Response of oceanic carbon cycle during Heinrich events

- *山本 彬友¹、阿部 彩子¹
 *Akitomo Yamamoto¹, Ayako Abe-Ouchi¹
- 1. 東京大学大気海洋研究所
- 1. Atmosphere and Ocean Research Institute, The University of Tokyo

Paleoproxy indicate that a substantial weakening of the Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation (AMOC) during Heinrich events was often accompanied by a notable atmospheric CO₂ increase. However, previous modeling studies show conflicting atmospheric CO₂ responses to an AMOC shutdown. In this study, we investigate the response of ocean carbon cycle to weakening AMOC using freshwater experiment conducted with a coupled atmosphere-ocean general circulation model MIROC and offline ocean biogeochemical model. The weakening of AMOC under mid-Glacial condition leads to an oceanic carbon reservoir decrease and to a 4 ppmv atmospheric CO2 increase, which is smaller than the ice core date of 15 ppmv CO₂ rise. The weakening of the North Atlantic leads to a loss of DIC in the North Atlantic intermediate and deepwaters, resulting in CO2 outgassing into the atmosphere. In contrast, the greater mixing in the Southern Ocean enhances biological pump and thus increases CO₂ uptake from the atmosphere. Because thse two process cancel each other out, our simulation underestimates the observed atmosphric CO₂ increase. We also discuss the potential mechanisms which cause the additional CO₂ increase of 10ppmv in this presentation.

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