and personal exposure to VOCs (predictors) appeared to
301 be linear overall. For these linear associations, which are characterized by intercept and slope,

302 we allowed the intercept to vary at random over individuals but the slope to be fixed (the same
303 for all individuals). Since data were collected over time (study days) on the same participants,
304 we considered a linear mixed model combining fixed effects and random effects (Brady, et al.
305 2007; Mohamed, et al., 2007). Note that the 12 personal VOCs (original data) were then
306 transformed into a few PCs retained (new data) as discussed in earlier section.

307

308 The linear mixed model for our analysis on the VOC-CV association includes effect modifiers
309 and confounders: demographic factor (age, gender, race), medical background factor (body
310 mass index, cardio-related medicine usage), and environmental factor (ambient temperature,
311 personal PM_{2.5}, personal Nicotine, and personal NO₂). The relationship between these factors
312 and CV responses is assumed to be common to all subjects. In equation,

$$313 \quad Y_{ij} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 VOC_{PCi} + \beta_2 D_i + \beta_3 M_{ij} + \beta_4 E_i + \alpha_i + \varepsilon_{ij} \quad (1)$$

314 where Y_{ij} is the CV response for subject i at study day j , VOC_{PCi} the principal components of
315 the personal VOCs, D_i the demographic variables, M_i medical background variables and E_i
316 the environmental variables. The base model (1) includes fixed effects associated with the
317 subject-level covariates (β 's), a random effect associated with the intercept for each subject
318 (α_i) and a residual associated with each observation (ε_{ij}). The random effects by subject were

319 assumed to be independently distributed across subjects with a normal distribution

320 $\alpha_i \sim N(0, \delta^2)$. The within-subjects errors ε_{ij} were assumed to be distributed $\varepsilon_{ij} \sim N(0, \sigma^2 R_i)$,

321 where R_i is the variance-covariance matrix for the residuals. It is also assumed α_i and ε_{ij} are
322 independent of each other. The first-order autoregressive structure, denoted by AR(1), was
323 explored for the covariance R_i in the analysis, which implies observations closer to each other in
324 time exhibit higher correlation than observations farther apart in time.

325

326 **3.5 Participants grouping and Base model**

327 As stated earlier, all participants were supposed to be non-smokers living in a non-smoking
328 household wearing the vest all the time during the study period. In practice, however, this
329 requirement was not always satisfied. We classified all participants into four groups by vest
330 compliance and exposure to nicotine to account for potential second-hand smoking (or ETS):
331 all-subject group, vest group (vest compliance $\geq 60\%$), low group (Nicotine $\leq 1.5 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$), and
332 vest-low group (vest compliance $\geq 60\%$ and Nicotine $\leq 1.5 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$). The vest compliance was

333 mathematically determined by examination of the electronic signature of the personal exposure
 334 monitoring device relative to key parameters including sensor temperature (proximity to the
 335 human body) and 3-D sensor movement (accelerometry) as defined in Lawless et al. (2012).

336 For each group we conducted a sensitivity analysis by lag of personal air pollutants (lag 0 & 1
 337 day of PM_{2.5}, Nicotine, NO₂) and personal VOCs (lag 0,1 & 2 days). Note that only one lag of the
 338 VOCs was considered in each model (Table 5). Since the effect of ambient temperature (Temp)
 339 is known immediate, no lag was considered for temperature. The base model (Model A) can be
 340 simply written as follows:

341
 342
$$CV \sim PC1 + PC2 + PC3 + PM_{2.5} + \text{Nicotine} + NO_2 + \text{Age} + \text{Gender} + \text{Race} + \text{BMI} + \text{Medicine} + \text{Temp}, \quad (2)$$

343
 344 where the PCs are the three principal components retained, and PM_{2.5}, Nicotine, and NO₂ the
 345 personal air pollutant concentrations (AP) in consideration. As summarized in Table 5, there
 346 were five more models in addition to the base model. Note that all the six models were applied
 347 to the four groups, respectively, and this implies that the influence by the effect modifiers and
 348 confounders mentioned in previous section varies over the four groups. For example, the effect
 349 of PM_{2.5} on the CV health endpoints is not necessarily the same for all groups.

350
 351 Table 5: Six models by lags of air pollutants and VOCs

	AP Lag 0	AP Lag 1
VOC Lag 0	Model_A (base model)	Model_B
VOC Lag 1	Model_C	Model_D
VOC Lag 2	Model_E	Model_F

352
 353 **3.6 Unadjusted and adjusted p-values for multiple health endpoints**

354 The p-value has been used for the strength of the significant association as well as testing
 355 significance. In this study, we report the p-values with more weight on the former than the latter.
 356 As we compared the 6 CV multiple endpoints for the same subjects (in group), VOC exposure
 357 and all other confounders including effect modifiers using model (2) above, there existed
 358 potential erroneous false positive outcomes (Benjamini and Yekutieli, 2001). To address this

359 concern, the false discovery rate (FDR), suggested by Benjamini and Hochberg (1995) as the
360 expected proportion of erroneous rejections amongst all rejections, was employed. Benjamini
361 and Yekutieli (2001) offer further rigorous discussions on the FDR methods. To maintain the
362 balance between erroneous rejections and low detection power in multiple comparisons, we
363 report both unadjusted p-values avoiding a potential over-adjustment and adjusted p-values
364 controlling the FDR.

