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Physiochemical Characteristics of Indoor PM_{2.5} with Combustion of Dried Yak Dung as Biofuel in Tibetan Plateau, China

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Abstract

People inhabiting the Tibetan Plateau rely for survival on the yak, the region's native cattle. One of the important products of yak is dung, which has been served as cooking and heating fuels in the traditional Tibetan pastoralist society for several thousand years. The indoor air quality at eight residential homes with altitudes ranging from 3212 m to 4788 m was investigated in November 2012 to obtain a shot-term profile of emission from combustion of dried yak dung as biofuel in pastoral and agro-pastoral regions on the Tibetan Plateau. The indoor temperature, relative humidity, CO₂, mass concentrations of PM_{2.5} were monitored for around 4-hour period (5 kg dried fuel was consumed) at each site. Filter based aerosol samples were also collected to characterize their elemental compositions, water soluble ions, carbonaceous species and individual particle morphologies. The results showed that combustion of solid biomass fuel in cast-iron stove is the preliminary source of indoor particulate pollution. The average indoor and outdoor PM_{2.5} mass concentrations were 330.7 and 29.1 µg/m³, respectively. Individual particle analysis showed that most of the particles in smoke from dung burning were in the submicrometer size range. Regular and irregular organic balls and soot aggregates were the predominant species in the smoke (>90% in numbers). The data set in this study can provide significant basis for indoor air quality and epidemiology study on the Tibetan Plateau.

Keywords: Indoor air quality, Biofuel, Yak dung, Tibetan Plateau, Individual particle analysis

Introduction

Air pollutants indoors affecting respiratory health can originate from a range of sources including the combustion of fuel for heating or cooking, the activities of building occupants and other biological sources, and emissions from building materials.¹⁻³ Infiltration from outside can also be another important source for some contaminants. Indoor air quality (IAQ) has become a matter of growing public concern because human spend a significant proportion of their time indoors.⁴ Consequently, particulate pollutants in the indoor residential microenvironment are the major contributor to personal non-occupational

exposure.⁵ Small particles with aerodynamic diameter less than 2.5 microns (termed as PM_{2.5}) are able to penetrate deeply into the lungs and appear to have the greatest adverse health effects.

Although exposure concentrations vary and depend on a number of factors as individuals' behaviour and activities, pollutant sources, and geographical locations, the use of solid fuels for cooking and heating is likely to be the largest source of indoor air pollution.⁶ On a global basis, it is estimated that approximate half of the world's domestic cooking rely on coal or unprocessed biofuels including wood, crop residues and animal dung.⁷ Taking into account dung or crop residues, the human exposures resulting from biofuel combustion can exceed World Health Organization (WHO) recommended values by factors of 10 to 20 or even more. Concentrations of particulates from the indoor combustion of biomass have been measured at levels of 10–50 times higher than those in urban areas of developed countries.⁸

On the Tibetan Plateau region, biomass (among those about 53% is yak dung) dominates the total energy consumption, accounting for nearly 70% in 2003.9 Forest is distributed only in the Southeastern Tibetan Plateau, then yak dung serves nearly all heating and cooking needs in this region where people require ample fuel but where wood or coal are scarce or nonexistent. In vast pastoral and agro-pastoral regions on the Tibetan Plateau, yak dung was stored and air-dried outside the permanent dwellings in large heaps or nomadic tents in dung cakes for several thousand years. Yak dung was pounded and moulded into cakes, which were completely desiccated in the sun and symmetrically piled. Outside dwellings, yak dung was always piled intermittently to about 2 m wide, 3-4 m long and 1-2 m high. Each family used a heap every two months in the summer (about 0.133 m³ per day), one every month in the winter (about 0.260 m³ per day), or about 10 piles per year. ¹⁰ The Tibetan Plateau region was characterized by long duration of winter time with an average of 194 days in a year. 11 In winter, the weather conditions were severe on the Plateau and the activities in nomadic tents were limited. Therefore, it is suitable to evaluate the indoor air quality in traditional Tibetan dwellings during winter time due to the most domestic fuel consumption and limited ventilation. However, limited data are available on the general understanding about present IAQ of residences in the whole Tibetan Plateau region.

The objectives of this study are to investigate IAQ parameters and to characterize the physicochemical properties of indoor aerosols at different residential homes with the

combustion of dried yak dung as biofuel in vast pastoral and agro-pastoral regions on the Tibetan Plateau.

