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The Relation of Ultrafine Particle Emission Production to Temperature from Wood Burning

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Abstract— *Ultrafine particles have attracted some scientists to investigate the properties due to their impacts on human health. Wood burning is a source of the ultrafine particle producer identified as a significant contributor of the particles in the air. This study investigated the relationship between ultrafine particle emission production and combustion temperature of wood burning under controlled laboratory conditions called fast and slow burnings. The results show that particle concentrations emitted during the burnings are proportional to temperature. Under fast burning conditions, a linear relationship was found between ultrafine particle number concentration and temperature, and the linearity ratio varied between 0.93 - 0.97 depending on the type of sample burned.*

Keywords : Emission Production, Temperature, Wood Burning.

I. INTRODUCTION

Many large areas around the world are affected by biomass burning and data shows that 500 - 1000 million hectares of open forest and savannas are burned every year [1]. More than 1.3 million ha of forest were burnt in China in 1987. In the same year, forest fires in eastern Asia consumed approximately 14 million hectares [2]. Forest burning destroyed more than 5-20 million hectares in Indonesia in 1994 and 1997 [3]. Other data show that 10 million hectares of forest in northern latitudes; 40 million hectares of tropical and sub tropical forest, and 500-1000 million hectares of open forest and savannas are burnt every year. More than 5 million hectares of forest was destroyed by fires in Kalimantan during the 1982-83 El Nino drought, and 9 million hectares of vegetation were burnt in Sumatra and Kalimantan in 1997-98. Between 5 and 20 million hectares of forest are consumed by uncontrolled fire every year in North America and Eurasia. In Australia, 40 – 130 million hectares of land are burned annually [4]. The particle and gaseous emissions that result from biomass burning [5-11] not only impact upon human health ([12, 13] Samet et al. 2000; Levy et al. 2000; and Tolbert et al. 2000), but they also play an important role in a number of atmospheric processes [14-16].

Quantification and characterization of the emissions, as well as the factors influencing them, has been identified as a very important element in developing a quantitative assessment of their impacts on both humans and the environment. In general, laboratory measurements of particle number emission factors were found to range from 0.5×10^{13} to 40×10^{16} [7, 17].

Due to the complex processes that occur during biomass burning [18], a number of factors affect particle emission characteristics, including the type of biomass, as well as burning conditions [1, 7, 19-24]. Temperature also plays a vital role in biomass burning processes (hydrolysis, oxidization, dehydration and pyrolyzation) [18], where biomass compounds (celluloses, hemicelluloses, lignin, lipid, proteins, simple sugars, starches, water, hydrocarbon components (HC), ash and other compounds) [25] are converted into emission products. Although the characteristics of particle emissions from biomass burning has been reported in previous papers [18, 26], however there is still a limited understanding of the relationship between temperature and particle emission during the burning processes, and this relationship is not yet to be quantified. This study aimed to quantify the relationship between ultrafine particle emissions and temperature for different burning conditions, in order to gain a better understanding of the biomass burning process, as well as to provide information for emission production and dispersion models.

II. METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted by burning several wood samples, collected from Queensland forest trees, under controlled laboratory conditions. The experimental setup consisted of a burning system (modified stove), a dilution and sampling system, and a particle measurement system [7, 24] (see Figure 1). A modified commercial stove ($66 \times 74.5 \times 55\text{cm}^3$), fitted with a ventilation system to enable the introduction of a controlled amount of air into the stove, and was used to simulate different burning rates. In order to obtain a homogeneous

rate of air flow, the outlet of the ventilation system was connected to a rectangular hood, which was connected to a blower with a maximum capacity of 14 L/s, by a pipe 30 mm in diameter. The flow rate of the air was adjusted by a valve located at this connection.

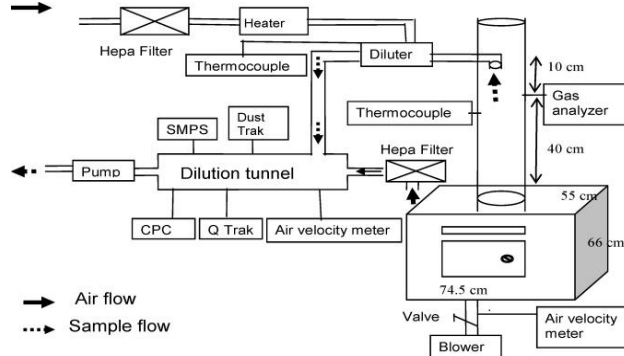


Fig 1. Experimental Setup Consisting Of The Burning System (Modified Stove), A Dilution And Sampling System, A Particle Measurement System and Temperature Measurement System [7, 24, 27].

