

Quantifying Trends in PM and Its Precursors

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Is PM air quality improving and are the improvements likely to be in response to the implemented emissions control programs?

Overview of Trend Analysis

Rationale for assessing trends in PM. One of the major programmatic objectives for the routine PM_{2.5} chemical speciation is providing data for the analysis of air quality trends and to track progress of control programs. The ability to detect trends in ambient concentrations that are associated with planned air quality control efforts must be incorporated in State Implementation Plan (SIP) assessments. For example, if specific control strategies have been implemented in an area to reduce fugitive emissions from construction activities, do the ambient data indicate lower concentrations of PM species associated with crustal material since the implementation of the control?

Indicator selection is important. Air quality data typically do not fit a normal distribution. The data tend to be more skewed and exhibit a few high concentration events. Thus, trends in extreme values in a data set may differ significantly from trends observed in a statistic that describes the bulk of the data. Data can be statistically adjusted to assess trends in peak days and on more typical days. For example, one can plot the annual maximum PM concentrations to assess how annual peak days are changing over time, or one can plot the median PM concentrations to assess how the 50th percentile of the days are changing. In addition, in order to assess a trend in air quality, sufficient data are required over a sufficient time period.

Understanding the data uncertainties is necessary. Uncertainties impact the ability to clearly discern air quality trends. For example, measurement accuracy, precision, bias, and interferences need to be understood to properly interpret the data. Also uncertainties arising from compiling large amounts of measurements into a single performance indicator can be important.

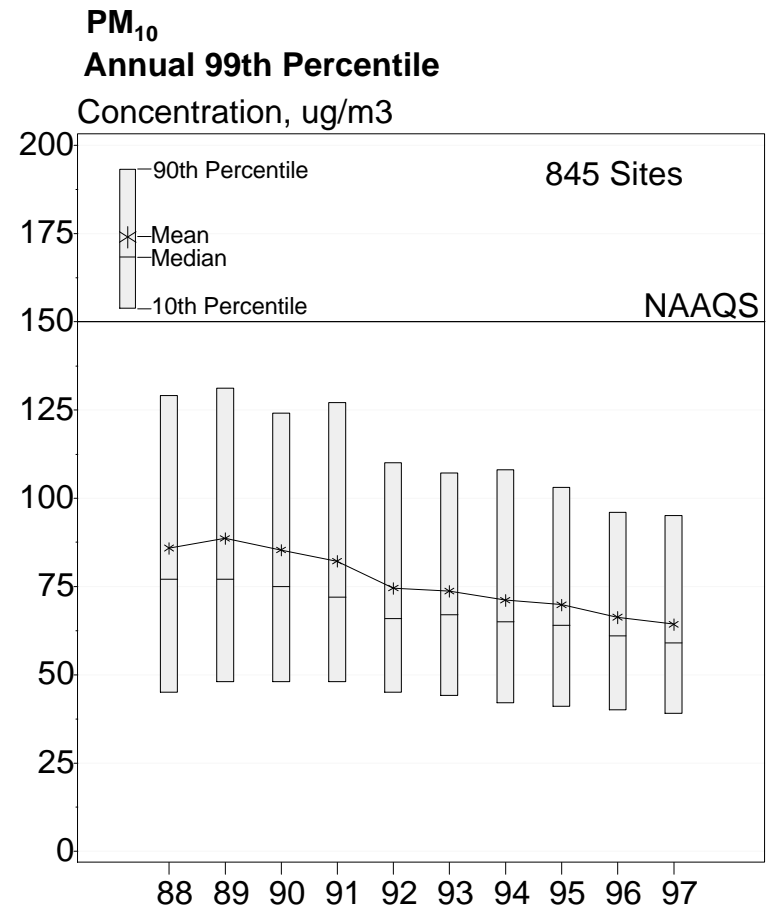
Changes in meteorology can obscure trends in air quality. We know that the meteorology can vary significantly among years (e.g., El Niño), and meteorology can have a significant affect on air quality. We also want to understand changes in air quality that are attributed to emission controls. Therefore, when we assess trends in air quality, we need to be able to adjust the data to account for meteorological conditions that were very different from average conditions. By properly accounting for the portion of the variability in the data attributable to changes in meteorology, we can compare air quality among years with widely different meteorological conditions. This is important because we do not have control over how meteorology changes (and meteorology is not an excuse for nonattainment).

Discerning trends can be tricky. The analyst needs to understand methods for quantifying trends and determining their statistical significance. The analyst also needs to be able to communicate the results in a meaningful and understandable way.

U.S. EPA, 1998

Selecting Indicators (assuming 24-hr data)

- Statistical indicators include arithmetic mean, geometric mean, median, maximum, minimum, 2nd and 3rd maximums, and selected percentiles.
- Time periods over which to apply the statistics include quarterly, seasonally, episode (i.e., days above some threshold) versus non-episode, annually.
- PM measurements upon which to apply the statistics include mass, species groups (e.g., total metals), individual species (e.g., lead), ratios of species. Concentrations and weight percent of total mass can be used.
- Consensus among trends in indicators gives the analyst more confidence in the results.