365

366 4. Results

367

368 4.1 Source of personal VOCs

369 Applying the PC selection criteria, three PCs were retained: the 1st component, PC1, found in
370 common among 7 VOCs (BENZENE, PBZ13, PETBZ, PMPXY, ORTHOXYLENE, PPETO,
371 TOLUENE in Table 6) seems to measure **a primary petroleum source**; the 2nd component,
372 PC2, among three VOCs (PBUDI, PPERC, STYRENE) seems to measure **a butadiene source**
373 from industrial emissions; the 3rd component, PC3, between two VOCs (PF113, PPDCL) seems
374 to measure **freon and industry source** from Freon and industrial solvent (Table 6). Since
375 Freon 113 exists in nearly consistent levels in the lower atmosphere, this component is believed
376 to be a more general (background) source to which some localized source (personal PDCL) is
377 also present. Bereznicki et al (2013) observed a localized outdoor PDCL source in a number of
378 the DEARS neighborhoods, but we were unable to fully isolate its primary point(s) of origin.
379 Even so, it must be acknowledged that indoor sources of PDCL are known to exist and could
380 have played a role in this principal component

381

382

383 Among the 12 personal VOCs, only PPERC was not explained adequately by the three PCs,
384 whereas the other 11 VOCs were explained well (Table 6). PPERC is a common dry cleaning
385 solvent, and personal exposures to this VOC might have been influenced by the presence of
386 recently laundered clothes in the participant's residence but on such an inconsistent basis that a
387 lack of statistical power existed to fully distinguish this component successfully.

388

389 Table 6: Standardized loadings and communality from three retained PCs

VOC*	PC1**	PC2**	PC3**	Communality***
PBENZ (benzene)	0.87	0.05	-0.09	77%

PBUDI (1,3 butadiene)	0.09	0.76	-0.13	61%
PBZ13 (1,3,5-trimethylbenzene)	0.93	0.00	-0.11	87%
PETBZ (ethylbenzene)	0.88	0.20	0.21	86%
PF113 (freon 113)	0.11	-0.30	0.67	55%
PMPXY (meta, paraxylene)	0.94	0.13	0.15	92%
POXYL (orthoxylyene)	0.89	0.16	0.21	86%
PPDCL (paradichlorobenzene)	0.01	0.17	0.88	80%
PPERCL (perchloroethylene)	0.00	0.48	-0.04	23%
PPETO (para ethyl toluene)	0.93	0.01	-0.06	86%
PSTYR (styrene)	0.31	0.77	0.20	73%
PTOLU (toluene)	0.77	0.15	0.14	63%

390 *The first letter of each VOC's name ("P") stands for personal exposure.

391 **Rotated PCs

392 ***Communality indicates the portion of each VOC explained by the three PCs included. For
393 example, 77% of the variance in BENZENE was explained by the three PCs.

394

395 **4.2 Association between Cardiovascular disease and personal VOCs**

396 Table 7 displays CV risk estimates in terms of PCs, not the original personal VOCs. This is
397 desirable for two reasons. First, we are interested in the source of the VOCs rather than the
398 VOC itself. Second, the association between personal VOCs and CV health outcomes becomes
399 more consistent when using PCs instead of the individual VOCs. As a result, we focus on the
400 association (positive or negative versus none) avoiding typical interpretation in terms of the
401 change in CV health outcomes by the unit change in the PCs.

402

403 SBP was unique among the six CV health outcomes that it was not associated with any three
404 PCs, whereas the other five CVs were consistently related to some PCs.

405

406 DBP was strongly associated in negative way with PC2 only, which is a butadiene source (Table
407 7). In other words, the butadiene source VOCs lowered DBP consistently over all the four
408 groups. The significant associations were observed for VOCs lagged by 0 or 1 day but not for 2
409 days. This implies that the impact of butadiene related VOCs on DBP is overall immediate within
410 a day since exposure.

411

412 Heart rate was increased by PC2, butadiene related VOCs, for all groups except for the all-
 413 subject group (Table 7). The consistency among the three groups, which were more refined
 414 groups than the all-subject group, supports this association between butadiene related VOCs
 415 and Heart rate. Heart rate was also increased by PC3, Freon and industry related VOCs, over
 416 all the four groups. It is noticed that both associations were significant for the VOCs lagged 2
 417 days but not lag 0 or 1 day. This may suggest that the impact of butadiene related VOCs and
 418 Freon and industry related VOCs on heart rate is not immediate but delayed by a couple of
 419 days. Note that there is no correlation between butadiene related VOCs and Freon and industry
 420 related VOCs, since they were characterized by the principal component analysis. This implies
 421 that heart rate is clearly affected by both butadiene related VOCs and Freon and industry-
 422 related VOCs.

