



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF DEVELOPMENT MATHEMATICS

ISSN: 3026-8656 (Print) | 3026-8699 (Online)

journal homepage: <https://ijdm.org.ng/index.php/Journals>



## A Mathematical Model of Indoor Air Pollution and Its Effects on Human Respiratory Health

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### ARTICLE INFO

#### Article history:

Received 10 January 2025

Received in revised form 10 March 2025

Accepted 27 March 2025

#### Keywords:

Mathematical Model, Indoor Air Quality, Pollution, Stability, Simulation.

#### MSC 2020 Subject classification:

34A30, 34A34, 92B05, 92-10

### ABSTRACT

Indoor air quality (IAQ) refers to the quality of air within and around buildings and structures, which is known to affect the comfort and well-being of the building occupants. Research on the urban population has confirmed that people spend more than 90% of their daily life span in indoor environments. This study aims to formulate a mathematical model that can help study indoor air quality dynamics and its impact on the human respiratory system. The formulated seven linear differential equations of first order were found to be uniform and asymptotically stable and the model has a unique solution using the Picard – Lindelof Method. Numerical simulations were carried out to study the effect of indoor pollutants on the human respiratory system and the results were graphed. The results indicate that this model can be used to study the effect of indoor pollutants on the human respiratory system perfectly and hence recommended.

### 1. Introduction

The quality of air within and around buildings has become a subject of research recently. Researches by Jones (1999), Sisask *et al.*, (2014) and Vilcekova *et al.*, (2017) indicated that the quality of air within and around buildings has become a subject of research recently because the quality of air within and around buildings is a major cause of health and wellbeing of human. Also, people globally spent 90% of their everyday life inside (residential, commercial, institutional, industrial etc) building environment (Klepeis *et al.*, 2001; Mannan and Al-Ghamdi, 2021). As a result of improvement in standard of living today, several chemicals and synthetic materials are used for the construction of the inside building decoration which may have negative impacts on the human respiratory system. Also, some materials such as air fresheners, Carbon monoxide from cooking, cleaning agents etc are other sources of indoor air pollution which has several effects on the human respiratory system (Klepeis *et al.*, 2001; Sundell, 2004; Prajakta, *et al.*, 2013; Lone *et al.*, 2021; Mannan and Al-Ghamdi, 2021). However, most environmental researches are focused on outdoor air quality (Sundell, 2004), while indoor air quality (Pollution) has received little attention. Recently, United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA, 2013) has shown that indoor air is more adulterated than outdoor air. WHO (2007) reported that more than 1.5 million people died due to indoor air quality (pollution). It is established that indoor air quality (pollution) is acknowledged as the third main cause of disability-accustomed life worldwide (Apte, 2016).

The human respiratory system plays a central role in transporting oxygen ( $O_2$ ) and carbon dioxide ( $CO_2$ ) between tissues in the body. Human tissues can survive for many days without food but cannot survive without the exchange of oxygen and carbon dioxide (Lone *et al.*, 2021). The human respiratory system is a process where the oxygen which is available free in the environment is inhaled (about 260 ml/min if oxygen under normal conditions) into the Arterial blood through the Alveolar tissue and then to the tissues where it is used (Salathe *et al.*, 1980; Nunn, 1987; Guyton and Hall, 2011). As a by product at the tissues, carbon dioxide (about 160 ml/min of carbon hydrate under normal conditions) is transported through to the Venous blood to the Alveolar tissue and then to the environment (Nunn, 1987; Ottesen *et al.*, 2004; Guyton and Hall, 2011).

