

HAZARD ASSESSMENT OF OUTDOOR GAMMA RADIATION IN TAVSANLI, KUTAHYA REGION OF TURKIYE

by

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In the present study, outdoor gamma dose rates have been measured by using a NaI(Tl) scintillation detector in 20 measurement points in the Tavsanly district center of Kutahya province in Turkiye. Annual effective dose equivalents and lifetime cancer risks have been calculated from the obtained results as $(106.64 \pm 6.20) \mu\text{Sv}$ and $(3.73 \pm 0.2) \cdot 10^{-4}$, respectively. The results have been compared with those of other studies for Turkiye and the world literature

Key words: outdoor gamma dose rate, annual effective dose equivalent, lifetime cancer risk

INTRODUCTION

The significance of knowing the radiation exposure level has increased since Becquerel's 1896 discovery of radioactivity and the subsequent realization of the harmful impact of radiation on human health. Ionizing radiation, also referred to as nuclear radiation, consists of alpha and beta particles, cosmic rays, gamma and X-rays, and free neutrons. Radiation can be categorized into natural and artificial types based on their sources. The 88 % of the annual radiation dose consists of natural sources and 12 % consists of artificial sources, although it varies depending on the geographical and physical conditions of the living environment [1].

Alpha, beta particles, and gamma rays emitted from natural and artificial sources constitute terrestrial radiation. Gamma rays, which have much greater penetrability and range than alpha and beta particles, arise from differences in the energy levels of the nucleus and emit electromagnetic radiation. In daily life, humans are exposed to gamma rays from artificial and natural radiation sources, both indoors and outdoors [2].

The radiation exposure that affects humans is known as the gamma dose rate (*GDR*). It is given as the equivalent dose at a specific location once per hour and its unity is given as Rh^{-1} ($1\text{R} = 258 \mu\text{C/kg}$). The *GDR* which emanates from vs. natural and artificial sources. There are two main sources of natural gamma radiation: terrestrial and cosmic. The radioactive

nuclides that are found in air, soil, and water are the terrestrial source [3]. Artificial radioactivity stems from biomedical sources, nuclear detonations, consumer goods, nuclear power facilities, and associated fuel cycles. Cosmic radiation contributes to background radiation through cosmic rays, with variations in elevation and altitude affecting its impact. Through interactions with the atmosphere, cosmogenic radionuclides like ^3H , ^7Be , ^{14}C , ^{22}Na , etc., are produced. Mainly found terrestrial radionuclides such as ^{40}K , ^{87}Rb , ^{138}La , ^{147}Sm , ^{176}Lu , and decay products from ^{238}U , ^{232}Th , and ^{235}U series [1]. Understanding their environmental distribution, especially in soils and rocks, is crucial for radiation protection and measurement [4]. In addition, small amounts of radioactivity can be detected in drinking water, although the levels and types of radioactivity present may vary depending on the specific soil and rock formations the water has traveled through. Natural or artificial radionuclides such as ^{40}P , ^3H , ^{14}C , ^{87}Rb , and alpha emitters like ^{226}Ra , ^{210}Po , U, Th, $^{220,222}\text{Rn}$ can be present in water. Natural radionuclides in the soil contribute to gamma-absorbed doses in the air, with their impact on air radiation levels varying with altitude from ground level. It's been observed that gamma rays significantly contribute to the air dose rate [5].

The Nuclear Regulatory Authority (NDK) monitors environmental natural *GDR* with the Radiation Monitoring and Warning System Network (RADISA) established at certain points in Turkiye [6]. Many studies have been conducted on this subject in the world and Turkiye. In 2017, a study on estimating the terrestrial outdoor *GDR* was carried out by the European Radio-

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logical Data Exchange Platform (EURDEP) in Germany, thus aiming to create a European natural radiation map [7]. The effects of outdoor gamma radiation on pediatric cancer cases were investigated in Germany [8]. A study, including the impact of outdoor gamma radiation, cosmic rays, and radon gas was conducted for France, and with this study, a risk map was created for France in general [9]. Outdoor and indoor GDR measurements were taken at 259 points in Greece using HP-Ge and NaI gamma detectors. By comparing these measurements, a radiation map of Greece was created [10]. Outdoor terrestrial GDR values were measured in Spain and a general indoor and outdoor gamma radiation map of Spain was prepared [11]. The average outdoor GDR ratio was determined for the historic objects in Bosnia and Herzegovina [12]. Activity concentrations of radionuclides (^{40}K , ^{238}U , ^{226}Ra , ^{232}Th , ^{137}Cs), absorbed dose rate (ADR), and annual effective dose equivalent (AEDE) in arable soil collected in Belgrade and Pancevo, Serbia were reported [13].