A Particle Emission Measurements

Smoke samples were taken from the flue through a probe 1 cm in diameter and then introduced into an DEKATI ejector diluter where they were diluted 10 times with heated, compressed, particle-free air, in order to obtain a dry, diluted sample and prevent further coagulation. The sample was then mixed in a dilution tunnel with a constant flow of HEPA (High Efficiency Particulate Air) filtered ambient air get the concentration below 10^6 particles/cm³. The flow rate and temperature of the samples were measured using an air velocity meter. The velocity of air in the dilution tunnel was kept > 1 m/s to obtain a good mixing of the sample. The tunnel temperature was between 28°C and 30°C. The dilution ratio was calculated as:

$$DR = \frac{C_f - C_b}{C_d - C_b} \quad (1)$$

where C_f , C_d , and C_b are CO₂ concentrations measured using a flue gas analyzer and a TSI 8554 Q Trak Plus, in the flue, dilution tunnel and background, respectively [7]. Both instruments were calibrated prior to obtaining the measurements. The dilution ratio was found to vary from 100 to 200 depending on the burning conditions. Particle number concentrations during the burning process were measured continuously using a TSI 3022 CPC (condensation particle counter) operated to measure particles for the diameter in the range of 8 to 560 nm. The sampling interval was set of 20s.

B Temperature Measurements

Real-time temperature measurements were conducted during the burning process by using a K-type thermocouple in the flue. The L shaped thermocouple having a 30cm length of the end was placed 30 cm above the stove, with the end of the thermocouple passing through the stack, in order to measure real temperature during the burning process. The thermocouple was connected to a data logger, via an analogue to digital converter, for temperature recording. The temperature was recorded every 20 seconds during the burning process.

C. Sample Material and Preparation

The samples consisted of different species of hardwood collected from the trees growing in open forests at Mount Samson, located about 40 km west from the city of Brisbane, in Queensland, Australia. Five species of Eucalyptus were selected as samples according to their prevalence in the forest and these 5 species represent 5 existing types according to a classification. These were: Spottedgumm (*Eucalyptus citriodora*), Bluegum (*Eucalyptus tereticornis*), Blood wood (*Eucalyptus intermedia*), Ironbark (*Eucalyptus crebra*) and Stringybark (*Eucalyptus umbra*). The pieces of wood were placed in an open area of the laboratory for several months to obtain homogeneous moisture contents within the optimum range for burning (i.e. 20 - 30 %) [28]. The moisture was not measured directly from the trunk because the sharp part of the moisture meter was only one centimeter in length and therefore, the moisture content of each piece of the wood was measured after the logs were cut into smaller pieces suitable for burning (about 15 - 25 cm in length, with a diameter of 5 - 12 cm). The moisture content measurements were conducted by measuring the dry part (outer part) and wet part (inner part) of the wood several times. The measured moisture content of the samples varied from 18 - 26% for Spotted Gum (outer and inner,



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respectively), 15 - 26% for Blue Gum, 14 - 24% for Blood wood and 17 - 25% for Iron Bark. The moisture contents of the branches were 16 - 18% for Spotted Gum, 18 - 22% for Iron Bark and 18 - 20% for Stringybark.