U.S. EPA, 1998

Assessing Uncertainties in Trend Analyses

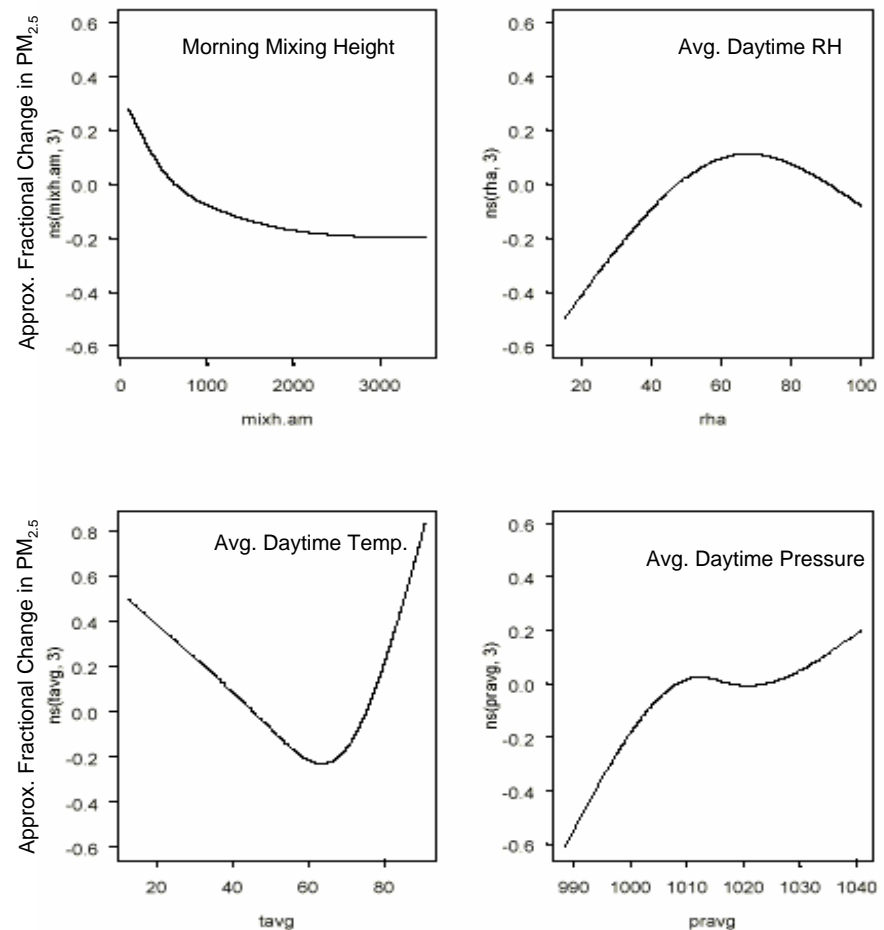
- Uncertainties impact one's ability to clearly discern air quality trends in an analysis.
- Uncertainties that affect trends in air quality are
 - **Atmospheric variability** associated with short-term fluctuations in meteorological conditions and source emissions.
 - **Meteorological variability** associated with synoptic seasonal cycles.
 - **Measurement uncertainty** associated with instrument accuracy and precision.
 - **Analysis uncertainty** associated with trend indicator interpretation.
- Methods exist to account or adjust for variations in meteorology.

Wittig et al., 1999

Adjusting for Meteorology

- Adjustment techniques involve some processing of the PM measurements to remove the influence of particular events or conditions from the data prior to any trends analysis.
- Adjustment techniques are compared in the following tables so that an analyst can decide which methods are the most reasonable to consider depending upon the data available.
- These figures illustrate some of the meteorological parameters that have an effect on $PM_{2.5}$ concentrations. For example, lower morning mixing height was linked to higher $PM_{2.5}$ concentrations. One of the next steps is whether or not these parameters show a significant interannual impact.

Exploratory Investigation of $PM_{2.5}$ Dependence on Meteorology on Washington DC IMPROVE Data



Frechtel et al., 1999

Summary of Adjustment Techniques

Methods for adjusting pollutant concentrations to account for methodology:

- Expected peak-day concentration (California Air Resources Board, 1993)
- Native variability (California Air Resources Board, 1993)
- Filtering techniques (e.g., Rao and Zurbenko, 1994)
- Probability distribution technique (Cox and Chu, 1998)
- Classification and Regression Tree (CART) analysis (e.g., Stoeckenius, 1990)
- Linear regression (e.g., Davidson, 1993)
- Nonlinear regression (e.g., Bloomfield et al., 1996)

Adjustment Techniques (1 of 3)

