

HECANET *** June - July 2008

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ARTICLE HIGHLIGHTS

The studies presented below depict the hazardous effects of indoor and outdoor air pollution on children. The awareness of risks associated with air pollution has also been investigated in developing countries. The attitudes and thoughts toward smoking and environmental tobacco smoke have also been investigated in more vulnerable populations, while a study in the US has suggested that prenatal exposure to Environmental Tobacco Smoke (ETS) is associated with Conduct Disorder (CD). New research has emerged on the potential hazardous effects of common substances used in sunscreen and perfumes. The time required for children's blood lead levels to decline to below the accepted level has been investigated. The Punjab government has decided to begin a cancer registry programme of pesticide induced health disorders. Occupational pesticide exposure and gene/DNA damage has also been investigated. The effects of mercury on children through teeth filling and vaccines are reported, while the new environmentally friendly incandescent light bulbs have been reported to potentially cause harm to children's health. Regarding water and sanitation articles, a simple action, such as hand washing is found to save lives in rural Nepal. Breast feeding is found to be protecting infants against postnatal mercury exposure. The debate between biofuels and world food availability and hunger continues, while climate change continues to cause harm to the natural environment. In Reproductive health, lead levels and the onset of puberty are investigated in Russian boys.

In the Americas, the articles presented investigate the effects of air pollution on women and children, and in the US, lawmakers agree to ban toxics in children's items. In the midst of the Olympics hype, athletes continue to withdraw from the games due to the air pollution in China. The recycling boom in Cambodia, adds to the hazardous lives of children. In Africa, the effects of air pollution and respiratory disease are investigated. In Europe, research from Denmark suggests an increased risk for acute lymphoblastic leukemia during childhood for children living in homes with high radon levels. In Oceania, Australian Aboriginal health is examined.

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 (e) Oceania**
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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.

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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

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 \(CEHI\)](#) or contact: cehindicators@who.int

(3) WHO Report: Safer water, better health

[The first-ever report](#) depicting country-by-country estimates of the burden of disease due to water, sanitation and hygiene highlights how much disease could be prevented through increased

access to safe water and better hygiene. This comprehensive overview provides the epidemiological evidence and economic arguments for fully integrating water, sanitation and hygiene in countries' disease reduction strategies -- a pre-requisite to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. It also provides the basis for preventive action by all relevant sectors managing critical water resources and services in support of public health efforts. Lack of safe water, sanitation and hygiene remains one of the world's most urgent health issues.

(4) Report: WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation

As 2008 is the International Year of Sanitation (IYS), JMP has taken the opportunity to make sanitation a major focus in its 2008 update report, entitled "[Progress on Drinking-water and Sanitation: special focus on sanitation.](#)" The WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation (JMP) report details global progress towards the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) target for drinking-water and sanitation, and analyses what these trends suggest for the remainder of the UN Decade "Water for Life" (2005 - 2015). It introduces a new way of assessing global, regional and country progress using the "ladder" concept for both sanitation and drinking-water. For sanitation, trends in using improved, shared, and unimproved sanitation facilities are shown, in addition to the trend in open defecation. The drinking-water ladder shows the percentage of global population using piped connections into a dwelling, plot or yard; other improved water sources; and unimproved sources. The intention is to continue refining the "ladders" in future reports.

(5) WHO Booklet: The international code of marketing of breast-milk substitutes

In 1981, Member States of the World Health Organization adopted the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes, with the aim to protect, promote and support appropriate infant and young child feeding practices. The adoption of the Code was a key milestone in global efforts to improve breastfeeding, and countries have taken action to implement and monitor the Code and subsequent relevant Health Assembly resolutions. [This booklet of Frequently Asked Questions](#) aims to increase awareness and understanding of how the Code can help to ensure that mothers and caregivers are able to make fully-informed choices of how best to feed their infants, free of commercial interest.