Methodology

Site Selection

Eight residential homes were selected as sampling sites in the major pastoral and agropastoral regions in Tibetan Plateau, among those who had the same type of cast-iron multipot stove fuelled with dried yak dung (Fig. 1). The three-room dwelling (each room about 7 m long by 5 m wide and 2.5 m high) in this study is the representative architecture style of permanent residences in the Tibetan Plateau region, of which the number and dimension of rooms and their functions were similar.

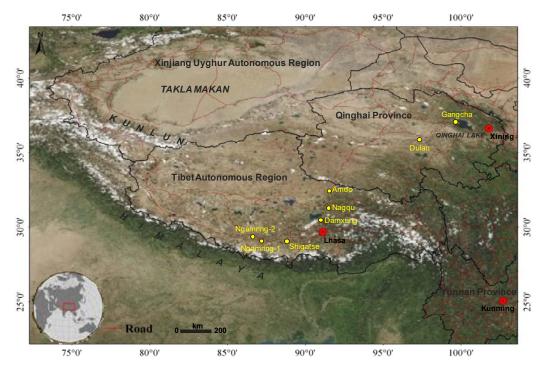


Figure 1. The locations of sampling sites at eight residential homes with combustion of dried yak dung as biofuel on the Tibetan Plateau.

In most of those dwellings, the living-room or bedroom is also used for cooking, with a series of beds, sofas and cabinets lying with their back against the walls and surrounded the

stove in the middle of the room. During winter time, the fire was started from the morning for a whole day's heating, cooking and tea or water boiling until naturally extinguished at night. In this study, the stoves were ignited indoors two hours before sampling. The smoke from dung burning passed upward through the chimney flue to be vented outside the dwellings (Fig. 2a and 2b). During the sampling periods, the windows were kept close and the residents were asked to live as usual (cooking and household task) except no smoke in the sampling rooms. All sites were at least 5 km away from the nearby roads. There is no nomadic tent being used in winter season.

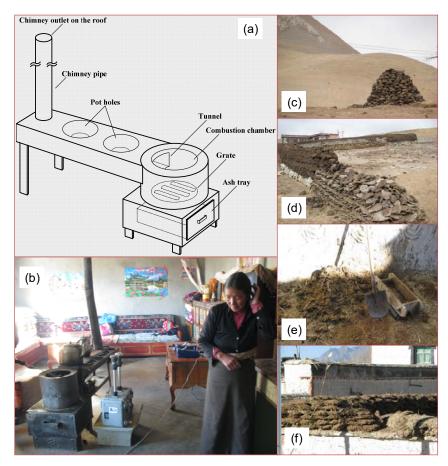


Figure 2. The schematic diagram of typical cast-iron multi-pot stove (a), its position at a residential home (b). In the pastoral regions, yak dung cakes were piled up (c) or placed along the wall (d) and air dried outside the house. In the agro-pastoral regions, yak dung was mixed with highland barley straw and moulded (e) to dung cake (f).

Among the eight sampling sites, five (Amdo, Nagqu, Damxung, Dulan, and Gangcha) were distributed in pastoral regions where animal husbandry (yaks, sheep, goats and horses) is booming in the area. The other three (two in Ngamring and one in Shigatse) were in agropastoral regions where the dominant crop was highland barley. Amdo, Nagqu and Damxung counties have a harsh, alpine climate, with long, very cold and dry winters. Dulan and Gangcha counties have a subalpine semi-arid climate, with long, very cold winters and warm summers. The Gangcha site is situated ~4 km to the west shore of the Qinghai Lake, a closed-basin saline lake and the largest water body in China. Vegetation around the Lake comprises steppe, desert shrub, alpine shrub and alpine meadow. Ngamring county and Shigatse city have a monsoon-influenced, alpine version of a humid continental climate, with frosty and very dry winters. The residential homes at the five sites in pastoral regions adopted dried yak dung as fuel, with dung cakes piled up (Fig. 2c) or placed along the wall (Fig. 2d) and air dried outside the house. Whereas biofuel used in residential homes at agro-pastoral regions as Shigatse site and Ngamring sites were dried yak dung mixed with highland barley straw and moulded to dung cake on the ground (Fig. 2e and 2f).