Method	Pros	Cons	Data Requirements
Expected peak day concentration (EPDC) (California Air Resources Board, 1993)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accounts for variability in the measurements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not explicitly account for meteorology. Ignores the highest concentration days. Requires daily observations over an entire year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Special software. Daily maximum concentration measurements for three consecutive years.
Native variability (California Air Resources Board, 1993)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accounts for variability in the measurements. Estimates the uncertainty in a parameter that is used to assess trends using a different approach than a measurement uncertainty or an average standard deviation. Uses any parameter that is measured on a daily basis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not explicitly account for meteorology. Ignores the highest days. To develop trending conclusions using this technique, the user must assume that emissions do not change over a running 3-yr period of time. Requires daily observations over an entire year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Special software. Daily maximum concentration measurements for three consecutive years.
Meteorological adjustment using a filtering technique (Rao and Zurbenko, 1994; Rao et al., 1995; Zurbenko et al., 1995; Anh et al., 1997; Flaum et al., 1996; Milanchus et al., 1997; 1998; Porter, 1996)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A meteorological adjustment technique. Is intended to be used as a predictive tool. Separates the concentrations into different time scales to discern trends in the concentrations that are due to emissions changes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To develop trending conclusions, the user must assume that concentrations that are not affected by meteorologically anomalous events can be fit to a periodic function. Numerically intensive. Most current versions of this technique use parameters that are not commonly measured and require some parameters to be modeled. Currently applied only to ozone. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Special software. Daily maximum concentration and daily maximum temperature measurements. Daily maximum concentration and daily maximum temperature, dew point temperature and depression, specific humidity, wind speed, opaque cloud cover, ceiling height, and solar radiation measurements at most.

Wittig et al., 1999

Adjustment Techniques (2 of 3)

Method	Pros	Cons	Data Requirements
Meteorological adjustment using a probability distribution technique (Cox and Chu, 1998)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A meteorological adjustment technique. • Is intended to be used as a predictive tool. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop trending conclusions using this technique, the user must assume that concentrations that are not affected by meteorologically anomalous events can be fit to a Weibull distribution. • Problem establishing a baseline – uses average parameters to define the base case. • Numerically intensive. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special software. • Daily maximum concentration and daily maximum surface temperature at minimum. • Daily maximum concentration and daily maximum surface temperature, relative humidity, wind speed and wind direction measurements at most.
Transported ozone estimation by analysis of wind speed and wind direction against measured ozone (Husar and Renard, 1997)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accounts for meteorology. • Considers a regional approach to ozone formation. • Does not fit ozone measurements to an equation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not a meteorological adjustment technique. • Uses meteorological parameters that require substantial classification. • Uses parameters that are not available over a long enough period at the sites of interest. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily maximum ozone concentration, daily wind speed and wind direction measurements.
CART (Classification and Regression Tree) analysis of ozone concentrations against numerous meteorological conditions (Stoeckenius, 1990; Deuel and Douglas, 1996)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accounts for meteorology. • Does not fit measurements to an equation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not a meteorological adjustment technique. • Uses meteorological parameters that require substantial classification. • Numerically intensive. • Uses parameters that are not available over a long enough period at the sites of interest. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special software. • Daily maximum concentration, daily maximum surface temperature, number of daylight hours, ceiling height, surface pressure, rainfall, relative humidity, wind speed, and wind direction measurements.

Wittig et al., 1999

Adjustment Techniques (3 of 3)

Method	Pros	Cons	Data Requirements
Linear regression of ozone against meteorological parameters (Davidson, 1993; Zeldin et al., 1990; Cohan et al., 1998)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accounts for meteorology. Not numerically intensive. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not a meteorological adjustment technique. Fits the overall nonlinear process of transport and reaction to a linear function. No real insight or physical meaning of coefficients. Can use meteorological parameters that are not widely measured. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daily maximum concentrations and daily T850 at minimum. Daily maximum concentrations and inversion parameters, synoptic parameters, surface pressure gradients, and T850 measurements at most.
Nonlinear regression of ozone against meteorological parameters (Bloomfield et al., 1996; Holland et al., 1999)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accounts for meteorology. Fits a nonlinear process to a nonlinear function. Not numerically intensive. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not a meteorological adjustment technique. No real insight or physical meaning of coefficients. Uses parameters that are not available over a long enough period at the sites of interest. Can use meteorological parameters that are not widely measured. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daily maximum concentrations and daily temperature, relative humidity, wind speed measurements.