(6) International report from the Health Behaviour in School-Aged Children: WHO Collaborative Cross-National Study

This international report from the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) World Health Organization collaborative cross-national study is the most comprehensive to date. [The report titled: 'Inequalities in young People's Health'](#) presents the key findings on patterns of health among young people in 41 countries and regions across Europe and North America. The document presents a status report on health, health-related behaviour and the social contexts of young people's health in 2005/2006 and provides the latest evidence from a unique cross-national study on the well-being of young people in industrialized nations. It is the fourth in a series of international reports from the HBSC study published by the WHO Regional Office for Europe in the "Health policy for children and adolescents" (HEPCA) series. In addition to presenting key statistics on young people's health, this report has a special focus on health

inequalities. It presents data on gender, age and geographic and socioeconomic dimensions of health differentials. The aim of the report is to highlight where inequalities exist in aspects of young people's health and well-being in order to inform and influence policy and practice and to contribute to health improvement for all young people.

(7) UNEP/Basel Convention Conference Adopts Bali Declaration on Waste Management for Human Health and Livelihood

The ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention on Hazardous Wastes (COP9), hosted by the Government of Indonesia, today adopted the Bali Declaration on Waste Management for Human Health and Livelihood. In the Bali Declaration, whose negotiations were facilitated by the Government of Indonesia as part of its Presidency of the meeting, Parties to the Convention (of which there are now 170) reaffirm their commitment to the fundamental objective of the Convention to protect, by strict control, human health and the environment against the adverse effects resulting from the generation, transboundary movement and management of hazardous and other wastes. Parties also underline their conviction that the implementation of the Basel Convention contributes to achieving sustainable development and the United Nations Millennium Development Goals. Through the implementation of the Basel Convention, Parties indicate that progress can be made in the areas of poverty eradication, health, education, gender equality and environmental sustainability. In the Declaration, Parties to the Convention invite the World Health Assembly of the World Health Organization (WHO) to consider a resolution on the improvement of health through safe and environmentally sound waste management. It also proposes concrete action points to Parties, public and private organizations, including international and regional organizations, and programmes in support of the sound implementation of the Convention. Please consult: www.basel.int and <http://cop9.basel.int/> For more information, please contact: Mr. Dida Gardera: gardera@menlh.go.id.

(8) UNEP: Child Activists Tell their Story

One of the largest international children's conferences in the world, the biannual Tunza International Children's Conference, organized by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), took place on 17-21 June, on the theme 'Creating Change'. The conference brought together about 1,000 participants (700 children aged 10 to 14 and 300 chaperones) from 105 countries. Each day began with a keynote speech followed by presentations from children on their projects and thereafter workshops and fieldtrips related to the daily themes of Energy, Water, Biodiversity, Sustainable Consumption and Production. The four-day conference culminated in a set of commitments by the delegates on environmental actions they will undertake on returning home. The highlight of the Conference was the election of the 2008-2010 Junior Board comprising of 11 children – seven from the UNEP regions (North America, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, West Asia, Asia and the Pacific) and four from Korea, which is the host for the next children's conference in 2010. The Junior Board will assist with the preparations of the 2010 children's conference and will advise UNEP on better ways of engaging children in environmental processes. To read more about this event please visit: http://www.ua21.no/tunza/tunza_2008/news/successful_conference

(9) Child and Adolescent Health and Development (CAH) WHO EMRO: Study Results published

[Study on acute insecticide poisoning in children](#). The study aim was to develop a clinical decision aid that could guide early triage at primary health care level of children exposed to organophosphates / carbamates, identifying those requiring referral to higher level facilities

[Study on hydrocarbon \(kerosene\) poisoning in children](#). The study aimed to develop a clinical decision instrument to identify at primary health care facilities in developing countries children under-five exposed to hydrocarbon (kerosene) requiring referral to higher level facilities.

(10) 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/>

(11) 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.

(12) Sixth session of the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety. Dakar, Senegal. 15-19 September 2008 – Website Now Live!

[Sixth session of the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety](#). Dakar, Senegal. 15-19 September 2008. Pre-meetings and side events 14 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. The official website of the Government of Senegal for Forum IV is now live and can be found at: www.denv.gouv.sn/fisc. This site gives information on: official hotels and reservation form, visa information, health and vaccination information, local transportation information and general practical information.