Measurements of outdoor and indoor GDR values were conducted not only in Europe but also in various countries worldwide. Outdoor dose rate measurements were taken in many cities in Iran, and the average values were measured as 79.6 nSv h^{-1} in Birjand city [14], 605 nSv h^{-1} in the capital Tehran [15], and 113 nSv h^{-1} in Lorestan province [16]. It is noteworthy that the values in Tehran are quite high. Outdoor and indoor GDR values were measured in different regions of Nigeria and their effects on cancer were investigated [17-19]. In the Kerala state of India, the average outdoor AEDE values were measured as 4.83 mSv , and its effects on cancer risk were examined [20]. The outdoor average GDR was measured in and around the Reasi district of Jammu and Kashmir, India [21]. Average GDR values in the Terengganu state of Malaysia [22] (measurements were taken with a NaI(Tl) detector at 145 different points) and in the northern regions of Chittagong-Bangladesh [23] (measurements were taken at 21 different points), were measured. Indoor and outdoor GDR values were measured at 40 measurement points in Muzaffarabad, the capital of Azad Kashmir Region of Pakistan [24]. Mapping for Japan was done by measuring the GDR values before the 9.0 magnitude Great East Japan Earthquake that occurred in Japan on March 11, 2011 [25].

Outdoor and indoor GDR values were measured for many regions and cities in Türkiye: In Kahramanmaraş, outdoor and indoor GDR values were measured and cancer risk was calculated [26]. The AEDE and excess of lifetime cancer risk (ELCR) values for Cappadocia were calculated at $219.07 \text{ } \mu\text{Sv}$ and $7.67 \cdot 10^{-4}$, respectively [27]. Outdoor GDR values were measured in Yalova [28], Kahramanmaraş [29], Adiyaman [30], and ADR and ELCR were calculated. Similar measurements and calculations were done in the Tatvan, Ahlat, and Adilcevaz districts of Bitlis [31], Kazdaglary [32], capital city Ankara [33], Digor

[34] and Selim [35] districts of Kars. Terrestrial GDR values were measured using a NaI(Tl) detector at 35 points around lignite coal deposits in Ilgin district of Konya province, and cancer risk was investigated [36]. In Artvin, measurements were taken at 204 points, and the outdoor AEDE values were determined as $214.5 \text{ } \mu\text{Sv}$ [37]. Outdoor GDR values were measured in Canakkale [38], 17 districts of Bursa [39], Trabzon and its districts [40], Kirklareli [41], Sanliurfa [42] and the average AEDE were calculated as $96.50 \text{ } \mu\text{Sv}$, $110.40 \text{ } \mu\text{Sv}$, $73.83 \text{ } \mu\text{Sv}$, $144.00 \text{ } \mu\text{Sv}$ and $74.70 \text{ } \mu\text{Sv}$, respectively. The activity concentrations of ^{226}Ra , ^{232}Th , and ^{40}K in the building materials commonly used in the Western Black Sea region of Türkiye were measured using a germanium (HPGe) detector and indoor absorbed GDR and corresponding annual effective dose [43]. The ADR in outdoor air in the sepiolite open quarry of Beylikova, Polatli, and Sivrihisar were measured using a dose rate meter with the Geiger-Muller tube [44].

The ^{238}U , ^{232}Th , and ^{40}K activity concentrations in soil samples from various districts were measured in central [5, 45] and around Kutahya province [5, 46] with NaI(Tl) scintillation detector. The average outdoor ADR in air from these radionuclides was reported as 46 (range: 28-76) nGy h^{-1} and 64.2 (range: 5.3-265.3) nGy h^{-1} . The AEDE values were calculated to be 57 (range: 35-94) μSv and 78.7 (range: 6.4-325.3) μSv [5, 45, 46]. Radioactivity concentrations of ^{226}Ra , ^{232}Th , and ^{40}K for construction materials used in Kütahya province were examined [47]. The GDR of these materials was calculated as lower than the limitation value. The measurement of the activity concentrations of terrestrial radionuclides (^{226}Ra , ^{232}Th and ^{40}K) in fly ash samples collected from Tuncbilek lignite coal-fired thermal power plant (located in Tavsanli) was performed by using a high-purity germanium detector [48]. The ADR, AEDE, and ELCR outdoor average values were calculated as 306 nGy h^{-1} (range: 186-496 nGy h^{-1}), 0.66 mSv (range: 0.40-1.07 mSv), and $2.6 \cdot 10^{-3}$ (range: $1.6 \cdot 10^{-3}$ - $4.3 \cdot 10^{-3}$), respectively.