Wittig et al., 1999

Important Meteorological Variables

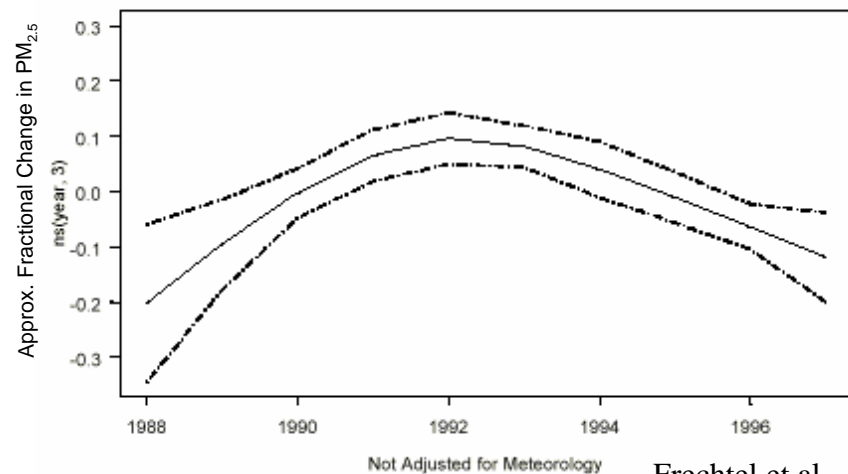
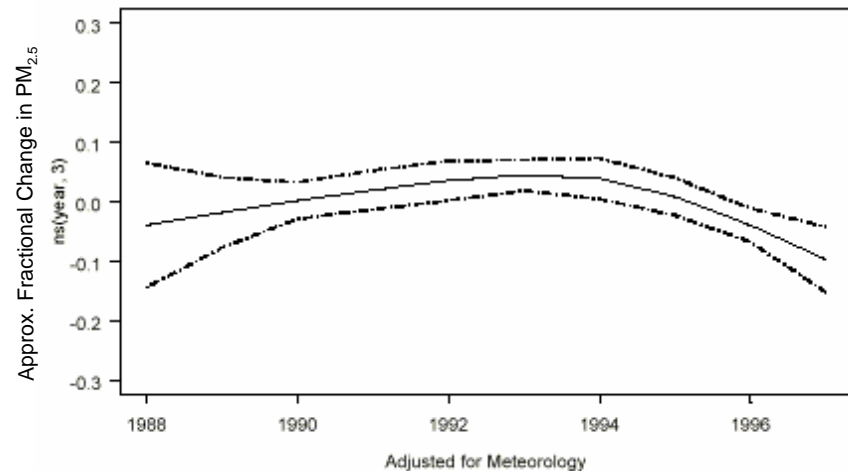
- Possible meteorological variables important to PM trend analysis include daily average specific humidity, average morning (0600-0900) wind speed, average afternoon (1300-1600) wind speed, morning mixing height, average 1000-1600 relative humidity, daily average temperature, daily average barometric pressure, wind direction, and transport/recirculation measures.
- To assess possible important meteorological variables, the following analyses are helpful: examine a matrix of scatter plots of fine mass and all possible independent variables available; perform Classification and Regression Tree (CART) analysis; perform cluster or factor analysis; perform other multivariate analyses.
- The correlation between some variables can be improved by offsetting ambient data and meteorological parameters by a lag time.

Cox and Chu, 1998

Example: Meteorology Adjusted Trends

- In this example, a general linear model was developed in which each of the independent variables was modeled using a natural cubic spline with three degrees of freedom. Meteorological parameters were stepwise deleted from the full model.
- The trend components (with twice standard errors) are shown here with and without meteorology included in the model. Important variables (averages) included are daily specific humidity, morning and afternoon wind speeds, morning mixing height, daytime relative humidity, and daytime surface temperature and pressure.
- The meteorologically adjusted trends appear to be smoother and flatter than the non-adjusted trends.
- The impact of interannual variations in meteorological conditions do not appear to be large enough to alter any conclusions about long-term PM trends at this site.

Exploratory Investigation of $PM_{2.5}$ Dependence on Meteorology
on Washington DC IMPROVE Data
826 daily observations



Frechtel et al., 1999

Discerning Trends

- **Linear Model:** Use simple linear regression on annual summary statistics or logged statistics (if lognormal); perform analysis of variance.
- **Nonparametric Methods:** Test for and estimate a trend without making distributional assumptions (e.g., Spearman's rho test of trend, Kendall's tau test of trend).
- **Time Series Models:** Statistically model PM concentrations (and other air quality parameters) taking into account their serial dependence (e.g., auto-regressive integrated moving average - ARIMA).
- **Extreme Value Theory:** Estimate distributions of annual maximum hourly concentrations and the number of days exceeding the standard (e.g., Chi-square test, Poisson process approximation).

Stoeckenius et al., 1994

Statistics

Measure	Parametric	Nonparametric
Measure of central tendency	Mean	Median
Deviation or dispersion	Standard deviation Coefficient of variation Variance	Inner quartile
Determining whether or not two samples come from the same population	Students t-test	Mann-Whitney U test
Test for randomness		Runs test
Measure of correlation between two variables	Pearson correlation	Spearman's rank correlation

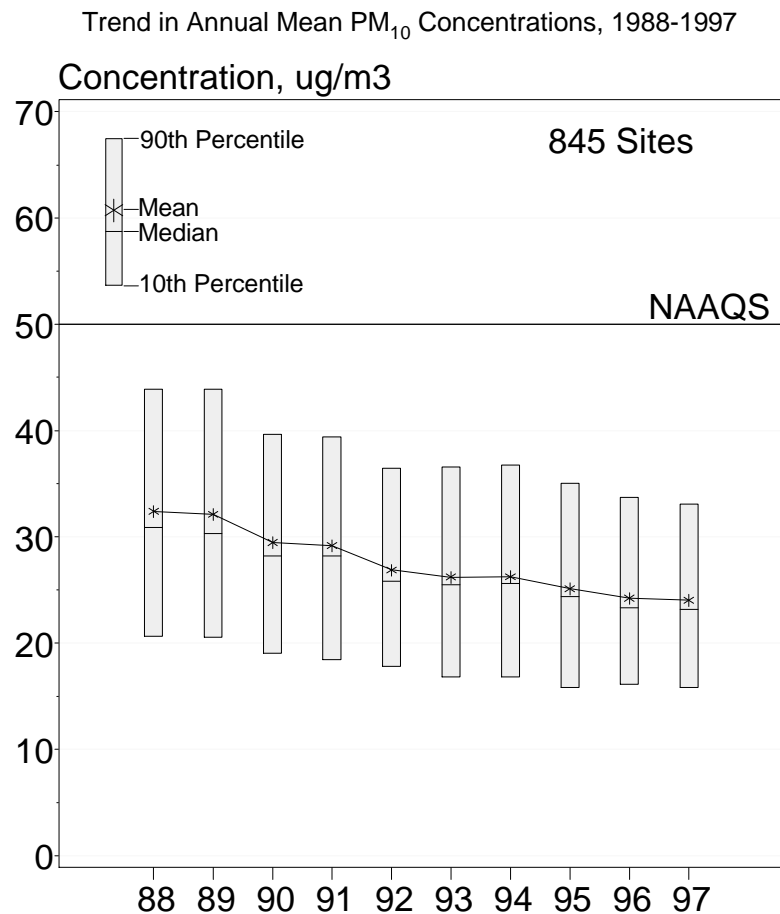
- Many tests of hypotheses and significance require various assumptions about the distribution of the population from which the samples are drawn.
- For some data sets, these assumptions may not apply, as in a case where the data are highly skewed.
- There are many excellent texts on statistics as well as on-line information such as
<<http://www.math.sfu.ca/stats/Courses/Stat-301/Handouts/node1.html>>