D Burning Conditions

The experiment was designed and carefully controlled to capture the maximum number of parameters, which can be controlled under laboratory conditions. In particular, the flow rate for the experiments was chosen to correspond as closely as possible with the flow rates under natural conditions, represented by wind speed. It has been reported in the literature that most fires occur at a wind speed between 70 and 120 km/h. Bushfires in Australia occur under typical wind speed of about 80 km/h and with a rate of spread of 18-20 km/h ([http:// www.ffp.csiro.au](http://www.ffp.csiro.au)). The experiments were set up to simulate burning conditions by injecting air with the speed of 20 m/s (72 km/h) into the stove for fast burning and by keeping the stove unconnected to the blower during slow burning, so as not to force the air supply through the ventilation system (unforced flow rate of the incoming air was in the range between 1.7 and 2.5 m/s). The samples were burned in the stove under 'fast burning' and 'slow burning' conditions. During fast burning, the stove was connected to a blower that introduced fresh air with a maximum velocity of 20 m/s. Under slow burning conditions, the blower was not connected to the ventilation system during the burning process. Air velocity at the base of the stove was measured at several points, using an air velocity meter, while the door of the stove was closed. The air velocity across the horizontal cross section was relatively homogeneous for a radius of 15 cm from the middle of the stove base, with a speed of 1.8 - 2.0 m/s. Therefore, the samples were placed in the centre of the stove's base, in order to ensure the same air velocity across each set of experiments. To ignite the wood, newspaper and small pieces of the same wood type were used for the first sample. Pieces of the same wood type were used to ignite the following samples [24]. Each type of wood was burned 3 times, under both fast and slow burning conditions, with some sets of measurements repeated several days later, in order to confirm the reproducibility of the results for the same wood species. These results showed that the measurements conducted on different days gave consistent results. However, since ambient conditions varied between the different days, only the data collected during one day was used.

E Data Analysis

Ultrafine particle concentration and temperature were plotted as a function of time, in order to investigate real-time emission production. The concentration and temperature data were also statistically analysed for each sample and plotted against each other, in order to quantify the relationship between temperature and emission production.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Figure 2 shows the time series of the ultrafine particle concentration and temperature measured during fast burning. From the figure it can be seen that particle number concentration followed the variation in temperature. The highest particle number concentration occurred at the same time as the highest temperature for all samples measured. Overall, the fast burning of blood wood and ironbark produced the highest particle number concentrations, being 9.3×10^8 particles/cm³ at 540 °C and 8.5×10^8 particles/cm³ at 535 °C, respectively. Spotted gum, stringy bark, and bluegum emitted 6.9×10^8 particles/cm³, 6.8×10^8 particles/cm³ and 6.1×10^8 particles/cm³ at temperatures of 565 °C, 535 °C and 436 °C, respectively. Therefore, this data shows that burning temperature is an important factor in the determining particle number concentration, and that, in general, high particle number concentrations resulted in from high burning temperatures.

As shown in Figure 3, a similar relationship was also observed for slow burning, however slow burning generally yielded lower particle number concentrations and lower temperatures than fast burning. The lower temperatures observed during slow burning were the result of an unstable flame, which would ignite and go out every few seconds, as a result of the limited flow of air in the chamber. Large fluctuations in particle number concentration during slow burning were also observed as a result of the unstable flame. Consequently, the production of UFP particles varied greatly during the burning process, especially for blood wood, bluegum and spotted gum, being the harder types of wood among the samples burned.

For slow burning, stringy bark and bluegum produced the highest particle number concentrations, being 6.2×10^8 particles/cm³ at 425 °C and 3.3×10^7 particles/cm³ at 400 °C, respectively. In contrast, blood wood produced the lowest particle number concentrations, being 1.7×10^7 particles/cm³ at 370 °C. This result was not unexpected, given that blood wood was the hardest of the woods sampled, and the influence of hardness on particle emission production was established in a previous paper by the authors [7]. Ironbark and spotted gum emitted 2.9×10^7 particles/cm³ and 1.9×10^7 particles/cm³ at temperatures of 390 °C and 385 °C, respectively.