As seen, GDR measurements and related calculations in different regions of Türkiye and the world are not identical because of the diverse activity of the radionuclides. The considerable difference between the measurement results in the Tuncbilek power plant and those in the center of Kutahya is noteworthy. In particular, the measurements in Tuncbilek are quite high. The objective of this study is to evaluate the outdoor GDR from naturally occurring radionuclides. For this purpose, in this study, outdoor GDR has been measured using the LUDLUM NaI(Tl) detector for a period of 12 months at 20 locations in the Tavsanli district center of Kutahya province, which has rich lignite coal deposits, underground resources, and lignite coal-fired thermal power plant. With the help of these measurements, ADR, AEDE, and ELCR have been calculated. These results can be used to investigate the hazard assessment of radioactivity on the environment

and human health by comparing them with the previously obtained results for Kutahya Province.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Properties of scintillation detector

Measurements have been taken using a LUDLUM (model 2241-3RK) portable NaI(Tl) scintillation detector located in the Nuclear Physics Research Laboratory of the Department of Physics, Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Kutahya Dumlupinar University. The device, which can measure gamma rays with energies between 60 keV and 1.25 MeV, contains a 2.5 cm diameter and 2.5 cm thick NaI crystal connected to a photomultiplier tube. The NaI crystal is placed in a 0.16 cm thick aluminum casing. The device has an operating voltage between 500 V and 1200 V, a 2.9 cm diameter magnetically protected photomultiplier, and 100 M dynodes responsible for electron multiplication. Additionally, the detector has an aluminum body with a diameter of 5.1 cm and a length of 18.5 cm. The detector weighs 0.5 kg and has a dead time of 8-12 μ s [49].

Measurement points

Tavşanlı is a district of Kutahya province in the Inner Aegean region and is located in the northwest of Kutahya, as seen in fig. 1. Its surface area is 1899 km². It is approximately 45 km away from Kutahya city center. Tavşanlı is located at 39° 32' 49.2036" north and 29° 29' 29.0400" east GPS coordinates.

Tavşanlı district, similar to the rest of Kutahya province, has various and high reserves of underground resources. Tavşanlı has notably rich lignite potential.

Tuncbilek and Seyitomer thermal power plants have made a great contribution to the industry and economy of the district. There are 198 666 000 tons of lignite reserves in Seyitomer and 317 732 000 tons in Tuncbilek [50]. The existing underground resources and reserves of Tavşanlı have been given in tab. 1.

Outdoor *GDR* values have been measured periodically for 12 months in 20 neighborhoods in the Tavşanlı district center of Kutahya province, which locations are given in fig. 2.

CALCULATIONS

The *GDR* measurements in units of μ Rh⁻¹ have been taken approximately one meter above the ground (at gonad level in humans). At each measurement point, 10 different measurements have been taken at each measurement time to minimize the error. The *h GDR* as been determined for that measurement point



Figure 1. Tavşanlı district

Table 1. Underground resources and reserves in Tavşanlı [50]

Underground resources	Reserve ($\times 10^3$ tons)
Cement raw materials	25000-30000
Fluorite	9
Silver	21 500
Manganese	9
Magnesite	88.1
Lignite	516398
Bituminous shale	122 170

by taking the average of these 10 measurements. The transition from *GDR* to *ADR* has been done using eq. (1). The 8.7 nGy/ μ R multiplier in eq. (1) is called the conversion factor that converts the μ Rh⁻¹ *GDR* to the nGyh⁻¹ *ADR* [42]

$$ADR(\text{nGyh}^{-1}) = GDR(\text{Rh}^{-1}) \cdot 8.7(\text{nGy} / \text{R}) \quad (1)$$

To understand the biological effect of gamma rays, the *AEDE* must be calculated. The ratio of the ef-