Graphical Methods for Discerning Trends

- Box plots (high and low values, median values, outliers)
- Plots of mean or median values with confidence intervals
- Line graph of selected indicator
- Interpolated or contoured maps of PM indicators
- Combination of map with temporal information

Using Box Plots to Investigate Trends

- Box plots are useful for displaying trends in data.
- Box plots illustrate the trends in the high values, the low values, and the means.
- In this graph, the variability is about the same from year to year—the boxes for each year are about the same height.
- Also note a gradual, steady downward trend over the years 1988-1997, for the high values, the low values, and the central values.
- For PM, both the high, episodic values, and the annual means are interesting because PM has both episodic, short-term health effects and chronic, long-term health effects.

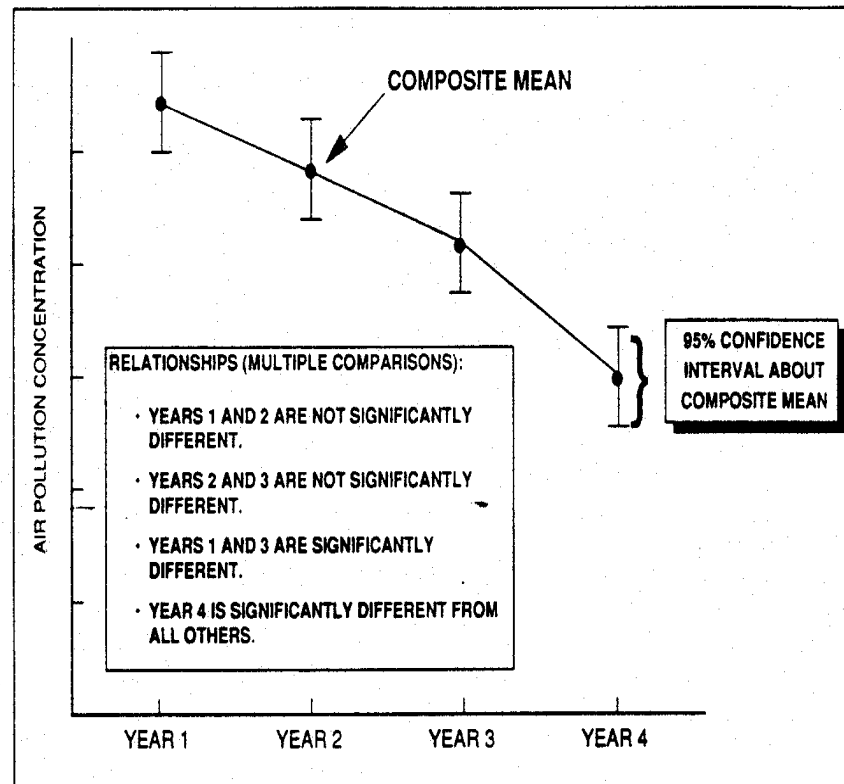


U.S. EPA, 1998

Using Confidence Intervals to Investigate Trends

- Confidence intervals are shown for four years of data.
- Since the plotted confidence intervals overlap for years 1 and 2 but not for years 1 and 3, years 1 and 2 are not significantly different, but years 1 and 3 are significantly different.