423

424 Table 7: DBP and heart rate associated with PCs

CV health outcome					SE		
	Model ¹	Group ²	PC ³	N ⁴	Association estimate ⁵	(Association estimate)	p- value ⁶
DBP	B	all-subject	PC2	157	-25.368	10.591	0.019
	B	low	PC2	102	-24.397	11.417	0.037
	B	vest-low	PC2	70	-24.490	11.406	0.039
	C	vest-low	PC2	65	-33.295	10.800	0.004
	C	vest	PC2	111	-27.858	10.414	0.010
	C	low	PC2	94	-29.408	11.083	0.011
	D	all-subject	PC2	162	-21.536	10.585	0.045
	D	vest	PC2	109	-30.317	11.137	0.008
	D	low	PC2	100	-27.011	10.865	0.016
D	vest-low	PC2	68	-31.470	10.715	0.006	
Heart Rate	E	vest	PC2	81	30.307	14.782	0.048
	E	vest	PC3	81	34.663	16.555	0.043
	E	low	PC2	72	32.445	14.474	0.034
	E	low	PC3	72	38.541	17.773	0.039
	E	vest-low	PC2	52	41.237	15.068	0.014
	E	vest-low	PC3	52	45.961	20.306	0.037

F	all-subject	PC3	122	31.380	14.721	0.037
F	vest	PC2	85	28.679	13.847	0.045
F	vest	PC3	85	45.465	15.870	0.007
F	low	PC3	77	52.889	18.167	0.007
F	vest-low	PC1	56	12.735	5.683	0.037
F	vest-low	PC2	56	38.848	16.256	0.027
F	vest-low	PC3	56	60.324	22.232	0.013

425 ¹Models by lag of VOCs and air pollutants in Table 5 (section 3.5). A is the base model with
426 VOC and confounder AP on the same day as the health outcomes observed; B is with VOC on
427 the same day and AP lag 1-day; C is with VOC lag 1-day and AP on the same day; D is with
428 both VOC and AP lag 1-day; E is with VOC lag 2-day and AP on the same day; F is with VOC
429 lag 2-day and AP lag 1-day.

430 ²Four groups defined in section 3.5

431 ³PC1= 1st principal component for Petroleum related VOCs; PC2= 2nd principal component for
432 Butadiene related VOCs; PC3=3rd principal component for Freon & industry related VOCs
433 (section 4.1)

434 ⁴Number of observations in the model.

435 ⁵The impact of VOC on CV health outcome: change of DBP in mm Hg per unit $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ PC:
436 change of Heart Rate in beats/min per unit $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ PC. (Here unit change in PC means a change
437 of standard deviation of each VOC included for that PC.)

438 ⁶ Statistical significance was defined as $p < 0.05$.

439

440 FMD was consistently increased by PC1, petroleum related VOCs, for all groups (Table 8). Note
441 that the association is significant only for VOCs with no lag. This may suggest the impact of the
442 petroleum related VOCs on FMD was immediate as observed on the same day. The extent of
443 association also seems to be related to the lag of the air pollutants included in the model: the
444 association became lower with the air pollutants lag 1 day than no lag.

445

446 BAD was associated with all three PCs, but consistently with PC2 only (Table 8). It was
447 increased by PC2, butadiene related VOCs, over the four groups all. Like heart rate, the
448 butadiene related VOCs lagged 2 days increased BAD.

449

450 NMD was associated with PC1, petroleum related VOCs, for all four groups but in different ways
451 according to the lag of the VOCs (Table 8). The petroleum related VOCs lagged 0-1 day

452 increased NMD, whereas the VOCs lagged 2 days decreased NMD. Note that the negative
 453 associations were estimated from relatively smaller number of observations and thus further
 454 investigation with more observations is necessary to better understand the association between
 455 petroleum related VOCs and NMD. Table 8: FMD, BAD, and NMD associated with PCs