Figure 2. The measurement points in Tavşanlı

fective dose equivalent to the absorbed dose is defined as the dose conversion factor (DCF) of 0.7 Sv/Gy for gamma rays [1]. This value is used for both indoor and outdoor calculations. Another factor that should be known when calculating the effective dose equivalent for gamma rays is the amount of radiation exposure to these rays. Occupancy factor (OF) expresses how much time a person spends outdoors or indoors daily. According to the UNSCEAR 2000 report, adults spend an average of one-fifth, or 20 %, of a day outdoors. In other words, OF = 0.2 is taken as the occupancy factor for the outdoor [1]. The AEDE for gamma rays has been calculated using eq. (2)

$$\frac{AEDE \text{ (mSv)}}{DCF \cdot OF \cdot T(8760 \text{ h per year})} = \frac{ADR \text{ (nGh}^{-1})}{10^{-3}} \quad (2)$$

By observing the number of people in a group exposed to radiation, the doses they were exposed to, and the occurrence of cancer in this group, the increased cancer risk per unit dose can be estimated by comparing the doses with the expected number of cancer cases in a group whose other characteristics are similar but not exposed to radiation. This is called risk factor (RF) and its value is $5 \cdot 10^{-2} \text{ Sv}^{-1}$ [51]. The ELCR is calculated by multiplying the AEDE, life expectancy (LE) (70 years), and risk factor (RF)

$$ELCR = AEDE \cdot LE \cdot RF \quad (3)$$

RESULTS

The measurement results for the outdoors taken with the LUDNUM 2241-3RK model for 12 months in the 20 neighborhoods in Tavsanlı are given in tab. 2. The measurement point names, the measured GDR values, and the calculated ADR, AEDE, and ELCR values have been given in the second, third, fourth, and fifth columns of tab. 2, respectively. The last row shows the general average of GDR, ADR, AEDE, and ELCR results for the Tavsanlı district. As seen from tab. 2, the lowest AEDE and ELCR values are at the seventeenth measurement point and the highest value is at the fourth measurement point. The average value of AEDE and ELCR for Tavsanlı have been calculated as $106.64 \pm 6.20 \mu\text{Sv}$ and $0.37 \pm 0.02 \cdot 10^{-3}$, respectively.

Table 3 shows outdoor AEDE and ELCR results for some cities in Türkiye. When the table is examined, it is seen that the results in Artvin [37], Tatvan [31], and Nevşehir [27] are much higher than the results in other cities. Although the results in Tavsanlı are lower than Nevşehir [27], Adıyaman [30], Tatvan [31], Kazdağları [32], Konya-İlgin [36], Artvin [37], Bursa [39] and Kırklareli [41] results, it is higher than the results in Yalova [28], Kahramanmaraş [29], Ankara [33], Dığor [34], Selim [35], Canakkale-Ayvacık [38], Trabzon [40] and Sanliurfa [42].

Table 2. The average GDR, ADR, AEDE, and ELCR values of 20 measurement points in Tavsanlı

No	Measurement points	GDR [μRh^{-1}]	ADR [nGyh^{-1}]	AEDE [μSv]	ELCR (10^{-3})
1	Yeni	12.83 0.63	111.65 5.44	136.93 6.68	0.48 0.02
2	Moymul	12.43 0.62	108.10 5.37	132.57 6.58	0.46 0.02
3	D. Hastanesi	8.33 0.39	72.43 3.43	88.83 4.21	0.31 0.01
4	Ulu Camii	13.92 0.57	121.08 4.96	148.49 6.08	0.52 0.02
5	Karakova	10.02 0.73	87.15 6.39	106.87 7.83	0.37 0.03
6	Cardakli	9.98 0.93	86.86 8.05	106.52 9.87	0.37 0.03
7	Ada	9.47 0.40	82.36 3.50	101.01 4.29	0.35 0.02
8	Circircesme	8.08 0.34	70.33 2.99	86.25 3.67	0.30 0.01
9	Hanimcesme	9.57 0.59	83.23 5.14	102.07 6.30	0.36 0.02
10	Y. Beyazit	8.63 0.74	75.11 6.47	92.11 7.93	0.32 0.03
11	Subasi	8.20 0.37	71.34 3.23	87.49 3.96	0.31 0.01
12	Baglik	9.43 0.63	82.00 5.51	100.56 6.76	0.35 0.02
13	Cukurkoy	10.93 0.65	95.12 5.62	116.66 6.89	0.41 0.02
14	Durak	11.18 0.54	97.30 4.69	119.32 5.75	0.42 0.02
15	Istasyon	8.53 0.64	74.24 5.57	91.05 6.83	0.32 0.02
16	Dagcesme	10.15 0.57	88.31 4.92	108.3 6.04	0.38 0.02
17	Dedeler	7.72 0.34	67.14 2.92	82.33 3.58	0.29 0.01
18	Beykoy	10.25 0.49	89.18 4.23	109.36 5.19	0.38 0.02
19	Omerbey	9.07 0.57	78.88 4.99	96.74 6.12	0.34 0.02
20	Kavakli	11.19 0.51	97.37 4.48	119.41 5.49	0.42 0.02
	Average	10.00 0.58	86.96 5.05	106.64 6.20	0.37 0.02