Mathematics is a vital tool in the hand of scientists for solving real-world problems (Khanday and Najjar, 2015a; Khanday and Najjar, 2015b; Kwaghkor and Luga, 2016; Kwaghkor *et al.*, 2018; Kwaghkor *et al.*, 2019; Kwaghkor *et al.*, 2021; Kwaghkor *et al.*, 2022; Orapine *et al.*, 2023; Kwaghkor *et al.*, 2024; Lone *et al.*, 2021). Krogh (1919) first presented an oxygen transport model where oxygen from a capillary circulates only into a tissue tube concentric with the capillary. An extension and modification of Krogh model was done by Blum (1960) where he added the capillary

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<https://doi.org/10.62054/ijdm/0201.11>

wall resistance. After this, several researchers extended and studied the oxygen transport and carbon dioxide transport models (see Salathe *et al.*, 1980; Lin, 1976; Simpson and Ellery, 2012; Clark *et al.*, 2006; Cherniack *et al.* 1966). Recently, Lone *et al.*, (2021) formulated oxygen and carbon dioxide transport model through blood in the body where he estimated the concentration profiles of oxygen and carbon dioxide over alveolar tissue, arterial blood, tissue and venous blood compartments. The model was a four-compartmental one with alveolar tissue, arterial blood, tissue and venous blood as the compartment. The transportation of oxygen and carbon dioxide in human body was found to have partial pressure as a main driving force. In this study, we shall formulate a mathematical model of indoor air quality (pollutant) and the human respiratory system by adding a first order differential equation of indoor air quality (pollutant concentration) to the mathematical model by Lone *et al.*, (2021).

## 2. Methods

### The Model

The formulation of this model shall be done in two stages: (1) the indoor concentration of air pollutant and, (2) the human respiratory system.

### The Indoor Concentration of Air Pollutant Model (ICAPM)

The Indoor Concentration of Air Pollutant Model (ICAPM) is presented in equation (1) based on Figure 1 and the following assumptions: A house or room in a house or other enclosed space is envisaged as a simple box, the contents of the box are well mixed, the rate of inflow into the box is not equal to the rate of outflow, inflow rate depends on outdoor air concentration, outflow rate depends on indoor air concentration, there is an indoor source and sink of pollutant, indoor air concentration follows a simple mass balance principle.

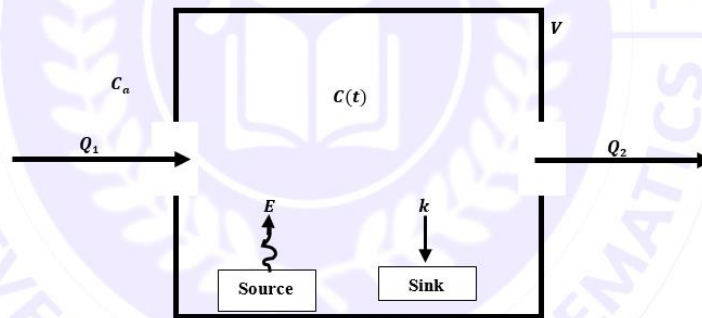


Figure 1: Flow diagram for the ICAPM

### The Indoor Concentration of Air Pollutant Model (ICAPM) Equation

The Indoor Concentration of Air Pollutant Model (ICAPM) Equation is presented as

$$V \frac{dC(t)}{dt} = Q_1 C_a + E - Q_2 C(t) - kC(t)V$$

Which is equivalent to

$$\frac{dC(t)}{dt} = \frac{Q_1 C_a}{V} + \frac{E}{V} - \left( \frac{Q_2}{V} + k \right) C(t), \quad C(0) = C_0 \quad (1)$$

From equation (1),  $V$  is the volume of the box,  $C(t)$  is the concentration of pollutant in the box at time  $t$ ,  $C_a$  is the outdoor air pollutant concentration around the box,  $C_0$  is the Initial indoor air pollutant,  $Q_1$  is the inflow rate of pollutant,  $Q_2$  is the outflow rate of pollutant,  $E$  is the indoor emission rate of pollutant (Source) and  $k$  is the pollutant decay coefficient (Sink).

