

HECANET *** April-May 2008

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ARTICLE HIGHLIGHTS

Air pollution begins with an association between prenatal exposure to wood fuel smoke and low birth weight. Concerning outdoor air pollution, studies see threats from big-particle pollutants; and traffic-related air pollution could have an adverse impact on birth outcomes. Also, prenatal cigarette smoke may affect the risk of sudden infant death syndrome. In the chemicals section, several articles raise concern about the components of plastic and how children are particularly vulnerable to them. Suspected carcinogenic chemicals used to make Teflon are found in human milk. Lead exposure in children could be linked to violent crime, whereas a study in the Journal of Neuroscience looks at possible links between lead exposure and Alzheimer's disease. Regarding pesticides, the BBC reports a link between DNA damage and pesticide use in Asian farmers. New mosquito repellents are being tested. In the water and sanitation articles, a singer campaigns for clean water and sanitation, while the Environment Ministry of Angola and UNICEF cooperate in improving sanitation. Several articles deal with the health impacts of climate change, which was one of the main issues in the past World Health Assembly. In the reproductive health section, persistent organochlorine pesticides are linked to risk of testicular germ cell tumors.

In the Americas, dengue fever toll in Rio de Janeiro reaches over 100 victims, whereas food price inflation threatens children. The UN asks for funds to support aid work after the Myanmar

cyclone in Asia. The UN Secretary-General visits China after the 12 May earthquake that has claimed more than 60,000 lives according to the media. Food crises worsens in Africa, where children are exposed to toxins from old computers. Finally, in Europe, the European Food Safety Authority reviews advice on bisphenol A levels in food packaging.

Summaries of articles grouped under the following themes appear below, with links to their full texts:

- (1) AIR POLLUTION: (a) Indoor air pollution (b) Outdoor air pollution (c) Environmental Tobacco Smoke/Smoking**
- (2) CHEMICALS: (a) General, (b) Lead, (c) Pesticides, (d) Mercury**
- (3) WATER AND SANITATION**
- (4) GLOBAL CHANGE**
- (5) REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH**
- (6) MISCELLANEOUS (a) General (b) Americas (c) Asia (d) Africa (e) Europe**

Healthy Environments for Children Alliance (HECA) is a world-wide alliance to reduce environmental risks to children's health that arise from the settings where they live, learn, play, and sometimes work, by providing knowledge, increasing political will, mobilizing resources, and catalysing intense and urgent action.

HECANET is an international mailing list dedicated to promoting healthy environments for children. The list provides updates on the activities of the Healthy Environments for Children Alliance (HECA) and its members, as well as an overview of media coverage of children's environmental health issues and relevant meetings, research findings and information and advocacy resources.

- * [*Past Issues*](#)
- * [*Subscribe*](#)

EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

(1) HECA Developments

For more information on HECA's latest developments, please visit the Healthy Environments for Children Alliance website: <http://www.who.int/heca/en/>

International Network to Promote Household Water Treatment and Safe Storage: http://www.who.int/household_water/en/

(2) Children's Environmental Health Indicators (CEHI) Newsletter and Upcoming International Workshop

The CEHI Newsletter has been set up to engage partners with the Global Initiative on Children's Environmental Health Indicators (CEHI). To sign up to the newsletter, to contribute information or to find out more, please visit the website [WHO | Children's environmental health indicators newsletter \(CEHI\)](http://www.who.int/cehi/newsletter) or contact: cehindicators@who.int

(3) World Health Assembly 2008

The [61st World Health Assembly](#) (19-24 May 2008) set WHO on a course to tackle longstanding, new and looming threats to global public health. Among its achievements, the Health Assembly produced a public health breakthrough by providing a platform for removing barriers and using innovative methods to encourage research, development and access to medicines for the common diseases of the developing world.

Delegates to the Health Assembly requested WHO and committed their own Ministries of Health to take action to protect health from climate change. They adopted a resolution that urges Member States to take decisive action to address health impacts from climate change, warning of its potential risks on human health. The resolution calls on the health sector: to scale up adaptation projects that would limit the impacts of climate change on health; to raise global awareness of the impacts of health from climate change at national and international levels; and to boost political attention and action. Member States also called on WHO to develop and strengthen the evidence base on links between climate change and health, and to help developing countries address health impacts from climate change.

"Climate change is already adding an additional set of stresses in areas that are already fragile, with marginal livelihoods and thin margins of survival when shocks occur. The implications are clear. More droughts, floods, and tropical storms mean greater demands for humanitarian assistance. These added demands will come at a time when all countries are stressed, to a greater or lesser degree, by the effects of climate change. The international community will also have to cope with a growing number of environmental refugees. If land is parched or salinated, if coastal and low-lying areas are permanently under water, these people cannot simply go home. Environmental refugees thus become a new wave of settlers, possibly adding to international tensions." Dr. Margaret Chan said.

(4) World Malaria Day 2008

[World Malaria Day](#) – a day to make the world care. 25 April was a day of unified commemoration of the global effort to provide effective control of malaria around the world. World Malaria Day was an opportunity for malaria-free countries to learn about the devastating consequences of the disease and for new donors to join a global partnership against malaria. It was an occasion for research and academia institutions to flag their scientific advances to both experts and the general public. It was a chance for countries in affected regions to learn from each other's experiences and back each other efforts. It was an opportunity for international partners, companies and foundations to showcase their results and reflect together on how to scale up what has been proven to work.

"In recent years, several African countries have made dramatic strides in malaria control. But the most affected nations remain off track to reach the goal of halting and reversing the incidence of the disease. As we pass the midpoint in the race towards the Millennium Development Goals, we desperately need to step up our efforts to roll back malaria." the UN Secretary General stated.