Sampling Methods

The sampling was performed from 17 November to 28 November 2012 (Table 1). At each site, the sampling duration was about 4 hours during daytime while 5 kg dried fuel was added into the fire. Two portable Q-Trak Plus IAQ monitors (Model 7565, TSI Inc., Shoreview, MN, USA) were used to obtain the 1-min average CO₂ concentrations, air temperature (T) and relative humidity (RH) records indoors and outdoors, respectively. The monitor is able to detect CO₂ based on the mechanism of non-disperse infrared detection.² This monitor is also equipped with a thermistor and a thin film capacitive sensor for temperature and relative humidity measurements. Two Dust-Trak Handheld Aerosol Monitors (Model 8532, TSI Inc., Shoreview, MN, USA) with PM_{2.5} inlets were placed at each indoor and outdoor location to measure PM_{2.5} mass concentrations. Based on the method of light scattering, the monitor measured PM_{2.5} at 1-min interval with a flow-rate of 0.102 m³/min. Before sampling, a separate calibration test was carried out to convert the results given by the Dust-Trak monitor into corresponding concentrations obtained by gravimetric methods. The temperature in the

middle of the stove combustion chamber was measured using a thermocouple sensor during sampling.

Table 1. Sampling information with the weather conditions, outdoor wind direction (WD), prevailing wind speed (WS, m/s), resident population, and the temperature in the middle of the stove combustion chamber (Stove T, °C).

Date	Province	County	Economics	Latitude	Longitude	Altitud (m)	e Weather	WD	WS	Resident population	Stove T
2012.11.17	TAR	Nagqu	Pastoral	31°18.184'	91°48.289'	4552	Sunny	-	≤5.4	2 Tibetans	550
2012.11.18	TAR	Damxung	Pastoral	30°29.906'	91°06.481'	4283	Sunny	-	≤5.4	5 Tibetans	600
2012.11.20	TAR	Ngamring	Agro-pastoral	29°12.432'	87°21.143'	4354	Sunny	-	≤5.4	4 Tibetans	380
2012.11.21	TAR	Ngamring	Agro-pastoral	29°19.433'	87°12.217'	4345	Sunny	-	≤5.4	3 Tibetans	320
2012.11.22	TAR	Shigatse	Agro-pastoral	29°19.803'	89°23.538'	3806	Sunny	-	≤5.4	5 Tibetans	600
2012.11.24	TAR	Amdo	Pastoral	32°20.540'	91°43.092'	4788	Snowy	W	≤20.7	5 Tibetans	388
2012.11.27	Qinghai	Dulan	Pastoral	36°18.062'	97°06.045'	2766	Cloudy	W	≤7.9	2 Mongolians	630
2012.11.28	Qinghai	Gangcha	Pastoral	37°00.258'	99°48.050'	3212	Sunny	N	≤7.9	3 Tibetans	560

Note: "TAR" means Tibet Autonomous Region; "-" means no sustained wind.

Collocated with Dust-Trak monitoring, one Mini-vol portable sampler with PM_{2.5} impactors (Airmetrics, Eugene, OR, USA) was used to collect 4-hour airborne particulate matters onto 47 mm quartz microfiber filters (Whatman, Maidstone, Kent, UK) for subsequent chemical analysis.¹² Another sampler was used to collect 20-min particle samples onto Nuclepore polycarbonate filters (0.2 µm in porosity, Whatman International Ltd., Maidstone, UK) for individual particle analysis.¹³ The operating flow rate of the samplers was 0.3 m³/h. All monitors and samplers were placed 0.5 m away from the stove and 1 m above the ground. The quartz filters were preheated before sampling at 900°C for 3 h to remove the contaminants. After collection, the loaded filters were stored in a refrigerator at 4°C until analyzed. All the instruments are listed in Table 2.

Table 2. Indoor and outdoor instruments used in the residential homes at the sampling sites.