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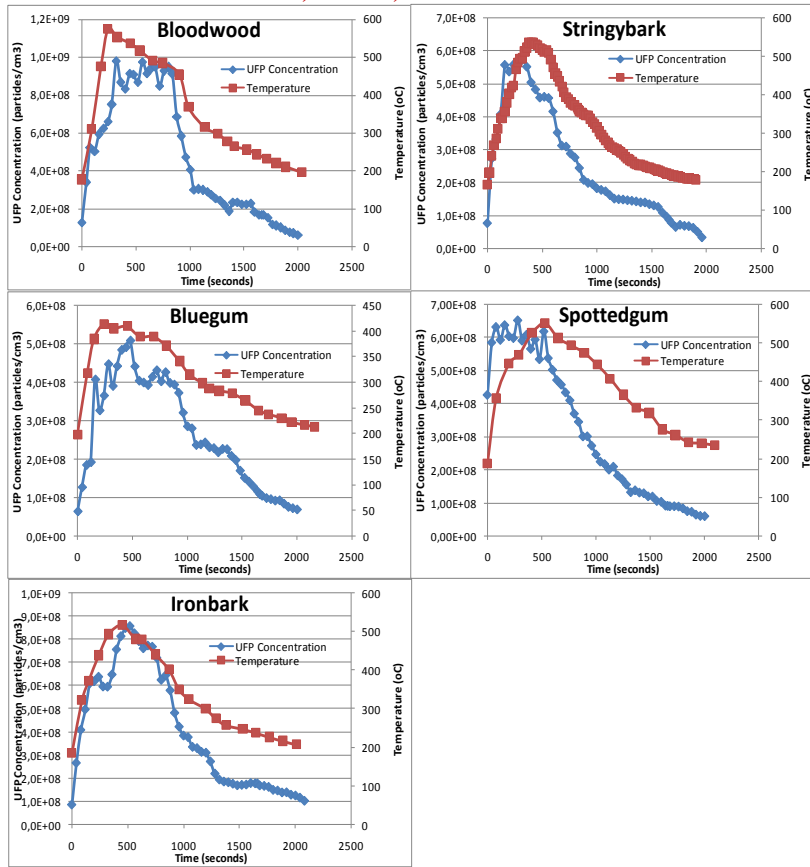


Fig 2. Time Series of Average UFP Concentrations and Temperatures For Fast Burning

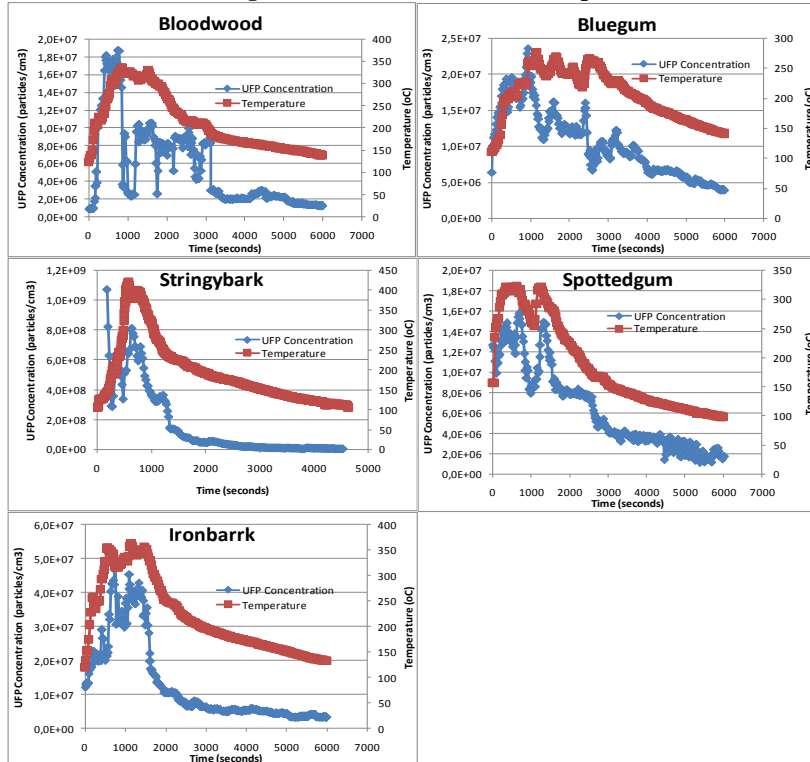


Fig 3. Time Series of Average UFP Concentrations and Temperatures for Slow Burning

Figure 4 shows the relationship between particle number concentration and temperature during fast burning. A significant linear relationship ($R^2 > 9.3$) was observed for all samples except bluegum and stringybark. Although fluctuations in particle number concentration meant that there was a large error when calculating the R^2 for slow burning, it was found that particle number concentrations were still proportional to temperature during slow burning. Whilst previous studies reported that particle production was proportional to flame size during the flaming process [29, 30], this paper reports particle production data throughout the entire burning process.