(5) World Environment Day 2008

The slogan for 2008 is "CO₂, Kick the Habit! Towards a Low Carbon Economy." Recognizing that climate change is becoming the defining issue of our era, World Environment Day, celebrated on 5 June 2008, highlighted resources and initiatives that promote low carbon economies and life-styles, such as improved energy efficiency, alternative energy sources, forest conservation and eco-friendly consumption. The day's agenda was to give a human face to environmental issues; empower people to become active agents of sustainable and equitable development; promote an understanding that communities are pivotal to changing attitudes towards environmental issues; and advocate partnership, which will ensure all nations and peoples enjoy a safer and more prosperous future.

Students from high schools in Australia, Canada, Malaysia and the United States discussed, via video conference, with students assembled at United Nations Headquarters, innovative youth projects that are contributing to a reduction of greenhouse gases. The students motivated their peers to create similar projects in their schools and communities.

For more information, please go to www.unep.org

(6) UNEP: Sustaining Life: How Human Health Depends on Biodiversity

On 23 April, [Sustaining Life: How Human Health Depends on Biodiversity](#), a new publication from Harvard Medical School's Center for Health and the Global Environment, which was co-sponsored by UNEP, UNDP, the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and IUCN, was [launched at the UN in New York](#). Edited and written by Harvard Medical School physicians Eric Chivian and Aaron Bernstein, with contributions by over 100 leading scientists, *Sustaining Life* presents a comprehensive—and sobering—view of how human medicines, biomedical research, the emergence and spread of infectious diseases, and the production of food, both on land and in the oceans, depend on biodiversity. One of the book's most crucial messages is that conserving biodiversity, and ensuring its effective and equitable use, is a core development priority. Meanwhile, [The Convention on Biological Diversity held its ninth meeting of its Conference of the Parties](#) (19-30 May 2008 in Bonn, Germany). The meeting took place at a time when the international community is faced with one of the most severe food crisis of modern history. Addressing the renewal of agricultural biological diversity, including ways to address the adverse effects of climate change, was among the main issues for discussion at the two-week conference. Furthermore, the [International Day for Biological Diversity](#) (22 May 2008) focused on 'Biodiversity and Agriculture'. The day sought to highlight the importance of sustainable agriculture not only to preserve biodiversity, but also to ensure that we will be able to feed the world, maintain agricultural livelihoods, and enhance human well being into the 21st century and beyond.

(7) UNEP: Water Quality for Ecosystem and Human Health, 2nd Edition

UNEP's GEMS/Water Programme has launched a new version of Water Quality for Ecosystem and Human Health, 2nd Edition. The purpose of the new edition is to introduce the basic concepts of water quality and how it is related to ecosystem and human health; and to present an overview and assessments of current and upcoming global water quality issues with examples from around the world. It also includes a new chapter highlighting how ecohydrology can serve to help achieve the Millennium Development Goals on water and sanitation. The target audience includes academia, research scientists, and water practitioners, and can serve as a background to water assessments being conducted at regional and global scales. The data and analyses presented in the book are derived almost entirely from GEMStat, the global water quality database accessible at www.gemstat.org

The future of water quality at local, regional, and global scales depends on investments of individuals, communities, and governments at all levels to ensure that water resources are protected and managed in a sustainable manner. The 130 page report includes over 40 figures, an extensive glossary, as well as an overview of water quality standards and guidelines from national and international sources. Water Quality for Ecosystem and Human Health 2nd Edition is available in paperback form for \$25 per copy, and will be available in PDF format at <http://www.gemswater.org/publications/index-e.html>

For more information about GEMS/Water, or to order a copy of Water Quality for Ecosystem and Human Health 2nd Edition, please contact: Dr. Richard D. Robarts at richard.robarts@gemswater.org or visit www.gemswater.org

(8) WHO: INFOSAN Information Note on Food Safety and Nutrition During Pregnancy and Infant Feeding

While all population groups are susceptible to foodborne disease, there are groups more susceptible to foodborne disease due to their low-levels of immunity, early stages of development or greater exposure. This note focuses on two high-risk groups; pregnant women and infants. This also includes the developing fetus as well as young children. Available in different languages in the [website](#).

(9) UNICEF: Our climate, our children, our responsibility

This [report](#) draws attention to the impacts of climate change upon children. It strongly argues that both mitigation and adaptation are necessary as highlighted by the Stern Review, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the most recent Human Development Report. There is increasing global consensus on the way forward, including the need for international collective action. UNICEF draws attention to the specific risks faced by children, who are more vulnerable and in no way responsible for their position. They have no choice. The state of the planet that we pass on to the next generation – today's children and young people – is our responsibility. Let us face up to this responsibility and address the specific needs of the most vulnerable: our children.

(10) UNICEF report: The State of Africa's Children 2008

[The State of Africa's Children 2008](#) highlights the need to position child survival at the heart of Africa's development and human rights agenda. This inaugural African edition of The State of the World's Children offers a regional perspective to trends in child survival and health and outlines possible solutions to accelerate progress in meeting the Millennium Development Goals.

(11) FAO and IFAD Joint Report : Water and the Rural Poor

FAO and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) have recently produced a [report](#) where they argue about the existing potentials for well-targeted, local interventions in water that can contribute to the rapid improvement in the livelihoods of the rural poor in sub-Saharan Africa. The same interventions that can help attaining the Millennium Development Goal of eradicating extreme poverty and hunger.