### The Human Respiratory System Model (HRSM)

Here, a four-compartment model of human respiratory system consisting of alveolar tissue, arterial blood and tissue with concentration of oxygen where considered. Also considered are the tissue, venous blood and alveolar tissue with concentration of carbon dioxide. A schematic overview of the four-compartment model of oxygen and carbon dioxide transport via blood in the human body is presented in Figure 2. The HRSM is presented in equations (2) – (7)

based on Figure 2 and the following assumptions: The concentrations of both inhaled and exhaled air at any compartment follows a simple mass balance principle, the blood flowing through the capillaries is treated as a homogeneous mixture of Plasma and Red Blood Cells, the interaction of the inhaled air ( $O_2$ ) and exhaled air ( $CO_2$ ) are taken constant, the production of carbon dioxide in the tissue is proportional to the consumption of oxygen and the mass exchange between compartments is represented by concentration gradient.

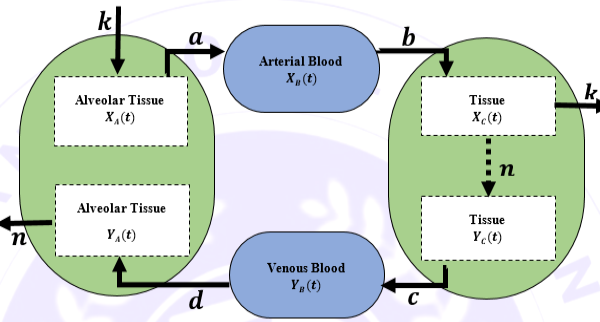


Figure 2: Flow diagram for the HRSM

### The Human Respiratory System Model (HRSM) Equations

Based on the assumptions, variables, parameters and the flow diagram in Figure 2, the model equations of the human respiratory system is given as

$$\frac{dX_A(t)}{dt} = kC(t) - aX_A(t), \quad X_A(0) = X_0 \quad (2)$$

$$\frac{dX_B(t)}{dt} = aX_A(t) - bX_B(t), \quad X_B(0) = \sigma \quad (3)$$

$$\frac{dX_C(t)}{dt} = bX_B(t) - kX_C(t), \quad X_C(0) = \delta \quad (4)$$

$$\frac{dY_C(t)}{dt} = nbX_B(t) - cY_C(t), \quad Y_C(0) = Y_0 \quad (5)$$

$$\frac{dY_B(t)}{dt} = cY_C(t) - dY_B(t), \quad Y_B(0) = \sigma^* \quad (6)$$

$$\frac{dY_A(t)}{dt} = dY_B(t) - nY_A(t), \quad Y_A(0) = \delta^* \quad (7)$$

Equation (1) is describing indoor air quality concentrations. Equations (2) – (4) is describing Oxygen ( $O_2$ ) transport from inhalation through the Alveolar Tissues, then through Arterial Blood to Tissues. While equations (5) – (7) is describing carbon dioxide ( $CO_2$ ) transport from Tissues, then through Venous Blood, then through the Alveolar Tissue to exhalation. Equations (1) – (7) is the required mathematical model equations that can be used to study the effects of indoor air pollutants concentration on the human respiratory system.

### 3. Model Analysis

#### Stability of the Model

##### Theorem 1: Stability Criteria

Suppose that the  $n$  – square matrix  $A$  has eigenvalues  $\lambda_i$  ( $i = 1, 2, \dots, n$ ). Then the stability of a solution of the linear system  $X' = Ax$  is determined according to the following criteria:

- (i) If  $Re(\lambda_i) < 0$ , for all  $i$ , then there is uniform asymptotic stability,
- (ii) If  $Re(\lambda_i) \leq 0$ , for any  $i$  or algebraic multiplicity equals geometric multiplicity whenever  $\lambda_i = 0$ , for any  $i$ , then there is uniform stability,
- (iii) If  $Re(\lambda_i) > 0$ , for any  $i$  or algebraic multiplicity is greater than the geometric multiplicity whenever  $\lambda_i = 0$ , for any  $i$ , then there is instability.