Item	Instrument	Site	Analytical data
Microclimate	Q-Trak Plus IAQ monitors	Indoor & outdoor	1 record/min T, RH, and CO ₂
PM _{2.5} mass concentration	Dust-Trak Handheld Aerosol Monitor	Indoor & outdoor	1 record/min PM _{2.5}
Chemical analysis	MiniVol sampler, 47 mm quartz filter	Indoor & outdoor	IC, XRF, OC/EC
Single particle analysis	MiniVol sampler, 47 mm polycarbonate filter	Indoor & outdoor	SEM-EDX
Combustion condition	Thermocouple sensor	Indoor	Stove T

Sample Analysis

The quartz filters were analyzed gravimetrically for $PM_{2.5}$ mass concentrations by an electronic microbalance with 1 μ g sensitivity (MC5, Sartorius, Göttingen, Germany) after 24-hour equilibration at temperature between 20 and 23°C and RH between 35 and 45%. ¹²

A punch of 0.5 cm² from each quartz filter was analyzed for organic carbon (OC) and elemental carbon (EC) concentrations by IMPROVE A, which is a thermal/optical protocol method using a DRI Model 2001 thermal/optical carbon analyzer (Atmoslytic Inc., Calabasas, CA, USA). Quality assurance and quality control procedures were described by Cao et al.¹²

One-fourth of each quartz filter sample was used for gravimetric determinations of water soluble ion mass concentrations.¹³ Three anions (Cl⁻, NO₃⁻ and SO₄²-) and five cations (Na⁺, NH₄⁺, K⁺, Mg²⁺ and Ca²⁺) were measured by a Dionex-600 Ion Chromatograph (Dionex Inc., Sunnyvale, CA, USA). Field blank levels were averaged, subtracted and standard deviations were propagated to the measurement precisions.¹⁴ Minimum detection limits were 15 µg/L for Na⁺, NH₄⁺, K⁺, Mg²⁺, Ca²⁺, and NO₃⁻; 0.5 µg/L for Cl⁻; and 20 µg/L for SO₄²⁻. Ten percent of the samples were submitted for replicate analyses.

Concentrations of elemental K, Ca, Ti, Cr, Mn, Fe, Ni, Zn, As, Br, Mo, Cd, and Pb collected on the PM_{2.5} quartz filters were determined using an Epsilon 5 ED-XRF (PANalytical B. V., the Netherlands).¹⁵ The X ray source is a side-window X ray tube with a gadolinium anode, operated at an accelerating voltage of 25 to 100 kV and a current of 0.5 to 24 mA. A spectrum of X-ray counts versus photon energy was acquired during analysis, with the individual peak energies matching to specific elements, and peak areas corresponding to elemental concentrations.¹⁵

Small rectangular sections (approximately 10×10 mm) were cut from the polycarbonate filters and mounted on the holder with conductive adhesive carbon tape. Samples were coated under vacuum with platinum and analyzed using a JEOL JSM-6460 LV SEM (Japan Electron Optics Laboratory Co. Ltd., Tokyo, JP) under 25 kV accelerating voltage at a work distance of 10 mm. Individual particles larger than 0.2 μ m were selected for elemental analyses manually using NORAN SYSTEM SIX Si-Li EDX detector with an ultra thin window (Thermo Electron Corporation, Waltham, MA, USA).¹³

Microclimate

Indoor and outdoor air temperature, relative humidity and levels of CO₂ during the sampling at all sites are listed in Table 3. The fluctuations of indoor air temperature and relative humidity did not follow the trend of those outdoors due to the protection of thick walls and passive solar house. The average CO₂ concentrations inside the eight sampling homes ranged from 436 to 915 ppm with an average of 583 ppm. These CO₂ concentration levels did not exceed China's IAQ standard recommended value of 1000 ppm. On the other hand, the mean CO₂ concentrations outdoors ranged from 372 to 442 ppm with an average of 394 ppm. All the stoves did not extinguish at daytime for heating, cooking and tea or water boiling, resulting with an elevated CO₂ levels observed inside all the monitored homes than those outdoors.

Table 3. Indoor and outdoor air temperature (T, °C), relative humidity (RH, %) and CO₂ concentrations (CO₂, ppm) in the residential homes at different sampling sites.