(12) ISEE-EAC 2008: Opportunities and Challenges of Environmental Health in Asia. Jeju, Korea. 17-19 April 2008

The Second East Asia Conference of the ISEE in conjunction with the Third Scientific Conference of Regional Initiative was hosted by the Korea Environmental Health Forum (KEHF) with support from the Korea Ministry of Environment, the WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific and the United Nations Environmental Programme in Jeju Island, Korea, April 17-19, 2008. The conference focused on the "Opportunities and Challenges of Environmental Health in Asia." Speakers included Dr. M. Neira, WHO Director of Public Health and Environment, who gave the keynote speech on 'Building of evidence and new knowledge for protecting human environmental health global and Asian perspective'. She pointed out the importance of protecting vulnerable groups. For more information, please see the [conference website](#).

(13) UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. New York, U.S. 21 April - 2 May 2008

The [UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues](#) (PFII) was held from 21 April to 2 May, with this year's special theme of "Climate change, bio-cultural diversity and livelihoods: the stewardship role of indigenous peoples and new challenges". Among the main concerns highlighted by speakers were the consequences of climate change on indigenous' livelihoods; the exacerbation of existing difficulties by climate change in areas such as political and economic marginalization and loss of land and resources. One session dealt with indigenous children, with a few speakers linking their well-being to climate change and biodiversity.

(14) Environmental health capacity building in nursing. Geneva, Switzerland. 13-14 May 2008

On 13-14 May 2008, WHO held a planning workshop for the creation of a global partnership in nursing for the purpose of developing capacity in environmental health in the areas of nursing practice, education, research and advocacy. Nurses are key to recognizing the link between

health and environment and mitigating and managing the health impact of environmental contamination.

The meeting was opened by Dr. Maria Neira, Director, Department of Public Health and Environment and Dr. Jean Yan, Coordinator, Nursing and Health Professions Networks at WHO. Nurses from Europe, the Americas, Africa and the Eastern Mediterranean regions participated in the planning workshop and their report was presented at the biennial meeting of Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officers held immediately following the workshop. The agenda included presentations on the WHO training package in children's environmental health for health professionals, environmental health assessment tools, water and sanitation, environmental health in hospitals, climate change, and chemical safety.

Work prioritized for development and implementation includes assessment tools and training nurses to utilize these tools in primary health care settings to identify and manage environmental impacts on health, environmental health in health care settings and chemical safety. A steering committee is being developed and representatives from major nursing, midwifery and occupational and environmental health nursing organizations are being sought to lead this initiative. For more information contact Susan Wilburn at wilburns@who.int

(15) Sixteenth session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development. New York, U.S. 5-16 May 2008

The issues of agriculture, rural development, land, drought, desertification and Africa were the main focus of the [Sixteenth session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development](#) (CSD-16) (5-16 May 2008, New York). Throughout CSD-16, participants highlighted the connections between the session's thematic agenda and both the current food crisis and climate change – two issues that have captured global attention, and have multiple implications for child health. CSD-16's review of the issues highlighted the drivers of food prices, including land degradation, high energy costs, climate change, poor harvests, speculation in agricultural commodities, inequitable terms of trade, decline of investments in agricultural development, and increased production of bio-fuels from food crops. Speakers also tied their discussions to meetings, such as the [Food and Agriculture Organization's High-level Conference on Food Security and the Challenges of Climate Change and Bio-energy](#), (3-5 June, Rome) and [Special Meeting of ECOSOC on Global Food Crisis](#) (20 May, New York). These issues are also comprehensively addressed in the recently published [International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development](#), co-sponsored by a number of UN organizations, including UNEP. The assessment concludes that the way the world grows its food will have to change radically to better serve the poor and hungry if the world is to cope with a growing population and climate change while avoiding social breakdown and environmental collapse. The assessment has a section which considers [how food production is affecting health](#).

(16) III Inter American Congress on Environmental Health. Quito, Ecuador. 14 - 17 de May 2008

[III Inter American Congress on Environmental Health](#). Quito, Ecuador. 14 - 17 de May 2008. The work "Lead levels in newborns and pregnant women in an urban/industrial municipality - Buenos Aires" received an award.

(17) Twenty-First Century Approaches to Toxicity Testing, Biomonitoring, and Risk Assessment Overview. Amsterdam, Netherlands. 16-17 June 2008

The emergence and rapid development of new tools for biomonitoring and toxicity testing can provide a significant opportunity to improve our ability to perform risk assessments. The International Council of Chemical Associations Long-Range Research Initiative (ICCA-LRI) is sponsoring a [workshop](#) to stimulate innovative approaches to the assessment of risk, with emphasis on research, development, and application of advanced methods, on communication of the data generated by these new tools, and on understanding the relevance of the data for human health. This is a "Call to Action" for the scientific and public health communities to invest in and strive for a more reliable understanding of biomonitoring data, exposure, dose, and risk from environmental stressors.

(18) Basel Convention on the Control of Trans-boundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal. Bali, Indonesia. 23-27 June 2008

The member-Governments of the [Basel Convention on the Control of Trans-boundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal](#) will meet in Bali, Indonesia, from 23 to 27 June 2008 for the ninth meeting of its Conference of the Parties. The Basel Convention is the most comprehensive global environmental treaty dealing with hazardous and other wastes. It aims to protect human health and the environment against the adverse effects resulting from the generation, management, trans-boundary movements and disposal of hazardous and other wastes. The theme of the meeting is "Waste Management for Human Health and Livelihood". A special high-level forum is organized on 26 June, in the presence of eminent speakers from Government, industry and civil society, to discuss concrete ways in which environmentally sound management of wastes helps protect human health and reduce poverty in line with the Millennium Development Goals (including MDG 4 on reducing child mortality). A Bali Declaration on "Waste Management for Human Health and Livelihood" will be adopted with the aim of ensuring that health and waste management shall be at the centre of global development strategies, reducing poverty and protecting vulnerable groups, including children.