### Proof

The matrix form of the model equations (1) – (7) is given as

$$\begin{pmatrix} C'(t) \\ X'_A(t) \\ X'_B(t) \\ X'_C(t) \\ Y'_C(t) \\ Y'_B(t) \\ Y'_A(t) \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} -\alpha & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ k & -a & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & a & -b & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & b & -k & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & bn & 0 & -c & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & c & -d & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & d & -n \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} C(t) \\ X_A(t) \\ X_B(t) \\ X_C(t) \\ Y_C(t) \\ Y_B(t) \\ Y_A(t) \end{pmatrix} + \begin{pmatrix} \frac{Q_1 C_a}{v} + \frac{E}{v} \\ 0 \\ 0 \\ 0 \\ 0 \\ 0 \\ 0 \end{pmatrix} \quad (8)$$

$$X'(t) = AX(t) + B \quad (9)$$

$$\text{where } X'(t) = \begin{pmatrix} C'(t) \\ X'_A(t) \\ X'_B(t) \\ X'_C(t) \\ Y'_C(t) \\ Y'_B(t) \\ Y'_A(t) \end{pmatrix}, \quad A = \begin{pmatrix} -\alpha & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ k & -a & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & a & -b & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & b & -k & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & bn & 0 & -c & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & c & -d & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & d & -n \end{pmatrix},$$

$$X(t) = \begin{pmatrix} C(t) \\ X_A(t) \\ X_B(t) \\ X_C(t) \\ Y_C(t) \\ Y_B(t) \\ Y_A(t) \end{pmatrix}, \quad B = \begin{pmatrix} \frac{Q_1 C_a}{v} + \frac{E}{v} \\ 0 \\ 0 \\ 0 \\ 0 \\ 0 \\ 0 \end{pmatrix} \text{ and } \alpha = \frac{Q_2}{v} + k$$

Using  $|A - \lambda I| = 0$ , the eigenvalues of (8) are given as  $\lambda_1 = -\left(\frac{Q_2}{v} + k\right)$ ,  $\lambda_2 = -a$ ,  $\lambda_3 = -b$ ,  $\lambda_4 = -c$ ,  $\lambda_5 = -d$ ,  $\lambda_6 = -k$ ,  $\lambda_7 = -n$ . Since the eigenvalues are all negative, the model (1) – (7) has uniform asymptotic stability. Hence the proof. This means that the model can be used to study the effect of indoor air pollutant on the human respiratory system perfectly.

### Existence and Uniqueness Solution of the Model

**Theorem 1:** (Picard-Lindelof Theorem). Let  $f: R \rightarrow R$  be a continuous function and let  $(\tau, A) \in \mathbb{R}$ . If  $\exists$  a constant  $L \geq 0$  satisfying the Lipschitz condition  $|f(t, y_2) - f(t, y_1)| \leq L|y_2 - y_1|$ , for all  $(t, y_2), (t, y_1) \in \mathbb{R}$ , then the initial value problem (IVP)  $y' = f(t, y)$ ,  $y(0) = x_0$  has a unique solution  $x = x(t)$  on the interval  $\tau$ .

### Proof

The functions  $f_1(t, C(t)) = \frac{Q_1 C_a}{v} + \frac{E}{v} - \left(\frac{Q_2}{v} + k\right)C(t)$ ,  $f_2(t, X_A(t)) = kC(t) - aX_A(t)$ ,  $f_3(t, X_B(t)) = aX_A(t) - bX_B(t)$ ,  $f_4(t, X_C(t)) = bX_B(t) - kX_C(t)$ ,  $f_5(t, Y_C(t)) = n - cY_C(t)$ ,  $f_6(t, Y_B(t)) = cY_C(t) - dY_B(t)$  and  $f_7(t, Y_A(t)) = dX_B(t) - nY_A(t)$  are all polynomial functions which implies continuity. Now, by Lipschitz condition