(13) The 6th Annual Conference on Children's Health and the Environment. University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, USA. 18-19 September 2008

The conference is organized by the Paediatric Environmental Health Specialty Unit (PEHSU) of Region 3; the Mid-Atlantic Centre for Children's Health and the Environment (MACCHE). This

two day event is targeted to health care providers, public health professionals and the interested public. The first day will include an optional Walk in the Park a guided tour of the John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge at Tinicum. The second day will be full of engaging discussions on children's environmental health. For details, visit the website at: <http://www.gwu.edu/%7Emacche/philadelphiaconference08>

(14) American Academy of Paediatrics 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

(15) Academic Activities in Pediatric Environmental Health in Spain. 16 - 19 October 2008

The First National Meeting of Environmental Pediatrics and Community Health for Spanish Pediatricians is entitled: Pediatric Environmental Health: A new Professional Challenge. To see the event programme: http://www.aeped.es/pdf-docs/2008/sma_2008.pdf. This 30 hour course is targeted to paediatricans, hospital staff, General Practitioners, Midwives and Nurses.

(16) 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.

(17) 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.

(18) Call for Nominations: BAQ 2008 Young Voices Award. Bangkok, Thailand. 12-14 November 2008

The Better Air Quality (BAQ) - 2008 Young Voices Award on Urban Air Pollution and Climate Change Clean Air Initiative for Asian Cities (CAI-Asia) encourages new thinking and approaches to deal with the problems of urban air pollution and climate change in Asia. Eligible for the Young Voices award are full/part - time students currently enrolled at Universities or Colleges in an academic degree (undergraduate or advanced degree) program in a subject that is

of relevance to urban air pollution and climate change in Asia. The maximum age eligible for entry is 25 years. For further information please visit: <http://www.cleanairnet.org/caiasia/1412/channel.html>

(19) 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](#).

(20) 5th World Environmental Education Congress: Palais des Congrès. Montreal, Canada. 10-14 May 2009

[5th World Environmental Education Congress](#). will draw a large attendance, potentially becoming one of the field's most significant gatherings on environmental education. The mobilization of support behind the organization of this Congress is further evidence of the tremendous enthusiasm at play. Your proposal must be submitted online. Detailed instructions are available at the Congress site: www.5weec.uqam.ca under "Calls for Papers." The submission deadline is September 30, 2008. For more information on the Congress or your trip to Montreal, please visit the Congress site. Further details will be added to the site in the coming months. For more information, please send an email to 5weec@jpd.com or secretariat@environmental-education.org

(21) The Pacific Basin Consortium's 13th International Conference. 20 -22 November 2009

The theme for the 13th International Conference is "Environmental Exposures In the Era of Climate Change". The PBC will begin calling for abstracts on a variety of themes related to environmental health, hazardous waste and climate change for both platform and poster presentations starting in November 2008. Please visit <http://eastwestcenter.org> for further information

(22) P.J. Landrigan honoured with the 4th Irving J. Selikoff Memorial Award of Collegium Ramazzini

The Collegium Ramazzini announced the conferment of the Irving J. Selikoff Memorial Award to Professor Philip J. Landrigan, MD, MSc. The ceremony was held on 5th June 2008 in the Hatch auditorium of the Mount Sinai School of Medicine, New York. Following the presentation of the award, Dr. Landrigan delivered a lecture entitled "The Future of Occupational and Environmental Medicine". The award is given periodically to a scientist or humanist whose studies and achievements have contributed to the protection of workers' health and the environment. Funds for the award are provided by the Irving J. Selikoff Endowment of the Collegium Ramazzini. The award has been previously conferred only three times.

(23) Graduate Certificate in Children's Environmental Health

A Graduate Certificate in Children's Environmental Health specifically designed to provide a specialist program in understanding children's special vulnerability to environmental exposures and their adverse health outcomes. The course is offered by Curtin University of Technology, Western Australia and has been designed to be a fully online course, which can be studied full time or part time, facilitating access to international and local students. The Graduate Certificate in Children's Environmental Health has been accredited by the European Board for Accreditation (EBA) in Pneumology and students successfully completing the course can receive 184 CME credits. For further information about the course, please contact Toni Hannelly by email: CEH@curtin.edu.au or visit http://www.ichr.uwa.edu.au/who/our_activities/educational