(19) First Inter-Ministerial Conference on Health and Environment. Libreville, Gabon. 26 - 29 August 2008

The World Health Organization and the UN Environment Programme, in partnership with the Government of Gabon, are organizing the First Inter-ministerial Conference for Health and Environment in Africa. The main objective of the conference is to secure political commitment for catalyzing the policy, institutional and investment changes required to reduce environmental threats to health, in support of sustainable development. A side-event is being organized on children and climate change. For more information, please go to <http://www.unep.org/health-env/>

(20) Children and Injuries International Conference. Cape Town, South Africa. 31 August 2008 - 3 September 2008

[Children and Injuries International Conference](#). Cape Town, South Africa. 31 August 2008 - 3 September 2008.

(21) Sixth session of the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety. Dakar, Senegal. 15-19 September 2008

[Sixth session of the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety](#). Dakar, Senegal. 15-19 September 2008. The IFCS Forum Standing Committee Working Group preparing the Forum VI session on the topic of substitution and alternatives is compiling case studies, examples and tools relevant to substitution and alternatives. Contributions are welcome. Please send information – published papers, reports, presentations or web sources of information – to the IFCS Secretariat at ifcs@who.int

IFCS Awards of Merit and IFCS Special Recognition Awards are presented at sessions of the Forum.

The Award of Merit recognizes a person(s) or organization(s) for outstanding contributions to international activities in chemical safety. 2008 Recipients of the Joint Award will be Dr Georg Karlaganis (Federal Office for the Environment FOEN, Switzerland) and Dr Franz Xaver Perrez (FOEN, Switzerland); and Ms Barbara Dinham (Freelance Consultant in Environmental Policy, Social Justice Advocacy, Trustee Bhopal Medical Appeal).

The Special Recognition Awards recognize those contributing in an exceptional way on a special chemical topic or activity. Individuals, institutions or groups are eligible for the Special Recognition Award. 2008 Recipients include Mr Ravi Agarwal (Director, Srishti/Toxics Link, New Delhi, India) and Dr Lilian Corra (International Secretary of International Society of Doctors for the Environment, ISDE).

(22) American Academy of Pediatrics 2008 National Conference and Exhibition. Boston, USA. 11-14 October 2008

[American Academy of Pediatrics 2008 National Conference and Exhibition](#). Boston, USA. 11-14 October 2008. For more information, please contact Dr. Ruth Etzel, fax 907-729-6199 retzel@earthlink.net

(23) 3rd Central and Eastern European Conference on Health and the Environment. Cluj-Napoca, Romania. 19-22 October 2008

3rd Central and Eastern European Conference on Health and the Environment. Cluj-Napoca, Romania. 19-22 October 2008. Please visit the [website](#) for more information or to register online.

(24) 12th International Congress of the International Radiation Protection Association. Buenos Aires, Argentina. 19-24 October 2008

The [12th International Congress of the International Radiation Protection Association](#) (IRPA 12) will take place in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in October 2008. The Congress motto is: “strengthening radiation protection worldwide”. By attending the Congress, participants will benefit from a renewed scientific programme that will give an overview of the latest developments in the science and practice of radiation protection in ionizing and non-ionizing radiation. This is the first time that an IRPA International Congress will take place in Latin America.

(25) EcoHealth: Healthy Environments, Healthy People. Merida, Mexico. 1-5 December 2008

EcoHealth: Healthy Environments, Healthy People. Merida, Mexico. 1-5 December 2008. For more information, contact Jaime Grace Engel at ecohealth2008@insp.mx . Symposia and abstracts may be submitted electronically to the [website](#).

(26) 5th World Environmental Education Congress. Montreal, Canada. 10-14 May 2009

[5th World Environmental Education Congress](#). Montreal, Canada. 10-14 May 2009. For more information, please send an email to 5weec@jpd.com or secretariat@environmental-education.org

(27) IFCS: Managing Chemicals in a changing climate to protect health: Final version now available

The emerging and unprecedented public health threat of accelerating climate change may significantly alter global and local development, use, distribution, and degradation of chemicals in ways that could affect human health. Little has been published to date addressing issues of climate change and chemical safety. In this brochure we explore how climate change may alter human exposure to chemicals, identify who may be at particular risk of harm, and suggest actions that can be taken now to reduce adverse health impacts. The IFCS [brochure](#) will be published in other languages and announced when available. Author: K. Shea, contributors: L. Corra, J. Pronczuk, MN. Bruné.

(28) Environmental Health Disparities Fact Sheets

EPA is pleased to announce the availability of four new fact sheets on children's environmental health disparities. These new fact sheets address disparities in secondhand smoke exposure and asthma among African American and Hispanic American children. Each fact sheet includes important information on actions parents can take to protect their children and positive actions EPA and other organizations are taking to address each specific environmental health issue. The intended audiences are parents and community-based organizations working on environmental health issues of specific minority populations. These new fact sheets are the first set in a series. EPA plans to develop fact sheets on environmental health disparities among Asian and Pacific

Islander American and American Indian children. To download the fact sheets, please go to <http://yosemite.epa.gov/oehp/oehpweb.nsf/content/publications2.htm#2>

(29) Pesticides materials

The Occupational and Environmental Health Research Unit (OEHRU) at the University of Cape Town, South Africa has produced the following resources: a card on how to understand the pesticide label's pictograms and colour codes; pamphlets on street pesticides and child poisonings; and the Southern African Pesticides Newsletter (volumes 1 and 2). These resources can be reviewed and down-loaded at <http://www.oehru.uct.ac.za/publications/pestrel.php>

(30) European Chemicals Agency (ECHA)

The [Agency](#), located in Helsinki, Finland will manage the registration, evaluation, authorization and restriction processes for chemical substances to ensure consistency across the European Union. These REACH processes are designed to provide additional information on chemicals, to ensure their safe use, and to ensure competitiveness of the European industry. In its decision-making the Agency will take the best available scientific and technical data and socio-economic information into account. It will also provide information on chemicals and technical and scientific advice. By assessing and approving testing proposals, the Agency will minimize animal testing.