$$|f_1(t, C_2(t)) - f_1(t, C_1(t))| = \left| -\left(\frac{Q_2}{v} + k\right)(C_2(t) - C_1(t)) \right| \quad (10)$$

$$|f_2(t, X_{A_2}(t)) - f_2(t, X_{A_1}(t))| = |-a(X_{A_2}(t) - X_{A_1}(t))| \quad (10)$$

$$|f_3(t, X_{B_2}(t)) - f_3(t, X_{B_1}(t))| = |-b(X_{B_2}(t) - X_{B_1}(t))| \quad (11)$$

$$|f_4(t, X_{C_2}(t)) - f_4(t, X_{C_1}(t))| = |-k(X_{C_2}(t) - X_{C_1}(t))| \quad (12)$$

$$|f_5(t, Y_{C_2}(t)) - f_5(t, Y_{C_1}(t))| = |-c(Y_{C_2}(t) - Y_{C_1}(t))| \quad (13)$$

$$|f_6(t, Y_{B_2}(t)) - f_6(t, Y_{B_1}(t))| = |-d(Y_{B_2}(t) - Y_{B_1}(t))| \quad (14)$$

$$|f_7(t, Y_{A_2}(t)) - f_7(t, Y_{A_1}(t))| = |-n(Y_{A_2}(t) - Y_{A_1}(t))| \quad (13)$$

Applying Cauchy's inequality on (9) – (12) gives

$$|f_1(t, C_2(t)) - f_1(t, C_1(t))| \leq \beta |C_2(t) - C_1(t)| \quad (14)$$

$$|f_2(t, X_{A_2}(t)) - f_2(t, X_{A_1}(t))| \leq \gamma |X_{A_2}(t) - X_{A_1}(t)| \quad (15)$$

$$|f_3(t, X_{B_2}(t)) - f_3(t, X_{B_1}(t))| \leq \delta |X_{B_2}(t) - X_{B_1}(t)| \quad (16)$$

$$|f_4(t, X_{C_2}(t)) - f_4(t, X_{C_1}(t))| \leq \theta |X_{C_2}(t) - X_{C_1}(t)| \quad (17)$$

$$|f_5(t, Y_{C_2}(t)) - f_5(t, Y_{C_1}(t))| \leq \vartheta |Y_{C_2}(t) - Y_{C_1}(t)| \quad (18)$$

$$|f_6(t, Y_{B_2}(t)) - f_6(t, Y_{B_1}(t))| \leq \rho |Y_{B_2}(t) - Y_{B_1}(t)| \quad (19)$$

$$|f_7(t, Y_{A_2}(t)) - f_7(t, Y_{A_1}(t))| \leq \sigma |Y_{A_2}(t) - Y_{A_1}(t)| \quad (20)$$

where  $\beta = \left| -\left(\frac{Q_2}{V} + k\right) \right|$ ,  $\gamma = |-a|$ ,  $\delta = |-b|$ ,  $\theta = |-k|$ ,  $\vartheta = |-c|$ ,  $\rho = |-d|$  and  $\sigma = |-K_e|$ . Since the Lipschitz condition is satisfied, the model (1) has a unique solution. Hence, the system (1) – (4) satisfied the Lipschitz conditions. So the system has a unique solution.

## 4. Results

### Numerical Simulation

Various simulations were carried out using the values of Table 1 and the results are presented in the graphs below.