CV health outcome	Model ¹	Group ²	PC ³	N ⁴	Associati	SE	p-value ⁶
					on estimate ⁵	(Associati on estimate)	
FMD	A	all-subject	PC1	179	6.316	2.362	0.009
	A	vest	PC1	116	7.371	2.637	0.007
	A	low	PC1	86	7.725	2.692	0.006
	A	vest-low	PC1	58	7.620	3.163	0.023
	B	all-subject	PC1	139	6.360	2.382	0.009
	B	vest	PC1	90	7.315	2.675	0.009
	B	low	PC1	94	6.724	2.517	0.010
	B	vest-low	PC1	63	6.915	2.939	0.025
BAD	B	vest	PC3	93	-1.627	0.801	0.047
	E	all-subject	PC2	108	1.096	0.538	0.047
	E	vest	PC2	72	1.351	0.628	0.040
	E	low	PC2	68	1.440	0.598	0.025
	E	vest-low	PC2	48	1.558	0.615	0.025
	F	all-subject	PC1	113	0.305	0.149	0.047
	F	all-subject	PC2	113	1.277	0.463	0.008
	F	vest	PC2	76	1.517	0.598	0.017
	F	low	PC2	73	1.302	0.605	0.041
F	vest-low	PC2	52	1.592	0.630	0.023	
NMD	A	low	PC1	52	18.026	7.378	0.023
	B	all-subject	PC1	79	13.124	6.433	0.048
	C	all-subject	PC1	80	14.576	5.749	0.015
	C	low	PC1	50	19.172	8.951	0.045
	E	all-subject	PC1	58	-20.010	6.669	0.006
	E	vest	PC1	35	-20.048	8.024	0.032
	E	low	PC1	39	-20.944	8.938	0.037

	E	vest-low	PC1	26	-29.542	11.013	0.044
	F	all-subject	PC1	61	-16.484	7.196	0.031
	F	vest	PC1	39	-18.782	7.541	0.028
	F	vest-low	PC1	29	-33.593	9.957	0.012

456 ¹Models by lag of VOCs and air pollutants in Table 5 (section 3.5). A is the base model with
457 VOC and confounder AP on the same day as the health outcomes observed; B is with VOC on
458 the same day and AP lag 1-day; C is with VOC lag 1-day and AP on the same day; D is with
459 both VOC and AP lag 1-day; E is with VOC lag 2-day and AP on the same day; F is with VOC
460 lag 2-day and AP lag 1-day

461 ²Four groups defined in section 3.5

462 ³PC1= 1st principal component for Petroleum related VOCs; PC2= 2nd principal component for
463 Butadiene related VOCs; PC3=3rd principal component for Freon & industry related VOCs
464 (section 4.1)

465 ⁴Number of observations in the model.

466 ⁵The impact of VOC on CV health outcome: change of FMD or NMD in % per unit $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ PC;
467 change of BAD in mm per unit $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ PC. (Here unit change in PC means a change of standard
468 deviation of each VOC included for that PC.)

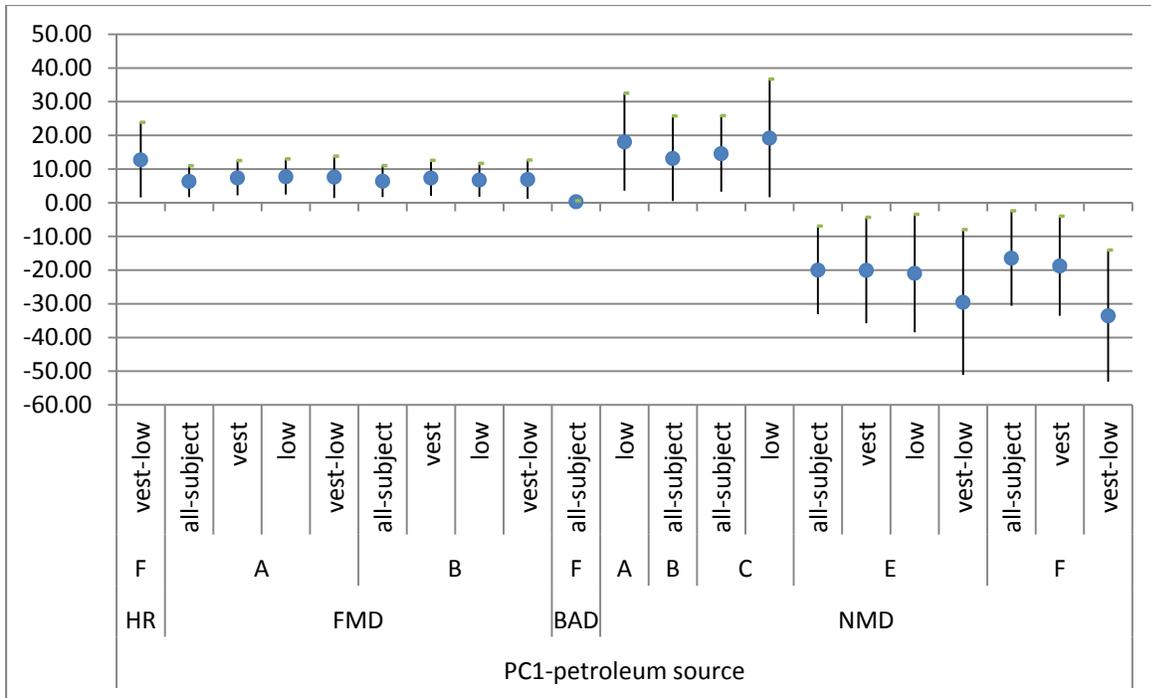
469 ⁶ Statistical significance was defined as $p < 0.05$.