(31) Scientific Consensus Statement on Environmental Agents Associated with Neurodevelopmental Disorders

This [consensus statement](#), developed by the Collaborative on Health and the Environment's Learning and Developmental Disabilities Initiative, outlines the current scientific understanding of the links between environmental factors and learning and developmental disabilities. It also identifies important research areas that hold promise of further advancing our understanding of these links. This statement is intended as a guide to scientists, medical professionals, policymakers, public health advocates, and the general public in advancing their efforts to address the important individual and social issues raised by learning and developmental disabilities.

(32) Green Wave

The [Green Wave](#) is a multi-year tree planting initiative that enables children and youth to make a difference – one school, one tree, one step at a time. The Green Wave brings together children and youth from around the world to raise awareness about biodiversity, and the need to reduce its loss.

(33) Healthy Child Healthy World

A new parenting book "[Healthy Child Healthy World](#)" helps mothers and fathers connect the dots, to understand cause and effect...It tries to emphasize the healthful solutions, the positive, easy-to-follow steps you can take for your family, your home, yourself. Foreword by Meryl

Streep With Special Contributions from Gwyneth Paltrow, Meryl Streep, Tom Hanks, Brooke Shields, Tobey Maguire, Kate Hudson and Erin Brockovich, among others.

(34) Cancer: 101 Solutions to a Preventable Epidemic

This [book](#) by Liz Armstrong, Guy Dauncey, and Anne Wordsworth on how to prevent cancer before it starts provides solutions for everyone from business to labour to government, practical tools for parents, youth, individuals, and action groups.

(35) Videos on environmental estrogens

These three short videos on environmental estrogens found in everyday products, including cosmetics and personal care products, plastics, detergents, and estrogenic heavy metals found in electronics have been produced by BCERF, the Cornell University Program on Breast Cancer and Environmental Risk Factors. The videos were designed to reach younger women (teens and college aged), an audience that often is not aware of breast cancer risk factors. You can view the videos at <http://envirocancer.cornell.edu/research/endocrine/videos/>

(36) Global Healthy Child Care

[Global Healthy Child Care](#) has a complete and comprehensive website that provides free information and training materials on child care health and safety practices. The primary goals of Global Healthy Child Care are to promote and maintain child health and reduce illness and injuries to children. The program is offered in five languages: English, Spanish, Chinese, Portuguese and French. The site is full of complete and easy-to-understand materials on disease and injury prevention practices, outdoor and playground safety, blood and body fluid safety, hand washing, diapering, cleaning and disinfection routines. Free banners, posters, mobiles, bookmarks, stickers, a reminder clock, self-evaluation checklists and certificates can also be downloaded. Please contact Chou Nuon for further information at chou@icrichild.org

(37) Proceedings of the Summit on Environmental Challenges to Reproductive Health and Fertility

The proceedings of the [Summit on Environmental Challenges to Reproductive Health and Fertility](#) that took place in January 2007 in San Francisco, U.S., are now available in the [Supplement from the Summit on Environmental Challenges to Reproductive Health and Fertility](#)

(38) Enviro-Health Links

Selected [links](#) to Internet resources on toxicology and environmental health issues of recent special interest.

(39) DDT Health Effects Studies

This [compilation of articles](#) is updated periodically by the Pesticide Action Network North America (PANNA). The articles are arranged by category and in chronological order with the

newest studies first. For detailed information on the toxicity, health effects and regulatory status of DDT, visit PANNA's on-line [Pesticide Database](#)

ARTICLES

(1) AIR POLLUTION:

(a) Indoor air pollution

[Prenatal Exposure to Wood Fuel Smoke and Low Birth Weight](#) Cooking with wood fuel during pregnancy, a modifiable exposure, was associated with LBW and marginally lower mean birth weight compared with using NG. Up to 70% of households use wood, biomass, and/or crop residues as cooking fuel, whereas 53% of households use wood alone as cooking fuel A. Siddiqui. EHP. April 2008.

[Unwelcome Guest: PBDEs in Indoor Dust](#) Although house dust is known to be a predominant source of exposure to PBDEs, it's not yet clear which part of the dust these chemicals bind to. Scientists have shown that some PBDEs can volatilize into the air. It is certainly possible that there is a link between PBDE exposure in the fetus and cryptorchidism, scientists say. KS Betts. EHP. May 2008.

(b) Outdoor air pollution

[Pollution danger higher than earlier estimated](#) The study found a direct correlation between increased pollution from specks of dust, soot, metals and soil and a greater number of hospitalizations, emergency visits and missed school days. Health problems were generally related to respiratory illnesses and heart disease. Even small increases can affect children. J. Kay. San Francisco Chronicle. 23 May 2008.

[Study sees threat from big-particle pollutants](#) Smaller particles spewed in vehicle exhaust and from other sources can travel farther than coarse particles and, can penetrate deeper into the lungs. If they become trapped, it raises the risks of illnesses that include emphysema, lung cancer and heart disease. There was an increase in hospital visits by patients with respiratory illnesses Reuters. 14 May 2008.