Table 1: Values of parameters/variables

Variable/Parameters	Value	Units	Source
$a$	0.9375	$S^{-1}$	Lone et al, (2021)
$b$	0.625	$S^{-1}$	Lone et al, (2021)
$c$	0.9375	$S^{-1}$	Lone et al, (2021)
$d$	0.625	$S^{-1}$	Lone et al, (2021)
$k$	$3.72 \times 10^{-8}$	$S^{-1}$	Lone et al, (2021)
$n$	$2.72 \times 10^{-8}$	$S^{-1}$	Lone et al, (2021)
$E$	50	$\mu g s^{-1}$	Assumed
$V$	200	$\mu g m^{-3}$	Assumed
$C_0$	100	$\mu g m^{-3}$	Assumed
$C_a$	100	$\mu g m^{-3}$	Assumed
$Q_1$	0.50	$S^{-1}$	Assumed
$Q_2$	0.40	$S^{-1}$	Assumed
$X_0$	$3.72 \times 10^{-6}$	$mol/cm^3$	Lone et al, (2021)
$Y_0$	$3.72 \times 10^{-6}$	$mol/cm^3$	Lone et al, (2021)

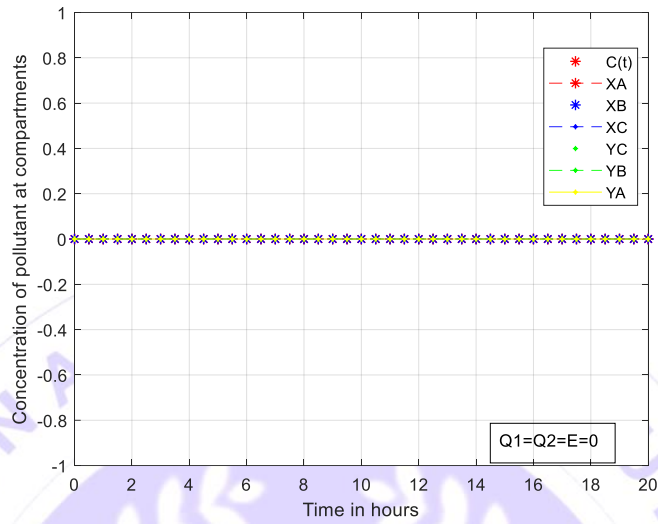


Figure 3: Pollutant concentration when  $Q_1 = Q_2 = E = 0$

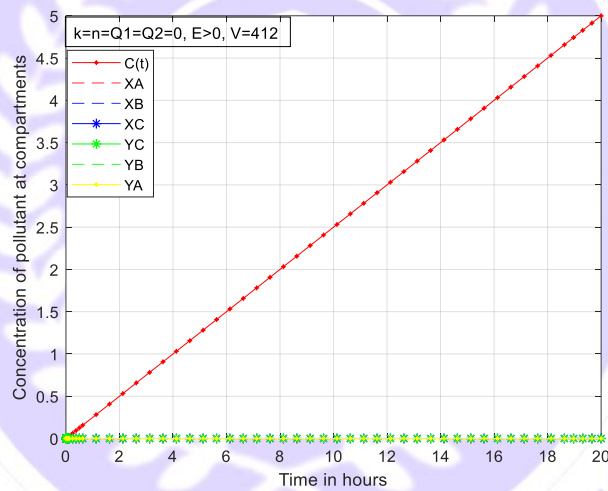


Figure 4: Pollutant concentration when  $k = n = Q_1 = Q_2 = 0, E > 0, V = 412m^3$

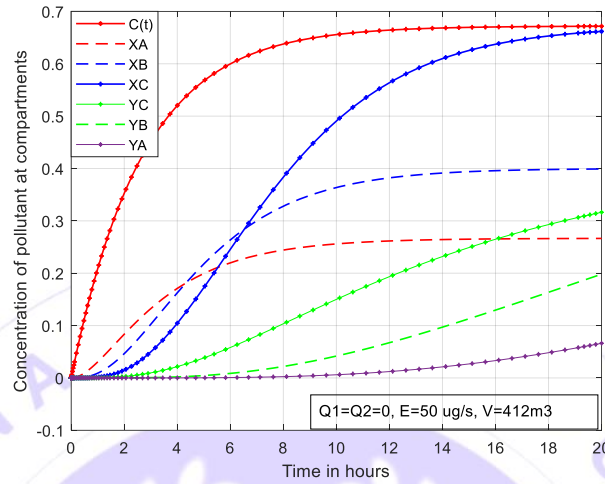


Figure 5: Pollutant concentration when  $k > 0, n > 0, Q_1 = Q_2 = 0, E > 0$  and  $V = 412m^3$