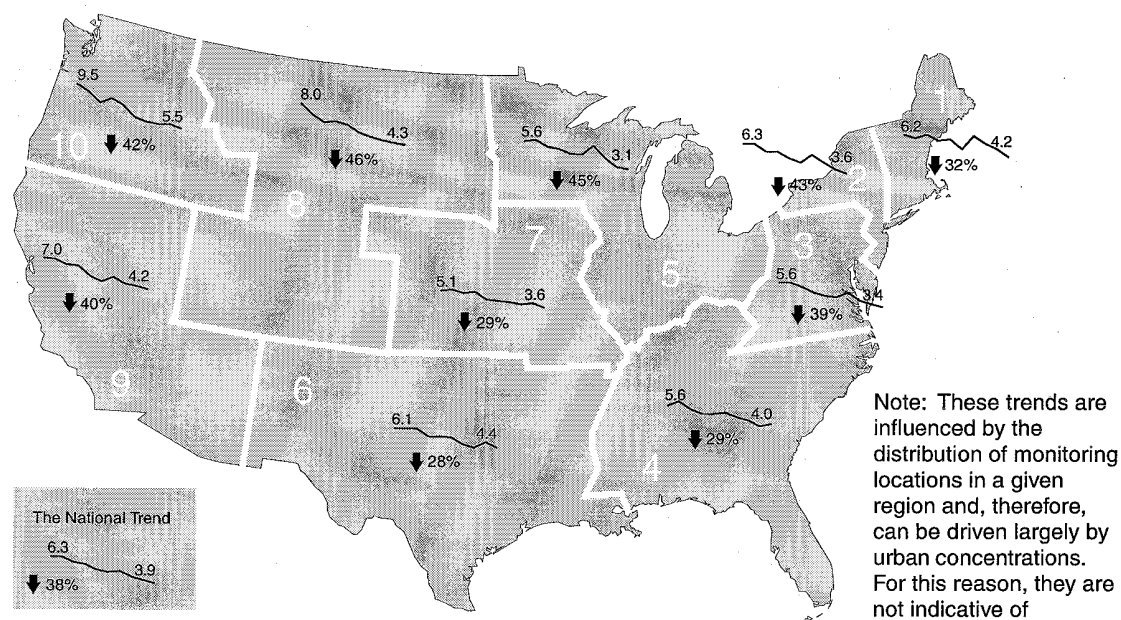
Illustration of the use of confidence intervals to determine statistically significant changes.



U.S. EPA, 1994

Using Line Graphs to Investigate Trends (1 of 2)

Trend in CO second maximum 8-hour concentrations by EPA Region, 1988-97.



Note: These trends are influenced by the distribution of monitoring locations in a given region and, therefore, can be driven largely by urban concentrations. For this reason, they are not indicative of background regional concentrations.

U.S. EPA, 1998

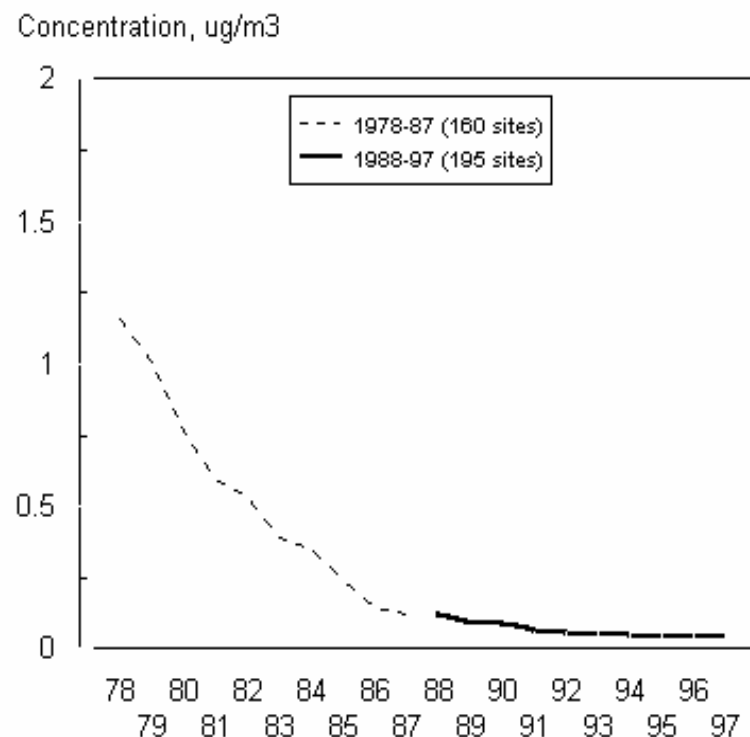
Alaska is in EPA Region 10; Hawaii, EPA Region 9; and Puerto Rico, EPA Region 2.
Concentrations are ppm.

Line graphs can be used to assess trends in selected indicators. In this graph, a map was combined with plots of the second maximum 8-hr CO concentration per year for each region. A similar plot could be prepared for PM_{2.5} concentrations.

Using Line Graphs to Investigate Trends (2 of 2)

- It is sometimes useful to break a long-term trend into shorter time intervals because of significant changes in emissions.
- For example, leaded gasoline was phased out starting in the late 1970s. Dramatic reductions were observed in ambient particulate Pb concentrations up to the 1980s. Since the late 1980s, Pb concentrations are near the minimum detectable level.
- Similar dramatic reductions in ambient benzene concentrations have been observed because of the introduction of reformulated fuels (e.g., Main et al., 1998).