Site	n	T		RH		CO ₂	
	11	Indoor	Outdoor	Indoor	Outdoor	Indoor	Outdoor
Nagqu	247	8.5±2.1	14.8±4.6	36.9±3.6	13.5±1.4	915±139	403±37
Damxung	306	9.8 ± 1.2	17.1 ± 8.5	25.7 ± 5.8	11.8 ± 2.6	540±251	374 ± 25
Ngamring-1	143	13.9 ± 0.6	1.5 ± 3.7	31.2 ± 3.2	13.6 ± 2.7	679±96	$379{\pm}14$
Ngamring-2	237	14.9 ± 3.5	-1.9±1.3	15.4±6.1	21.4±2.5	436±29	408 ± 5
Shigatse	242	12.8 ± 0.7	-0.9±0.6	14.1 ± 2.4	13.5±0.7	587±146	442±25
Amdo	226	9.2 ± 3.1	8.7 ± 0.6	13.5±1.9	6.8 ± 0.6	443±57	372±9
Dulan	194	20.1 ± 5.8	0.5 ± 4.1	4.5±2.8	25.2±12.3	442±60	381 ± 7
Gangcha	206	19.8±1.7	9.5±3.4	25.2±5.4	6.8±3.1	625±45	392±9

Results and Discussion

PM_{2.5} Mass Concentration

Fig. 3 illustrates the mean indoor and outdoor PM_{2.5} mass concentrations at the eight sampling sites. The average PM_{2.5} mass concentrations inside the residential homes ranged from 69.5 to 713.0 μg/m³ with an average of 330.7 μg/m³. Whereas the average PM_{2.5} mass concentrations outside the residential homes ranged from 9.8 to 61.0 μg/m³ with an average of 29.1 μg/m³. As shown in Fig. 3, all the monitored residential homes had higher levels of indoor PM_{2.5} mass concentrations than those outdoors. The pattern of indoor PM_{2.5} mass

concentrations varied from site to site during the sampling periods, with large peaks corresponding to the condition of cooking stove and refuelling schedules. Indoor airborne particles were mainly emitted through the narrow cracks of the iron-cast stove or from the pot holes during adding fuel. The indoor/outdoor (I/O) ratios of PM_{2.5} mass concentration ranged from 2.8 to 31.0, implying insufficient ventilation in dwellings all over the Tibetan Plateau.

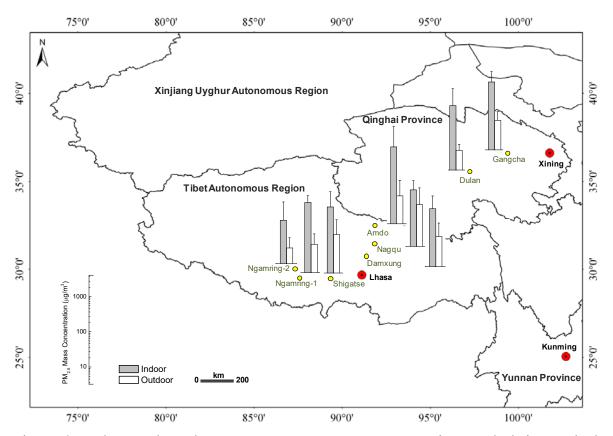


Figure 3. Indoor and outdoor average PM_{2.5} mass concentrations and their standard deviations at residential homes in pastoral and agro-pastoral regions on the Tibetan Plateau.

Indoor PM_{2.5} mass concentrations measured in this study were compared with those levels of particulate matters in residential homes using cattle, yak and sheep dung as fuel in the major pastoral regions in China (Table 4). Despite the variability in measurements and size differentiation of samples, the indoor winter PM_{2.5} in this study are much higher than the value monitored in tent with flue and much lower than that in tent without flue, implying that

the smoke exhaust efficiency and ventilation condition were the critical factors affecting the indoor particle level.

Table 4. Indoor mass concentrations of particulate matters in the residential homes using animal dung as fuel at different sampling sites in pastoral regions in China.

Province	Item	Housing type	Fuel type	Avg. time	Sampling location	Avg.±SD (μg/m³)	Source
TAR	$PM_{2.5}$	Residences	Yak dung	4 hours avg. at 1-min interval	Stove with flue	359.5±306.5	This
							study
TAR	$PM_{2.5}$	Residences	Yak dung &		Stove with flue	291.5±200.6	This
			straw				study
Qinghai	$PM_{2.5}$	Residences	Yak dung		Stove with flue	346.5±562.7	This
			_				study
TAR	$PM_{2.5}$	Herders' tent	Yak dung	Personnel sampler	Tent without flue	1272	16
			_	·	Tent with flue	97	
Qinghai	TSP	Residences	Yak dung	6×/day hourly filter weighing	Kitchen & Living	2204	17
			· ·	avg.	room avg.		
	PM_{10}				<u> </u>	1573	
Inner	TSP	Residences	Cow & sheep	Morning & afternoon avg.		Win. 1939	18
Mongolia			dung			Sum. 1061	
Ü	PM_{10}		Ü			Win. 1674	
						Sum. 830	
Gansu	PM_{10}	Residences	Yak dung	Morning & afternoon cooking time avg.	Hallway & bedroom avg.	3765±1504	19