470

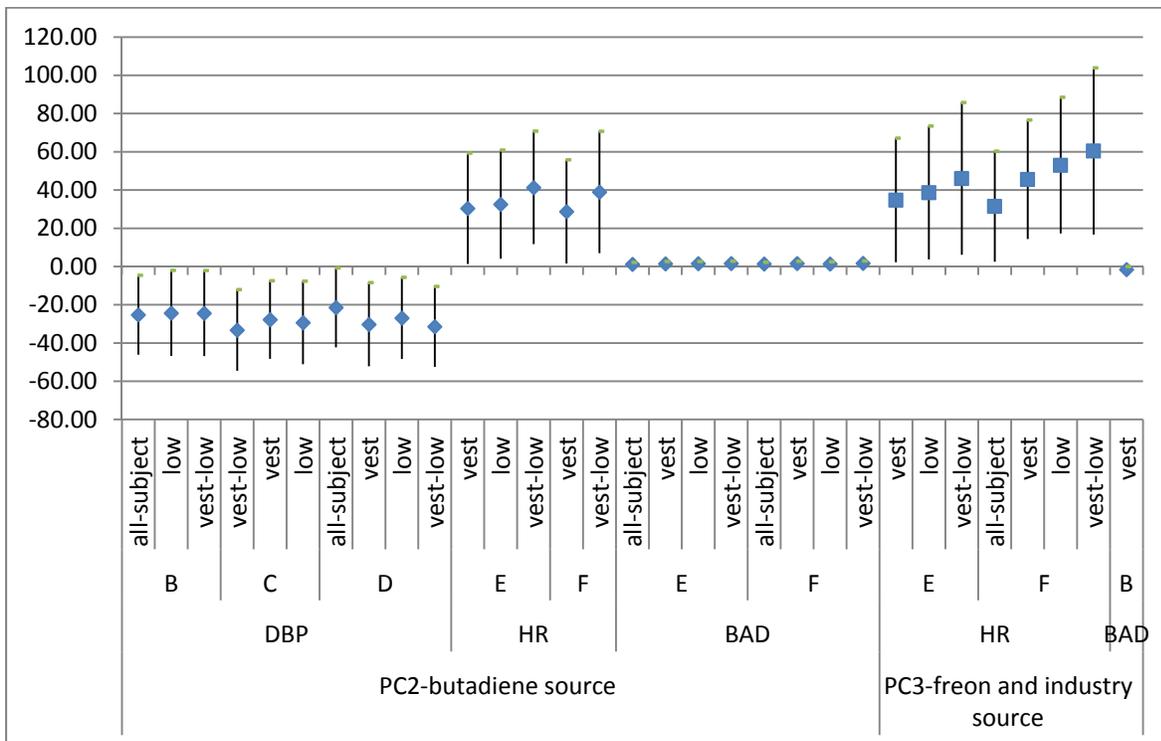
471 Note: All other insignificant results are available upon request, and the analysis was performed
472 by function “lme (linear mixed-effects model)” in R (version 2.15.2).

473

474 The significant associations in Tables 7 and 8 are visualized with confidence intervals by the
475 PCs in Figures 1 and 2.



476
 477 Figure1: 95% confidence intervals of the significant associations between PC1 and health
 478 outcomes.
 479



480
 481 Figure2: 95% confidence intervals of the significant associations between PC2 or PC3 and
 482 health outcomes.

483 In addition to the unadjusted p-values reported in Tables 7 and 8, the adjusted p-values
 484 controlling the false discovery rate (FDR) are summarized in Table 9.

485

486 Table 9: Five CV health outcomes associated with PCs based on adjusted p-values

CV health outcome	Model ¹	Group ²	PC ³	N ⁴	Association estimate ⁵	SE (Association estimate)	p-value ⁶
DBP	C	vest-low	PC2	65	-33.295	10.800	0.026
	D	vest-low	PC2	68	-31.470	10.715	0.035
Heart rate	F	vest	PC3	85	45.465	15.870	0.041
	F	low	PC3	77	52.889	18.167	0.041
FMD	A	vest	PC1	116	7.371	2.637	0.040
	A	low	PC1	86	7.725	2.692	0.039
BAD	F	all-subject	PC2	113	1.277	0.463	0.049
NMD	E	all-subject	PC1	58	-20.010	6.669	0.037

487 ¹Models by lag of VOCs and air pollutants in Table 5 (section 3.5). A is the base model with
 488 VOC and confounder AP on the same day as the health outcomes observed; B is with VOC on
 489 the same day and AP lag 1-day; C is with VOC lag 1-day and AP on the same day; D is with
 490 both VOC and AP lag 1-day; E is with VOC lag 2-day and AP on the same day; F is with VOC
 491 lag 2-day and AP lag 1-day.