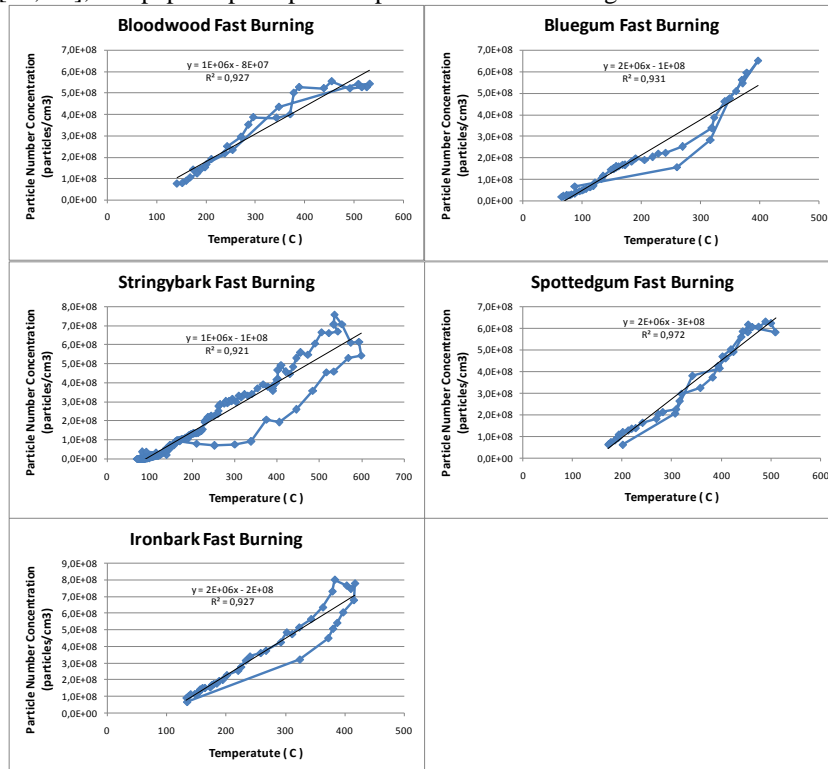


Fig 4. UFP Concentration Versus Temperature Of Fast Burning (The Arrows Show Temperature Increases and Decreases)

Overall results show that ultrafine particle formation in fast and slow burnings depends on combustion temperature. To understand the UFP particle formation, it may necessary to discuss burning process that involves physical and chemical processes and is divided into ignition, flaming and smouldering processes [31, 32]. The particle formation is started by the creation of condensation nuclei in the flame zone in which most particles are cyclic molecules in polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) [33-35]. Then the PAH molecules grow to higher molecules through chemical and coagulation processes [36]. In flaming, arising temperature causes a pyrolysis process in which the molecules decompose into small ones [31, 37]. In terms of fast burning, high temperature results in more decomposition of the molecules, consequently more ultrafine particles are emitted. In slow burning, less oxygen supplying during the burning produces lower temperature. In sufficient oxygen transported during pyrolysis process may be not high enough to complete oxidation process. This causes the ultrafine particles undergo a secondary condensation growth phase as a result the larger particles is formed. The previous studies confirm this phenomena that is smaller particles are produced during fast burning rather than slow burning [27, 38].

IV. CONCLUSION

In summary, it was found that burning conditions influenced the relationship between particle concentration and temperature, and that fast burning resulted in relatively high particle concentrations and temperatures, when compared to slow burning. For fast burning, a statistically significant linear relationship was obtained between UFP concentration and temperature, however whilst slow burning displayed similar trends, large fluctuation in concentration meant that this relationship was not statistically significant. Knowledge of the relationship between particle concentration and temperature is very important to estimate particle emissions released in the atmosphere



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during open biomass burning, and also useful for dispersion model for biomass burning particles, especially for emission production model. In terms of emission production model, heat rates (heat intensity (heat released per second) and heat severity (heat released per unit area)) are related to convective energy used to transport the particles vertically before they disperse horizontally. More heat released means the higher the emissions are raised in the air. The height of the emissions causes the mixing height of the atmosphere boundary layer to become larger, which affects the dispersion process of the emissions. Heat rate also can be related to estimated particles released by biomass burning. This study obtained that particle concentrations are proportional to temperature. Based on this study, more heat released by biomass burning means more particles produced. By measuring temperature from burned area, amount of particles released in the area can be estimated.

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