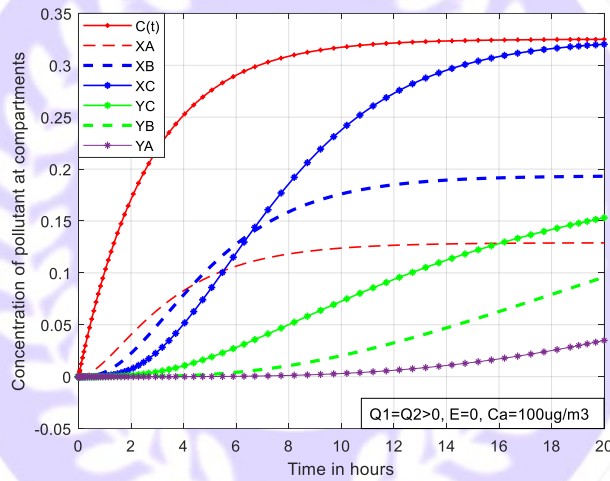


Figure 6: Pollutant concentration when  $Q_1 = Q_2 > 0, E = 0, C_a = 100$  and  $V = 412m^3$

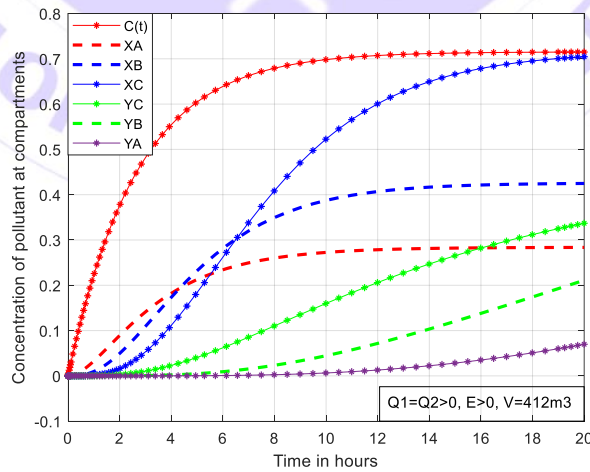
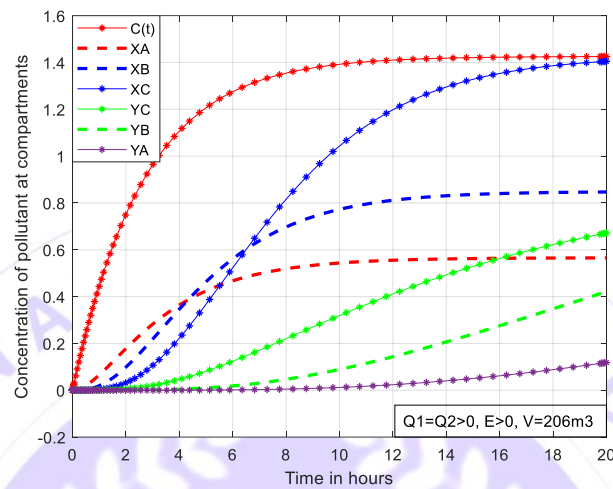
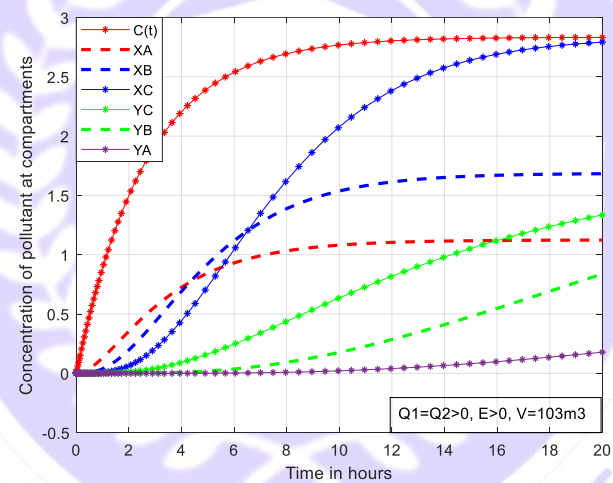