492 ²Four groups defined in section 3.5

493 ³PC1= 1st principal component for Petroleum related VOCs; PC2= 2nd principal component for
 494 Butadiene related VOCs; PC3=3rd principal component for Freon & industry related VOCs
 495 (section 4.1).

496 ⁴Number of observations in the model.

497 ⁵The impact of VOC on CV health outcome: change of DBP in mm Hg per unit $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ PC;
 498 change of Heart Rate in beats/min per unit $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ PC; change of FMD or NMD in % per unit
 499 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ PC; change of BAD in mm per unit $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ PC. (Here unit change in PC means a change
 500 of standard deviation of each VOC included for that PC.)

501 ⁶ Adjusted p-values controlling the false discovery rate. Statistical significance was defined as
 502 $p < 0.05$.

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5. Discussion

Humans are exposed to VOCs from a multitude of potential sources originating from both indoor and outdoor sources. While few studies have attempted to define VOC personal exposures in a subject population (Weisel et al., 2005; Edwards et al., 2001; Sexton, 2004a, b; Wallace et al., 1985), with rare exception have they attempted to identify the source of the exposure due to the complexity of the effort (Kim et al., 2002). Even less reported is the attempt to define VOC source exposures in a non-occupational setting. The associations between VOC exposure source and health outcomes reported in this study represent one of the seminal articles on this subject matter. Even so, while our focus was upon cardiovascular outcomes due to the nature of the DEARS primary study hypotheses, it must be recognized that the findings we describe cannot be considered definitive as many alternative health outcome parameters were not examined.

The data do however clearly provide strong and compelling evidence that, for the DEARS participants, three primary VOC source categories existed that significantly influenced their exposures to a number of common air pollutants. These included some VOC source categories containing human carcinogens (PC1; e.g., benzene). The fact that a petroleum source was evident in the data is not surprising. Participants would have been exposed to this source in such activities as being in proximity to near road traffic, refueling engines, and emissions from many common household consumer products. PC2 was representative of industrial emissions and had a significant 1,3 butadiene signature. This VOC is a common industrial material used in the Detroit area and is also associated with automotive traffic pollution. Bereznicki et al (2013) has categorized the primary VOC sources impacting DEARS residential outdoor monitoring sites, and identified multiple industrial activities that might have been responsible for the linkage between this source category and the observed personal exposures. Lastly, a source category (PC3) dominated by Freon 113 and para-dichlorobenzene was evident. Freon 113 levels were very consistent across all of the residential and ambient monitoring episodes in the DEARS and routinely with <10% concentration variability. It is well understood that this particular halogenated VOC is well distributed in the atmosphere to the point it could be considered a marker of outdoor air infiltration into residential structures (contingent upon properly operating local residential air conditioning and refrigeration systems). As stated earlier, PPDCL was known to sometimes exist in high concentrations in residential outdoor samples in collected

539 during the DEARS (Berezinicki et al., 2013) and that these non-identified point sources were of
540 a consistent basis to influence the principal component analysis performed here.

541
542 A potential issue with our data treatment is whether or not the two-season data from same
543 subjects (the specific 18 subjects) can be treated as independent. Our rationale for assuming
544 independence is based on two things. First, it can be visually examined through a plot (not
545 shown), which shows different exposure-response linear relationship for those subjects by
546 season. Second, we did take account for the correlation within subject by season using the
547 linear mixed model. The covariance structure employed in this study was AR(1), autoregressive,
548 which assumes homogeneous variances and correlation declining over time (here in day). If we
549 combine, for example, 10 data for some subject (5 measurements for each summer and winter),
550 there is an incomparable gap between the 5th & 6th measurements. With these two reasons we
551 treated them as independent.

552
553 We also note that the subjects did not all contribute data points consecutively and that some
554 individuals contributed less than five days of data points. This might suggest unequal weighting
555 among the subjects, which has the potential to introduce a bias in estimates. We included those
556 subjects, who had at least 2-day data each season, which is the minimum number of data for
557 linear association between VOC and CV health endpoints. The degree of bias by the unequal
558 individual contribution is expected to be minimized through our model assuming a linear
559 association. As stated in Table 1, the percentage of the subjects who had 4- or 5-day data
560 points is about 85% (69/81). This indicates overall comparable contributions among the subjects
561 in this study.

562
563 As stated earlier in the Methods section, we focused our analyses not on the individual VOC but
564 rather on the VOC component category. Therefore, the impact of any one VOC upon the CV
565 outcomes we examined cannot be defined. Even so, some clear distinction between health
566 outcomes and VOC types can be discussed. It was interesting that no discernable affect upon
567 SBP was linked with any of the PC categories. Given the limitations of the study and its
568 observational nature, it is not clear why other vascular and hemodynamic parameters were
569 associated with VOC categories but SBP was not. It is not possible to know with certainty if this
570 represents a true biological result, meaning the VOCs did not impact SBP, or a lack of adequate
571 statistical power given that this study was not designed to evaluate this specific association.

