There is inspiration in respiration

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One of those obnoxious climate sceptics, may they perish in the eternal flames (should it stop raining long enough for those flames to burn the way they used to), has written querying a report on the ABC science blog. That report suggests climate change is to blame for yes, obesity: “Steadily rising levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere may be affecting brain chemistry and contributing to the obesity epidemic”. The sceptic (may he perish etc.) complains this assertion does not seem to be based on any evidence.

Isn’t that classic? That’s the trouble with these sceptics. They just don’t get the scientific method. For here’s the test that proves the report’s claim. I’ve done it and I can assure you it works.

Take a random sample of 100 people, 100 wombats, and 100 wattles. Randomly assign them into a treatment group (who will be subjected to the experiment) and a control group. Allow the control group to undertake their usual routine, and especially make sure they breathe in those fumes from the atmosphere. Allow the treatment group to do whatever they want EXCEPT breathing. Continue the treatment for a week.

And here are the results. Of the control group (who were allowed to consume the noxious fumes associated with “steadily rising levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere"), 45 percent gained weight over the period with fully 15 percent moving towards obesity.

In the treatment group, who were protected from the noxious fumes (and from any other form of breathing, but who otherwise were no different from the control group) NOT ONE, yes NOT ONE, gained any weight.

Applied to these results, the Mann–Whitney–Wilcoxon rank-sum test leaves no room for doubt: the difference in weight gain between the control and treatment groups is statistically significant. Does carbon dioxide contribute to obesity? My word it does.

So, concerned about those bulging wombats littering our roads? Fear no more – the ABC science blog is here to help. Prevent them breathing and those ugly side handles will stop their inexorable spread. It’s exactly the sort of elegant thinking we’ve come to expect and respect.