Long-term Ambient Lead (Pb) Trend, 1977-1997

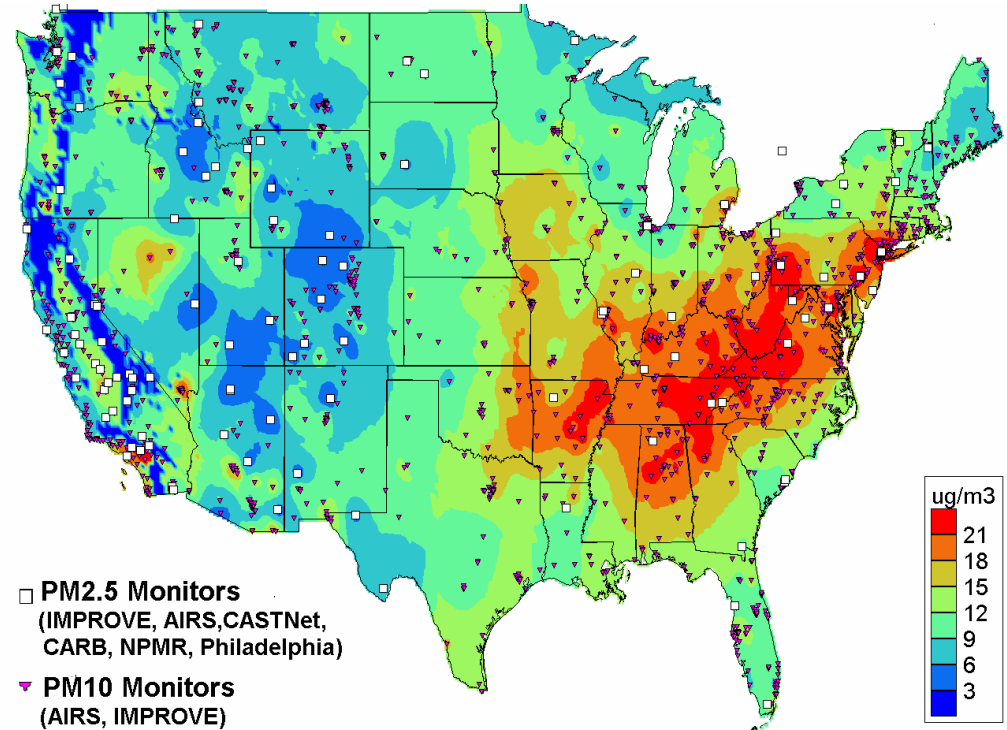


U.S. EPA, 1998

Spatial Trends in PM

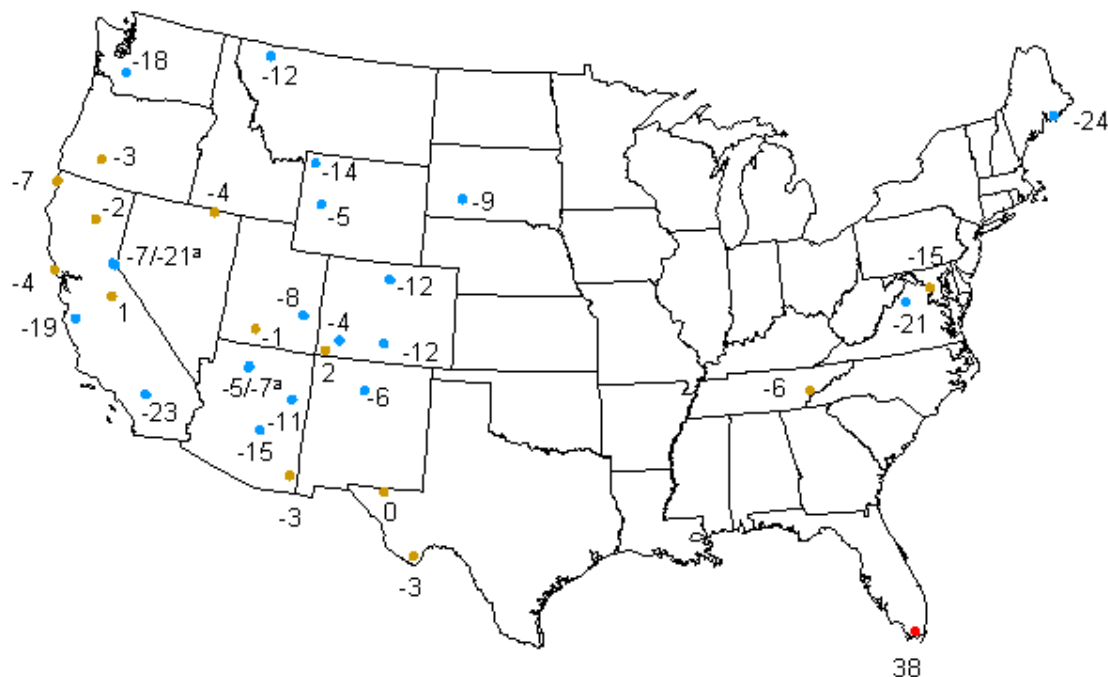
- It is important to use consistent data records (e.g., same site operating over all years of the trend period) when assessing spatial and temporal trends.
- From the map, summer $PM_{2.5}$ concentrations are highest in the southern Appalachian mountains and in the eastern metropolitan corridor. Concentrations decline outside these areas. Moving east to west, the concentrations mostly decrease except for a few hot spots around western cities.