572 PC1, the Petroleum related VOCs, was found associated positively with FMD (an increase in
573 flow mediated dilatation) but negatively with NMD (a decrease in nitroglycerin mediated
574 dilatation). Note that the NMD data availability was relatively low to the other CV health
575 endpoints, and thus the strong association between PC1 and NMD could be less reliable.
576

577 On the other hand, PC2, the grouping heavily influenced by 1,3 butadiene, was strongly
578 associated with a decrease in DBP. This effect was immediate (lag 0) and diminished by lag
579 day 2. Likewise, PC2 was shown here to be linked with a decrease in HR but only at the lag day
580 2 time point. This VOC is a suspected A2 carcinogen but at least one source indicates it also
581 has reported BP and HR reduction associations (Agency for Toxic Substances & Disease
582 Registry, 1992). It is interesting to note that anecdotal evidence of chronic exposures effects to
583 this PC have been reported relative to both fatigue and loss of general well-being status
584 (Snyder, 1987). Reduction in both HR and DBP would be consistent with both of those health
585 outcomes. ETS is a known source of 1,3-butadiene. Even so, we accounted for ETS exposures
586 in our health outcome models and therefore it is reasonable to suggest that the PC2 category in
587 this study was most likely evidence of personal exposures to industrial and other sources of this
588 VOC.

589
590 PC3 had by far the weakest impact upon health outcomes. We did observe some increase in
591 HR with this VOC source category under some of the participants grouping scenarios. Even so,
592 one might suggest that this category, best summarized as that relating to primarily background
593 VOC levels (ambient), had an overall weak potential for impacting the CV health outcomes in
594 general.

595
596 We have previously reported that personal-level exposures to fine particulate matter were
597 associated with elevations in blood pressure and heart rate, and trends towards reductions BAD
598 (i.e., arterial vasoconstriction) during the same time windows evaluated in this current report.
599 This health outcome sub-study of DEARS was designed and powered to evaluate the impact of
600 fine particles on cardiovascular physiology with the interpretation and potential mechanisms
601 involved having been discussed previously (Brook et al., 2011a,b). Therefore, it is important to
602 acknowledge that the current findings regarding VOC sources being linked with both positive
603 and negative associations with physiological parameters may represent chance findings due to
604 the *post hoc* nature of these multiple analyses.

605

606 On the other hand, we did observe some consistent results. We can only speculate at this point
607 as to the mechanisms responsible if we accept that these reported changes are valid. However,
608 it is plausible that these inhaled VOC pollutants may trigger perturbations in the functionality of
609 the cardiovascular system via several pathways. These have been described in regards to
610 particulate matter; nonetheless, these mechanisms may also apply to inhaled gaseous (e.g.,
611 NO_x, ozone) and VOC pollutants. These include acute autonomic imbalance through stimulation
612 of pulmonary receptors (resulting in changes that favor either sympathetic or parasympathetic
613 tone), systemic inflammation arising from the spill-over of cytokines and/or activated cells from
614 local inflammatory responses in the pulmonary tissues, and, finally, the direct translocation of
615 pollutants within the systemic circulation having a direct impact on remote cardiovascular
616 tissues (Brook et al., 2010). Far fewer studies have evaluated the impact of gaseous or VOC
617 pollutants on cardiovascular outcomes or biological changes. Our results suggest that the latter
618 may indeed provoke observable responses in humans.

619
620 The sum changes observed in each outcome will reflect the integrated impact of all these 3
621 general pathways, as well as any potential compensatory biological responses. Given the
622 overall findings, the most logical interpretations are as follows: We posit that PC2 may have
623 triggered a direct arterial vasodilatation upon inhalation (i.e., increased BAD), with a subsequent
624 reduction in DBP. In this scenario, it is likely that the increased heart rate reflected a
625 compensatory baroreflex-mediated response to maintain cardiac output. The pathway whereby
626 PC2 caused the vasodilation may be via direct actions upon the vasculature or by altering
627 autonomic tone. The physiology behind the other changes is less evident. However, it is
628 possible that PC3 triggered an increase in HR, likely via stimulation of the sympathetic nervous
629 system in a manner that was not profound enough to also elicit elevations in blood pressure or
630 changes in observable vascular tone. Heart rate changes are the most sensitive and observable
631 autonomic changes and therefore this remains a plausible supposition. Finally, the changes
632 linked to PC1 remain very difficult to interpret given the variable responses in FMD and NMD
633 over time. More studies will be required to speculate upon the health implications and the
634 biology involved. Nonetheless, these first of a kind observations do suggest that VOCs from
635 several sources can elicit observable changes in the cardiovascular system within a few days of
636 exposures.

