

Health costs of noise: What have we learnt from the literature and their use in noise policy?

Katrin Ohlau¹, Jacques Lambert²

¹ Institute of Energy Economics and the Rational Use of Energy (IER), Universität Stuttgart, Stuttgart, Germany

² IFSTTAR-LTE, Bron, France

ABSTRACT

Traffic, especially air traffic, is expected to increase in the future; consequently more people will likely face an increasing number of noise impact constraints. Therefore public authorities need an assessment tool of noise effects: noise costs. How these costs can be assessed and integrated in the policy making?

Within the FP7-ENNAH project (European Network on Noise and Health), a research work addressed the health costs of noise: current knowledge (preliminary overview of methods) and noise values derived from these costs, applied by researchers and policy makers.

For monetary assessment of noise impacts, various different studies were examined, where a wide range of real estate losses as well as loss of work and life were ascertained. It is assumed that the owner is aware of the disruption and annoyance caused by noise, which is not often the case for health effects.

First of all, a literature review related to health costs of noise in general and of aircraft noise in particular has been performed as well as ongoing research projects were taken into account.

Secondly, a survey was worked out for experts in this field. A short questionnaire was designed and then sent out to 58 experts involved in noise research and in noise policy, from Europe, Japan, USA and Australia. Their views about the practices and difficulties encountered, when assessing health costs of noise, will be presented and discussed here.

For assessing benefits of noise abatement policies, it is recommended to systematically use noise values reflecting health costs of noise.