[A Cohort Study of Traffic-Related Air Pollution Impacts on Birth Outcomes](#) Environmental factors may influence biological factors to affect fetal growth and induce preterm birth. Specific toxicology is not known. Associations between traffic-related air pollution and birth outcomes were observed in a population-based cohort with relatively low ambient air pollution exposure. M. Brauer. EHP. May 2008.

[Panel says link between smog and premature death is clear](#) Short-term exposure to smog, or ozone, is linked to premature deaths: it should be taken into account when measuring health

benefits of reducing air pollution. Premature death from ozone exposure is greater among those with lung and heart disease, but not restricted to people who are at a high risk of death. H. Hebert. USA Today. 22 April 2008.

(c) Environmental Tobacco Smoke/Smoking

Prenatal Cigarette Smoke May Affect SIDS Risk In rat study, cigarette smoke affects breathing patterns after hypoxia. Researchers from the University of Calgary, suggest that prenatal exposure to cigarette smoke may affect the risk of sudden infant death syndrome, according to a report in the June 1 issue of the American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine. Modern Medicine. 2 June 2008.

Prenatal Exposure to Airborne Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons and Risk of Intrauterine Growth Restriction Transplacental exposure to PAHs released from cigarette smoke induced a large increase in xenobiotic metabolism by the placental tissues, increased PAH–DNA adduct levels, and subsequently reduced neonatal weight in a cohort of mother–newborn pairs. H. Choi. EHP. May 2008.

(2) CHEMICALS: (a) General

Plastic is a killer Phthalates are notorious chemical additives that make plastic flexible and soft and are often found in child-care products such as soft baby books and rattles. Over-exposure to phthalates is known to cause genital abnormalities in men and women. In fact, it was considered so dangerous that the EU recently banned them in the production of children's toys. S. Nayeem. Gulfnews. 25 May 2008.

The anti-plastic backlash Concerns about toxins are bringing glass jars back into style. Experts agree that rethinking plastic in the kitchen should be a priority, especially among families with pregnant women and small children. Children are uniquely vulnerable to chemicals. It's important for them to avoid exposure to those chemicals. Eliminating all risks is impossible. T. Pearce. Globe and Mail. 20 May 2008.

Maternal Exposure To Persistent Organic Pollutants Linked To Urologic Conditions In Boys Higher incidences of congenital anomalies, including cryptorchidism and hypospadias, were found in boys whose mothers had higher serum levels of certain organochlorine compounds, researchers say. These data underscore the importance of regular 'well-baby' checkups. ScienceDaily. 17 May 2008.

Suspected Carcinogenic Chemicals Used To Make Teflon, Scotchgard, Found In Human Milk Chemicals used to make non-stick cookware and stain-resistant fabrics are spreading around the world and turning up in surprising places, everywhere from wildlife and drinking water supplies to human blood. Researchers found these suspected carcinogens in samples of human milk. ScienceDaily. 1 May 2008.

(b) Lead

[Lead exposure in children linked to violent crime](#) A study finds that even low levels can permanently damage the brain. The research also shows that exposure is a continuing problem despite efforts to minimize it. Recently, parents and authorities have become concerned about increasing levels of lead-based paint in toys imported from China. T. Maugh II & M. Cone. Los Angeles Times. 28 May 2008

[Fixing up 'this old house' may increase young lead levels](#) Ripping out and tearing down to create a divinely designed home is all the rage today and the economic downturn may be leading more families to renovate rather than relocate. But a study has found that parents need to be aware that all this interior renovation can put their children's health at risk due to exposure to lead. Bio-Medicine. 3 May 2008.

[Alzheimer's Disease \(AD\)-Like Pathology in Aged Monkeys after Infantile Exposure to Environmental Metal Lead \(Pb\): Evidence for a Developmental Origin and Environmental Link for AD](#) Data suggests that AD pathogenesis is influenced by early life exposures and argue for both an environmental trigger and a developmental origin of AD. J. Wu. Journal of Neuroscience. January 2008.

(c) Pesticides

[New Repellents Without DEET Show Promise in Tests on Humans](#) Researchers have found several new mosquito repellents that appear to work more than 3 times as long as DEET. Tests will be needed to see whether the acylpiperidines irritate skin, evaporate, dissolve in sweat or fail in ways that other repellents do. New repellents are always needed. D. McNeil Jr. New York Times. 27 May 2008.

[DNA damage 'caused by pesticides'](#) The study found DNA of farmers in Punjab altered. Research in India suggests exposure to pesticides could have damaged the DNA of people in farming communities, leading to higher rates of cancer. New crop varieties have not kept up the promise of the early days of the green revolution in Asia. Yields have gone down. D. Loyn. BBC News. 19 May 2008.

[Insecticides in pet shampoo may trigger autism](#) Could insecticides in pet shampoos trigger autism spectrum disorders? That's a suggestion of one of the first large-scale population-based studies to look how environmental factors and their interactions with genes contribute to the condition. Autism is a complex disorder involving multiple genes and environmental factors L. Geddes. New Scientist. 15 May 2008

[Dietary Intake and Its Contribution to Longitudinal Organophosphorus Pesticide Exposure in Urban/Suburban Children](#) The widespread use of organophosphorus (OP) pesticides has led to frequent exposure in adults and children. Because such exposure may cause adverse health effects, particularly in children, the sources and patterns of exposure need to be studied further. C Lu. EHP. April 2008.

(d) Mercury

[Thimerosal exposure in infants and neurodevelopmental disorders: An assessment of computerized medical records in the Vaccine Safety Datalink](#) Routine childhood vaccination should be continued to help reduce the morbidity and mortality associated with infectious diseases, but efforts should be undertaken to remove Hg from vaccines. H.A. Young. Journal of Neurological Sciences. 15 May 2008

[Mums-to-be warned of fish danger](#) Mothers-to-be and those planning to have babies should avoid eating too much fish as it may contain excessive levels of mercury, the Centre for Food Safety warned. Too much mercury will affect brain development, especially intelligence, and will also cause chronic toxicity, damage to the nervous system and cancer, they said. D. Pang. The Standard. 17 April 2008.