Material Balance for Indoor PM2.5

The material balance approach has been used to estimate mass enclosure²⁰ and to evaluate the potential health hazards of indoor smoke from yak dung burning. By multiplying a characteristic coefficient, Fe is used to estimate the upper limit of geological material.²¹ Previous study has shown that Fe accounts for 4% of Asian dust.²² Thus, the concentration of geological material was considered as the mass concentrations of elemental Fe multiplied by 1/0.04. The amount of organic material was determined by multiplying the amount of OC by 1.6.^{23, 24}

The material balances for geological materials, organic materials, EC, ions (sum of Cl⁻, NO₃⁻, SO₄²-, Na⁺, NH₄⁺, K⁺, Mg²⁺, and Ca²⁺) and uncertain materials (as the difference between the measured mass and the sum of the major components) for indoor PM_{2.5} at all sampling sites were shown in Fig. 4. Distinct differences were found in the chemical compositions of PM_{2.5} emitted from combustion of dried yak dung and yak dung mixed with straw. In all of the residential homes in pastoral regions using dried yak dung as biofuel, carbonaceous species, especially OC, are the major component (70.0%, average) of indoor PM_{2.5} mass. OC, including polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) and other components

with both primary and secondary origins can have possible mutagenic and carcinogenic effects. On the other hand, in the three residential homes at Shigatse site, Ngamring-1 site, and at Ngamring-2 site, geological materials dominated in indoor PM2.5 with the weight percentage of 50.3%, 29.3%, and 58.1%, respectively. In those agro-pastoral regions, yak dung was mixed with highland barley straw and moulded to dung cake during which crustal materials were brought into the solid biofuels. The water-soluble K^+ in airborne particulate matters was considered as biomass burning marker. Compared with the water-soluble ionic component concentrations measured during straw combustion events in western China during 2006-2007, $^{25, 26}$ the K^+ concentrations in PM2.5 from yak dung burning (1.0 \pm 0.5 μ g/m³) were much lower than those from straw combustion (14.3 \pm 3.6 μ g/m³ in PM2.5 and 17.6 \pm 5.4 μ g/m³ in PM10), probably due to the yak's digestion of potassium.

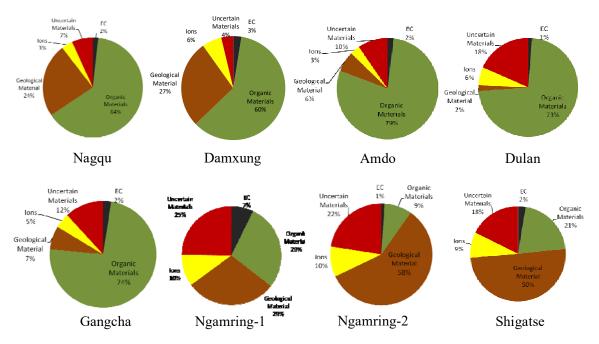


Figure 4. Material balance charts determined by chemical bulk analyses for PM_{2.5} at residential homes in pastoral and agro-pastoral regions on the Tibetan Plateau.

Morphology of Indoor Particles

The individual indoor PM_{2.5} particles were grouped into four dominant types according to their morphologies and elemental compositions as organic ball, soot aggregate, salt particle

and Soil dust (Fig. 5). The major elements of spherical organic balls detected by EDX were C and O with four typical morphologies, including sphere with smooth surface (Fig. 5a), sphere with holes (Fig. 5b), broken balls (Fig. 5c) and shrunk balls (Fig. 5d) with diameters from less than one micron to several microns. Nearly all soot particles were observed as chain-like aggregates (Fig. 5e and 5f) with submicron diameters. Several salt particles, including potassium chloride particle (Fig. 5g) and calcium sulphate particle (Fig. 5h) with diameters around one micron were also found. Soil dusts were classified according to their elemental composition enriched by Al and Si, and minor Na, Mg, Ca, Mn and Fe.