Figure 7: Pollutant concentration when  $Q_1 = Q_2 > 0$ ,  $E > 0$ , and  $V = 412m^3$ Figure 8: Pollutant concentration when  $Q_1 = Q_2 > 0$ ,  $E > 0$ , and  $V = 206m^3$ Figure 9: Pollutant concentration when  $Q_1 = Q_2 > 0$ ,  $E > 0$ , and  $V = 103m^3$ 

## 5. Discussion

Graph of Figure 3 assumed a situation where there is no pollutant in the room, so there will be zero pollutant concentration at the various compartments. This shows that people within the room will not have issue with breathing. Figure 4 indicates a situation where pollutant concentration in the room is only generated through internal emission (source). But because  $k = 0$ , the concentration of pollutant at the various compartments will be zero also. This probably mean that no person is within the room. Figure 5 shows that as the concentration of pollutant in the room is increasing due to indoor emission of pollutant ( $E > 0$ ), the concentration at various compartments will begin to raise within one hour and as time progresses, the concentration at the tissue is almost being equal to the concentration in the room. This shows that the more you stay in a room with pollutant concentration, the more complications you will have with your breathing (respiratory System). Figure 6 shows that as the concentration of pollutant in the room is increasing due to outdoor (surrounding) pollutant ( $C_a = 100\mu gm^{-3}$ ), the concentration at various compartments will begin to increase within one hour and as time progresses, the concentration at the tissue is almost being equal to the concentration in the

room. But the volume of pollutant here (about  $0.33\mu\text{gm}^{-3}$ ) is less compared to that of Figure 5 (about  $0.68\mu\text{gm}^{-3}$ ). This shows that the indoor air pollutant has more effect on the human respiratory System than the surrounding pollutant if the room is well ventilated. In Figure 7 where the source of the room pollutant concentration is both from within and the surrounding, the volume of the concentration in the room (about  $0.72\mu\text{gm}^{-3}$ ) and at the compartment is higher compared to that of Figure 5 (about  $0.68\mu\text{gm}^{-3}$ ) and 6 (about  $0.33\mu\text{gm}^{-3}$ ). Any person in this room will have more difficulty in breathing. In Figure 8, the volume of pollutant concentration in the room is high (about  $1.41\mu\text{gm}^{-3}$ ) probably because of the size of the room. Here the room half of the ones of Figure 3 to Figure 7. In Figure 9, the concentration of pollutant in the room in this case (which is half of the room in Figure 8) is higher (about  $2.85\mu\text{gm}^{-3}$ ). The results of Figure 8 and Figure 9 indicates that the smaller the room, the more complication people living inside will have with the breathing (respiratory system). The results here shows that this model can be used to study the effect of indoor air pollution on the human respiratory system perfectly and hence recommended.

## 6. Conclusion

In this study, we formulated a mathematical model of indoor air quality (pollutant) and the human respiratory system by adding a first order differential equation of indoor air quality (pollutant concentration) to the mathematical model by Lone *et al.*, (2021). The formulated seven linear differential equations of first order were found to be uniform and asymptotically stable, and the model has a unique solution using the Picard – Lindelof Method. Numerical simulations were carried out to study the effect of indoor pollutants on the human respiratory system and the results were graphed. The results indicate that this model can be used to study the effect of indoor pollutants on the human respiratory system perfectly and hence recommended.

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