(3) WATER AND SANITATION

[South Africa: Court Ruling On Water Sets 'Global Precedent'](#) A landmark High Court ruling against a multimillion-dollar prepaid water scheme in South Africa's town Soweto, has been heralded as a global precedent in the struggle for the basic right to water. Water is life, sanitation is dignity - this case is about the fundamental right to have access to water and human dignity. AllAfrica. 6 May 2008

[Angola: Environment Ministry And Unicef Cooperate in Sanitation](#) A memorandum of understanding in the area of basic environmental sanitation was signed in Luanda. This convention constitutes a unique opportunity to work in partnership with the government to provide better living standard for Angolan children, as many of them have been dying due to the lack of sanitation. AllAfrica. 24 April 2008

[Water pollution: Dawn of the 'Dead Zones'](#) "Dead Zones" are being discovered across the world and a major United Nations report in 2003 found that the number had doubled each decade since the 1960's. Agricultural nitrates have been identified as a factor in the growth of toxic "red tide" algae and high levels in drinking water can also pose a health risk to humans, especially children. CNN. 21 April 2008

[Singer shines light on sanitation](#) A Mozambican musician who campaigns for clean water and sanitation has been awarded a top environmental prize. F. dos Santos won a Goldman Environmental Prize for using his music star status to raise awareness about health, water and HIV/Aids issues. UN says diarrhoeal diseases kill an estimated 1.8 million people each year. M. Kinver. BBC News. 12 April 2008.

(4) GLOBAL CHANGE

[Can we live light?](#) June 5 is World Environment Day. This year's theme 'Pick Right' encourages every individual to reflect on lifestyle choices. Climate change is the issue of our times. Everyday choices like taking a bus or a train instead of a car, buying an energy efficient gadget or walking or cycling short distances contribute to bringing down our carbon footprint. R. Namagiri. The Hindu. 3 June 2008.

[Sahel stands at 'ground zero' of climate change, top UN adviser warns](#) Africa's Sahel region is "ground zero" for countries trying to cope with climate change, but investment in adaptation measures and cooperation between neighbouring States means this does not have to lead to conflict, a UN official said. Many of the people here live on the edge even in normal times. [UN News Centre](#). 2 June 2008.

[Nigeria: Women, Children Mostly Affected By Climate Change - Minister](#) The minister said that women and children in developing countries would be mostly affected by the effects of climate change. She said that the effects of climate change would negatively affect the inhabitants of coastal areas and peasants residing in rural areas who depended on rain-fed activities for survival. [AllAfrica](#). 23 April 2008

(5) REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

[Persistent Organochlorine Pesticides and Risk of Testicular Germ Cell Tumors](#) Increased exposure to p,p'-DDE may be associated with risk of both seminomatous and nonseminomatous TGCTs, whereas exposure to chlordane and metabolites may be associated with risk of seminoma. Exposure to these pesticides during fetal life may increase risk of TGCT in young men. K. McGlynn. [JNCI](#). 29 April 2008.

[Bisphenol A can alter genes, study finds](#) Animal experiments have found that fetal or early life exposures to BPA cause lesions that may lead to increased susceptibility to mammary gland tumours later in life. BPA, the widely used compound in plastic, can alter the activity of genes in normal breast cells in ways that resemble what is found in breast cancers. M. Mittelstaedt. [Globe and Mail](#). 18 April 2008.

[Risk of Erectile Dysfunction Induced by Arsenic Exposure through Well Water Consumption in Taiwan](#) Erectile dysfunction (ED) has a profound impact on the quality of life of many men. Arsenic exposure could damage peripheral vessels and increase the risk of cardiovascular disease. However, the relationship between arsenic exposure and ED has seldom been evaluated. F Hsieh. [EHP](#). April 2008.

(6) MISCELLANEOUS (a) General

[Greenpeace Pushes for Greener Video Game Consoles](#) Greenpeace has released the results of its investigation into hazardous materials in next-generation video game consoles. A study reveals that several consoles tested positive for hazardous chemicals: they contained high levels of phthalates and bromine. A greener game console is possible. J. LeClaire. Newsfactor Network. [Yahoo news](#). 21 May 2008.

[Fate Of Personal Care Products Linked To Environmental Pollution And Human Health Concerns](#) Parental concerns in maintaining germ-free homes for their children have led to an ever-increasing demand and the rapid adoption of anti-bacterial soaps and cleaning agents. But the active ingredients of those antiseptic soaps now have come under scrutiny by the EPA and FDA. [ScienceDaily](#). 19 May 2008

[Warning: Using a mobile phone while pregnant can seriously damage your baby](#) A giant study, which surveyed more than 13,000 children, found that using the handsets just two or three times a day was enough to raise the risk of their babies developing hyperactivity and difficulties with conduct, emotions and relationships by the time they reached school age. G. Lean. The Independent. 18 May 2008

[Nobel Peace laureate Wangari Muta Maathai speaks at ecological awakening event in L.A](#) The founder of Kenya's Green Belt Movement urges attendees to 'start with small things, start with ourselves,' in a campaign to save the environment and ease poverty. Maathai's appearance in Los Angeles was part of an Ecological Justice Day of Awakening. JL. Mitchell. Los Angeles Times. 27 April 2008.