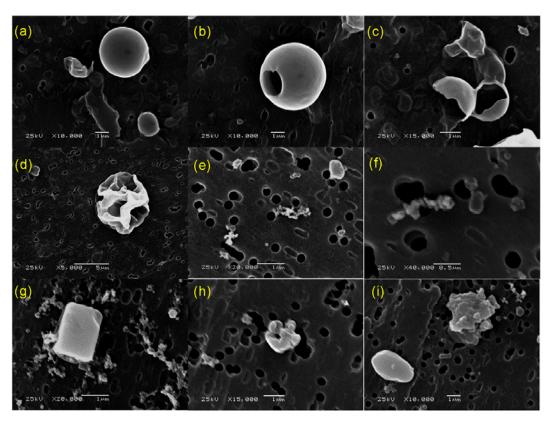


Figure 5. The morphologies of typical indoor particles: (a~d) organic balls; (e) and (f) soot aggregates; (g) potassium chloride particle; (h) calcium sulphate particle; (i) mineral dust.

The number percentages of each group in airborne particles collected in the residential homes at different sampling sites were illustrated in Fig. 6. A distinct difference was found by comparing the number percentages and mass fractions of major constituents in PM_{2.5} samples. As for the particle number concentrations, carbonaceous aerosols (almost equal

number of organic balls and soot aggregates) dominated among the four particle types. Those two types of particles were added up to >90% (in numbers) in indoor PM_{2.5} particles emitted from combustion of dried yak dung in stoves at all sampling sites. Soot aggregate was always the dominating component in numbers but EC occupied an obviously small percentage in the total PM_{2.5} mass due to their small size and loose structure. Soil dust was composed of silicate, quartz, sulphate, carbonate and aluminosilicate from natural sources, which were non-spherical particles with large size and high density. Although the contributions of soil dusts to PM_{2.5} mass were significant in samples collected at agro-pastoral regions, their number concentrations were only 7.2% at Shigatse site, 5.2% at Ngamring-1 site and 4.6% at Ngamring-2 site, respectively. Since aerosol adverse health effects are related to particle numbers,²⁷ results from bulk analysis techniques may have overestimated the human health risk associated with geological materials and underestimated the human health hazard associated with organic materials.

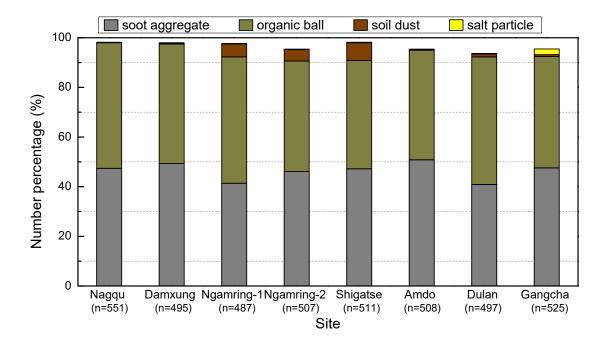


Figure 6. Classification and number percentage of each group in airborne particles collected in the residential homes at different sampling sites.

Conclusion

Although yak dung has been used as the most widespread solid fuel in traditional Tibetan household use for thousands of years, little is known about the indoor emission of dung combustion at a regional scale. In this study, the indoor air quality at eight residential homes was investigated to obtain a shot-term IAQ profile of emission from combustion of dried yak dung as biofuel in pastoral and agro-pastoral regions on the Tibetan Plateau. The indoor/outdoor ratios of PM_{2.5} mass concentration ranged from 2.8 to 31.0 with an average of 14.1 at all sampled homes. The real-time results also showed that particles emitted through cracks of the stove or from the pot hole during refuelling were the main source of indoor PM_{2.5}. Moreover, high content of submicron size carbonaceous particles, including OC (in mass concentration) and EC (in number concentration) in indoor solid fuel smoke may contain and/or have adsorbed toxic and hazardous substances, that could cause adverse health effects on human health with limited ventilation.

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Declaration

Tafeng Hu and Junji Cao conceived the basis of the research and drafted the manuscript, Shuncheng Lee, Kinfai Ho, and Xuxiang Li commented and discussed on the research, Suixin Liu and Ji Chen performed the sampling and experiments. The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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