Average $PM_{2.5}$ Concentrations
July, August, September 1994-1996



This is a work in progress. The map is currently the best available but is expected to change as estimation methods improve and additional data is incorporated. Falke, 1999

Combining Spatial and Temporal Trends



Long-Term IMPROVE Sites

- Significant Decreasing Trend
- No Significant Trend
- Significant Increasing Trend
- States in Contiguous US

Prepared using SAS and ArcView

Label Units: $(\mu\text{g}/(\text{m}^3 \cdot \text{year})) \cdot 100$

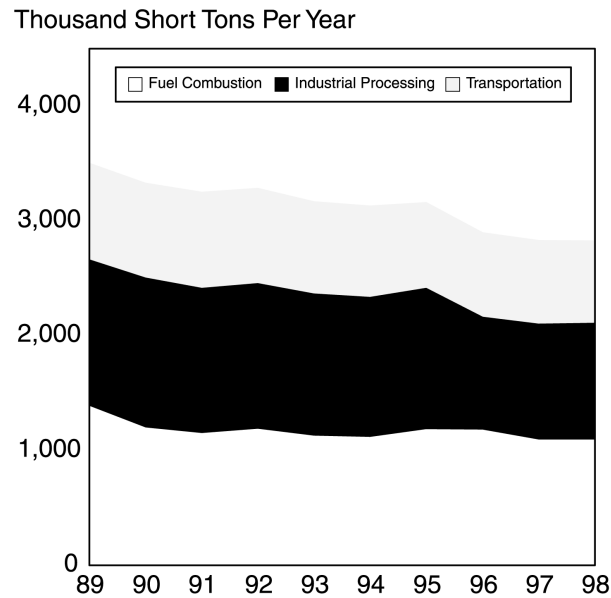
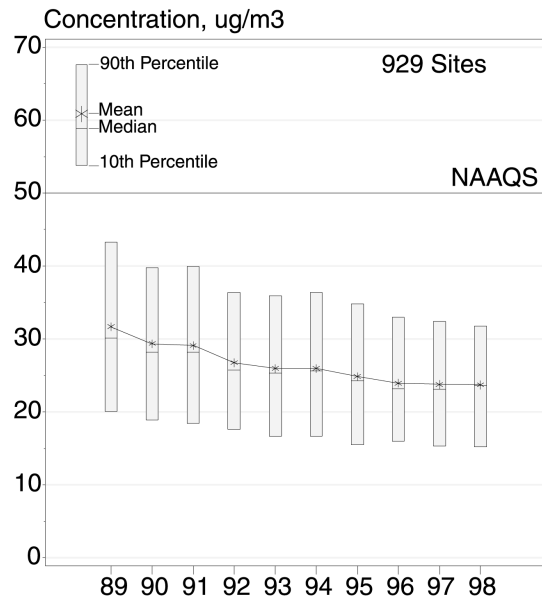
- The map shows the annual trends in overall $\text{PM}_{2.5}$ concentration for 1988-1997 at 34 monitoring sites in the continental United States which have been recording $\text{PM}_{2.5}$ concentrations for over six years.
- The site labels are the annual trends of $\text{PM}_{2.5}$ concentrations at each site. The data were deseasonalized to "take out" the seasonal cycle of $\text{PM}_{2.5}$.

Data Source: IMPROVE Network

^a Sites labeled XY are actually two sites in close proximity.

Frechtel et al., 1999

Ambient and Emission Inventory Trends



National PM₁₀ ambient (left) and emissions (right) trends, 1989-1998 (traditionally inventoried sources only). U.S. EPA, 1999a, 1999b

- It is important to compare ambient trends with trends in the emission inventory. Do the ambient trends corroborate changes in emissions?
- The example here compares trends in national PM₁₀ concentrations and emissions from 1989 through 1998. Both plots show a decline since 1989.
- As PM_{2.5} emission inventory and ambient data become available, these types of comparisons should be made.

Tools and Methods for Trend Analysis (1 of 2)

Available mapping software includes

- Surfer <<http://www.goldensoftware.com/>>
- MapInfo <<http://www.mapinfo.com/>>
- ArcInfo and ArcView <<http://www.esri.com/>>
- SAS <<http://www.sas.com/>>
- AIRS graphics <<http://www.epa.gov/airsweb/maps.htm>>
- TopoUSA <<http://www.delorme.com/topousa/>>
- Other similar statistical and GIS-based software.

Tools and Methods for Trend Analysis (2 of 2)

Demonstrated methods for trend analysis include (with reference)

- De-seasonalizing annual trends: Frechtel et al., 1999
<<http://capita.wustl.edu/PMFine/Workgroup/Status&Trends/Reports/Completed/LongTermIMPROVE/LongTermIMPROVE.html>>
- Assessing seasonal trends: Eldred, 1994
- Meteorological adjustment using filtering: Rao and Zurbenko, 1994
- Meteorological adjustment using probability distribution: Cox and Chu, 1998; Cox et al., 1999
- Classification and regression tree analysis: Stoeckenius, 1990

Handling Missing Data

- In the assessment of long-term trends for the EPA trends report, analysts handle missing annual data in the following manner:
 - Missing the last year: set the missing year equal to the second-to-last year.
 - Missing the first year: set the missing year equal to the second year.
 - Missing any other year: interpolate between the adjacent two years.
- Data handling conventions for missing data and for determining whether a site is in compliance with the NAAQS are discussed in detail in U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 1999b.

Summary

- One of the key issues of the PM_{2.5} monitoring program is how to determine whether or not PM air quality is improving.
- This workbook section provides examples of methods for displaying and assessing trends in PM data. Methods and tools for assessing uncertainties and adjusting for meteorology are also discussed.

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