['Silent tsunami' of hunger threatens world: WFP](#) Rising food costs threaten to unleash a "silent tsunami" of hunger around the world, the head of the UN World Food Programme said at a summit to discuss the crisis. The head of WFP said spiralling food prices could push more than 100 million people worldwide into a level of poverty where they cannot afford to feed themselves. CBC News. 22 April 2008

(b) Americas

[Dengue fever toll in Rio de Janeiro state reaches 123](#) The death toll from the worst-ever dengue fever epidemic in Rio de Janeiro has reached 123 so far this year, with more than 162,500 people infected but surviving, authorities said. Nearly half the fatalities were children under the age of 16, and most cases occurred in Rio de Janeiro, the state's health secretariat said. AFP. Hindustan Times. 29 May 2008.

[State senate bill would ban suspect plastic](#) California passed a bill that would prevent the sale of plastic baby bottles, cups and formula cans if they contain detectable levels of an estrogen-like chemical suspected of disrupting normal human growth. California may be the first state in the U.S. to ban the plastics ingredient bisphenol A in any consumer product. J.Kay. San Francisco Chronicle. 16 May 2008

[Food Price Inflation Threatens Children](#) Child malnutrition in Latin America and the Caribbean will worsen because of global food shortages; the region produces more food than it consumes. Breast feeding, enriched foods and monitoring of children's growth are among the basic weapons for fighting a potential new wave of childhood malnutrition in Latin America. D. Estrada. Tierramerica. 12 May 2008.

[Chemical in gum toxic? Maybe, Ottawa says](#) The federal government is considering declaring a substance used to make chewing gum as toxic after tests on the colourless liquid with a sweet, fruity smell linked it to cancer in lab rats. Vinyl acetate is one of 17 substances Health Canada could recommend be deemed toxic in a draft report to be published soon. S. Rennie. TheStar.com. 12 May 2008.

(c) Asia

[UN food chief urges more funding to support aid work after Myanmar cyclone](#) The head of the UN food agency called for greater support for its growing relief operations in Myanmar. UN estimates that more than 77,000 people have been killed and 55,000 others are missing since Cyclone Nargis struck on 2 May. 500,000 to 600,000 people have had to be relocated. UN News Centre. 1 June 2008

[Living with floods](#) Through adaptation methods, Vietnamese living in the Mekong River Delta are benefiting from the annual inundation. Provinces also introduced flood-based farming practices to improve farmers' livelihoods during the flood season. The 1997 flood took the lives of many children, the overall death toll reaching 607 and 173,606 houses destroyed. S. Kaopatumpit. Bangkok Post. 25 May 2008.

[Secretary-General visits Chinese region devastated by massive quake](#) Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon visited one of the towns in China's Sichuan province hit hardest by the recent earthquake. He met with the Premier in Yingxiu, near the epicenter of the 12 May earthquake measuring 8.0 on the Richter scale which, according to state media reports, has claimed more than 60,000 lives. UNChina. 24 May 2008.

[Bank Loans Light Up Rural Karnataka With Solar Power](#) Over 100,000 people in Karnataka's villages have benefited in the last five years after banks started providing loans for solar lighting at low interest rates, a UNEP official has said. The \$1.5-million pilot project managed by UNEP has now become a model for other developing countries, like Tunisia, China, Indonesia. News Post (India). 7 May 2008.

[Bhopal: hundreds of new victims are born each year](#) Hundreds of children are still being born with birth defects as a result of the world's worst industrial disaster 23 years ago in the central Indian town of Bhopal, say campaigners. They are demanding that the Indian government provide immediate medical care and research the "hidden" health impacts. R. Ramesh. The Guardian. 30 April 2008.

(d) Africa

[Food crisis may worsen African child mortality - UN](#) The global food crisis could reverse some of the progress Africa has made in bringing down child mortality, the head of the UN children's agency said. Sub-Saharan African countries accounted for 9 of the 10 highest mortality rates for children under five in the world. It's an impact on those who are the most vulnerable. Y. Kubota. Reuters. 28 May 2008

[Uganda: Rakai in School Environment Drive](#) Following the rampant environmental degradation in Rakai district, teachers have started the school environment programme to create awareness regarding environmental issues in schools. The activities, according to the KACODEP coordinator, Mathias Mulumba, shall involve the school administrators and students. P. Jaramogi. AllAfrica.com. 6 May 2008.

[Breeding toxins from dead PCs](#) Children are dying to clear up the developed world's discarded computers. Thousands of computers from western Europe and the US arrive in the ports of west

Africa every day, ending up in massive toxic dumps where children burn and pull them apart to extract metals for cash. Over half a million computers arrive in Lagos every month. R. Wray. The Guardian. 6 May 2008.

[Uganda: Study Links Testicular Cancer to DDT](#) As the use of DDT to fight mosquitoes spreading Malaria in Uganda begins to take shape, it is emerging that men born to mothers exposed to lingering amounts of the pesticide might have an increased risk of getting testicular cancer. The cancer that affects young men is said to be on the increase around the world. K. Kirunda. AllAfrica.com. 6 May 2008

(e) Europe

[EFSA to review bisphenol A \(BPA\) in food packaging](#) On 25 April, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) has decided to review its previous advice on safe levels of bisphenol A (BPA) in food packaging and provide updates on its deliberations. Health Canada is expected to publish its health risk assessment of BPA from food packaging applications soon. HEAL. 5 May 2008.

[Impaired Reproductive Development in Sons of Women Occupationally Exposed to Pesticides during Pregnancy](#) In Denmark, the highest occupational pesticide exposure occurs in greenhouses. Findings suggest an adverse effect of maternal occupational pesticide exposure on reproductive development in the sons despite current greenhouse safeguards and protection. H. Andersen. EHP. April 2008