Table 3. AEDE and ELCR values in different cities of Turkiye

Region	AEDE [μSv]	ELCR (10^{-4})
Nevsehir [27]	219.07	7.67
Yalova [28]	59.20	2.07
Kahramanmaras [29]	79.50	3.20
Adiyaman [30]	177.00	7.10
Tatvan-Bitlis [31]	261.00	9.14
Kazdaglari [32]	198.66	6.95
Ankara [33]	71.83	2.70
Digor-Kars [34]	96.80	3.38
Selim-Kars [35]	87.10	3.00
Konya-Ilgın [36]	132.90	5.18
Artvin [37]	214.50	7.50
Canakkale-Ayvacic [38]	96.50	3.38
Bursa [39]	110.40	4.50
Trabzon [40]	73.83	2.58
Kirklareli [41]	144.00	5.04
Sanliurfa [42]	74.70	2.61
Kutahya [5, 45]	57.00	1.99
Kutahya [5, 46]	78.70	2.75
Tuncbilek [48]	660.00	26.00
World [1]	73.60	2.58
(Present study)	106.64	3.73

CONCLUSIONS

In this study, the measurement of outdoor GDR values and the calculation of *AEDE* and ELCR in the central area of Tavsanlı, located to the north of Kütahya in the inner Aegean region of Turkiye have been showed.

It has been observed that *AEDE* results for Tavşanlı varied between 82.33 μSv and 148.49 μSv and the lowest result is in the Dedeler neighborhood, and the highest one is in the Ulu Camii neighborhood. The average values of *AEDE* and ELCR have been calculated as 106.64 μSv and 3.73 10^{-4} , respectively. These results are approximately 1.5 times higher than UNSCEAR's world average of 73.6 μSv for *AEDE* and 2.58 10^{-4} for ELCR. Compared to the results in Konya-Ilgın [36], where lignite deposits are abundant, the results in the present study are lower. *AEDE* results determined in Tavsanlı are approximately two times larger than the results for the Kutahya center [5, 45], and 1.5 times larger than the results for Kutahya province [5, 46]. The *AEDE* results obtained for Tavsanlı are approximately one-sixth of the results for Tuncbilek [48], and the ELCR results are approximately one-seventh of the results for Tuncbilek. Lignite coal is the most important energy source in Turkiye and Tavsanlı is very rich in lignite coal and has two thermal power plants. The results obtained for Tuncbilek, being significantly above the world average warrant close monitoring. Tuncbilek is very close to Tavsanlı, and the radioactive effects here also affect the *GDR* in the city center of Tavsanlı. To better assess

the atmospheric radiation hazard for Tavsanlı, atmospheric radon concentration should be determined along with *GDR* in the city center.

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AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

K. Deniz conducted the field measurements at different locations with a LUDLUM portable NaI(Tl) scintillation detector. A. E. Calik and K. Deniz analyzed the results presented. A. E. Calik prepared the figures, tables, and text of the manuscript.

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**ПРОЦЕНА ОПАСНОСТИ ОД СПОЉАШЊЕГ ГАМА ЗРАЧЕЊА
У ОКРУГУ ТАВШАНЛИ, ПРОВИНЦИЈЕ КУТАХЈА У ТУРСКОЈ**

У овом раду приказане су јачине гама доза на отвореном, мерене коришћењем NaI(Tl) сцинтилационог детектора у 20 мерних тачака, у окружном центру Тавшанли, провинције Кутахја у Турској. Годишњи еквиваленти ефективне дозе и животни ризици од рака израчунати су из добијених резултата као $(106.64 \pm 6.20) \mu\text{Sv}$ и $(3.73 \pm 0.2) \cdot 10^{-4}$, респективно. Резултати су упоређени са резултатима других студија за Турску и свет.

Кључне речи: јачина гама дозе на отвореном, годишњи еквивалент ефективне дозе, животињи ризик од рака