637
638 One of the components of the DEARS research has been the effort to determine the impact
639 (value) of subcategories of personal exposure monitoring (Brook et al., 2011b; Williams et al.,

640 2012; Hammond et al., 2013). In the data reported here, we subcategorized four distinctive
641 participants groups relative to personal VOC exposures and select CV health outcomes. These
642 ranged from participants fully complying with wearing their monitoring vests to those who might
643 not have been as compliant as well as some various distinctions in ETS exposures. In a
644 remarkable outcome of consistency, the association estimates for all CV health outcomes,
645 models, groupings, and PCs were at their highest in the subcategory of participants who
646 faithfully wore their monitoring vest and who had ETS exposure levels within the study's defined
647 criteria ($< 1.5 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ per 24h hour). As an example of this finding, we observed a range of DBP
648 outcomes estimates between -21.5 mm Hg per unit $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3\text{PC}$ for the all-subject group (having
649 the lowest component of compliance) and ETS exposures and a value of -31.5 mm Hg per unit
650 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3 \text{PC}$ for the vest-low subgrouping (the most compliant with low ETS exposures) for the
651 Model D, PC2 health outcomes. This represented a 47% increase in outcome response. Other
652 comparisons of this nature can be developed. For instance, we see a range of 31.4 bpm per
653 unit $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3\text{PC}$ and 52.9 bpm per unit $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3 \text{PC}$ when we compare HR outcome estimates for
654 model F, PC3 (all-subject vs low ETS). This represents a 68% difference in outcome effect. It
655 is clearly evident from this and the aforementioned DEARS references to similar comparisons,
656 that ensuring participants are compliant with performing the personal exposure monitoring
657 protocol is vital to ensuring data quality needed for health outcome determinations. Likewise,
658 unless one is interested in primarily investigating ETS exposure for CV cause and effect, it is
659 encouraged for potential study participants to be excluded who have high potential for such
660 exposures. It is obvious that the data having the closest reality to the person's true exposure
661 and with minimal ETS exposure (vest-low) provided us the greatest opportunity to observe
662 health effects.

663
664 We note that the FDR adjustment gained more detection power comparing results reported in
665 Tables 7 and 8 with those in Table 9. By controlling the FDR, we observed a drastic reduction in
666 significance, from 52 to 8 significant cases (15%). The FDR adjustment is known to be very
667 useful for equally and positively correlated health endpoints. The 6 CV health endpoints in this
668 study could be assumed to be equally likely to correlate together as we have no prior knowledge
669 or belief available on this subject matter. This correlation potential would mean the VOCs would
670 not be assumed to be more associated with any particular health endpoints as compared to the
671 others. However, the 6 CV health endpoints can be either positively or negatively associated
672 with some VOCs. For example, some VOCs might have the potential to raise the heart rate
673 while also lowering lower blood pressure in an individual. Such a possibility suggests a potential

674 over-adjustment in the FDR adjusted p-values if used without direct knowledge of the correlation
675 structure of the pollutants and health outcomes. Since we do not know this for certain, the FDR
676 adjusted p-values are provided here for informational purposes only with the primary discussion
677 of results still associated with findings reported in Tables 7 and 8. To be conservative regarding
678 the VOCs-CV associations, one may prefer unadjusted p-values to the FDR adjusted ones until
679 the aforementioned correlation structure can be clearly identified.

680

681 **6. Conclusions**

682

683 The DEARS has reported observed CV health outcomes in an adult population associated with
684 personal exposures to a wide range of air pollutants. These include PM_{2.5} mass, PM_{2.5} mass
685 components, NO₂ and now VOCs. In this latest report, we specifically did not target any VOC
686 directly but chose to categorize groupings of VOCs determined to correlate closely with other
687 VOCs relative to personal exposure relationships. This approach provided the statistical
688 methods, which not only secured a means to establish personal exposure health outcomes, but
689 also provided insight on particular sources of that exposure. This is a fundamental issue that
690 should be considered by others as they potentially consider repeating studies of this nature.

691 The statistical power needed to truly differentiate the impact of closely related VOCs upon any
692 single health outcome would be extremely hard to meet. Our findings clearly demonstrate that
693 monitoring participants under close supervision and excluding participants with low wearing
694 protocol compliance, who can cloud the ultimate statistical analyses, offers the greatest
695 opportunity for securing adequate statistical power to conduct such epidemiological research
696 involving a general population.

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698

699

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701

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711 and Technology) are acknowledged for their assistance in VOC laboratory analyses. Charles
712 Rodes and Jonathan Thornburg along with the field staff of RTI International were responsible
713 for performing the field data collections involving the exposure measurements. The study was
714 approved by Institutional Review Boards of the University of Michigan and RTI International as
715 well as the Human Subjects Approving Official of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
716 (EPA).

717

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719 findings and improve the paper.

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