(24) The American Academy of Environmental Medicine provides courses

The courses are designed to provide the knowledge and modalities needed by physicians and health care professionals to effectively incorporate Environmental Medicine into their practices (of any specialty). Each course includes the syllabus and Continuing Medical Education credit. To view two FREE samples, please click the following link: http://www.aemonline.org/online_ed.html

- The Common Sources of Toxic Chemicals That Can Cause Human Disease – WJ. Rea
- Taking the History in the Food Sensitive Patient - RG Jaeckle

(25) Pediatric Environmental Health Toolkit: Now Available

The Toolkit is a combination of easy-to-use reference guides for health providers and user friendly health education materials on preventing exposures to toxic chemicals and other substances that affect infant and child health. The materials are visually appealing, practical and easy to use. The Toolkit fills the need for environmental health education and information. For further information, visit: http://www.psr.org/site/PageServer?pagename=pediatric_toolkit

(26) EPA announces FINAL report: Analyses of the Effects of Global Change on Human Health and Welfare and Human Systems.

[This Synthesis and Assessment Product 4.6 \(SAP 4.6\)](#) focuses on impacts of global climate change, especially impacts on three broad dimensions of the human condition: human health, human settlements, and human welfare. The SAP 4.6 focuses on impacts of global climate change, especially impacts on three broad dimensions of the human condition: human health, human settlements, and human welfare. It was prepared by a team of experts from academia, government, and the private sector in response to the mandate of the U.S. Climate Change Science Program's Strategic Plan (2003). The assessment examines potential impacts of climate change on human society, opportunities for adaptation, and associated recommendations for addressing data gaps and near- and long-term research goals.

(27) Médecins Sans Frontières open access website launched

The international medical humanitarian organisation Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) has launched an open-access website on which it makes available published research based on its medical work. The site, <http://www.fieldresearch.msf.org>, requires no password or sign-up and

full-text articles are available for free. MSF hopes that health professionals, policy makers and researchers, especially those in developing countries, will now have easier access to the results of MSF's field research.

Although MSF is well known for providing emergency medical assistance, the organisation carries out significant field research based on its work with vulnerable populations. This research has often changed clinical practice and health policy in developing countries. At its launch, the field research site includes over 400 archived articles on issues including HIV care, malaria, tuberculosis, leishmaniasis, refugees and health politics.

It also features conference abstracts and a section called 'Programme Descriptions' that describes lessons learnt from MSF's field experience. As new articles are published, they will be archived on the site. The field research website initiative was made possible through the kind cooperation of over 30 publishers representing 100 journals in which MSF research has been published. These include The Lancet, BMJ, New England Journal of Medicine, PLoS Medicine and Transactions of the Royal Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene. Contact Details: tony.reid@brussels.msf.org.

(28) Enviro-Health Links

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

(29) 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

[Awareness of health effects of cooking smoke among women in the Gondar Region of Ethiopia: a pilot survey](#) The objective of this study was to determine the awareness of women in Gondar, Ethiopia to the harmful health effects of cooking smoke and to assess their willingness to change cooking practices and introduction of smoke-free stoves. [BMC](#). 18 July 2008

[Indoor residential chemical emissions as risk factors for respiratory and allergic effects in children: a review](#) The findings from this study point to a new class of little under recognized and under reported indoor risk factors for allergic and respiratory disease, distinct from the current set of indoor risk factors. M. Mendell. Wiley InterScience. 18 July 2008.

(b) Outdoor air pollution

[Spatial variations in estimated chronic exposure to traffic-related air pollution in working populations- A simulation](#) Chronic exposure to traffic-related air pollution is associated with a variety of health impacts in adults and recent studies show that exposure varies spatially, with some residents in a community more exposed than others. E Setton. Int J Health Geogr. 18 July 2008.

[Chronic Traffic-Related Air Pollution and Stress Interact to Predict Biologic and Clinical Outcomes in Asthma](#) This study aimed to test interactions between chronic exposure to traffic-related air pollution and chronic family stress in predicting biologic and clinical outcomes in children with asthma. E Chen. EHP. July 2008

[Air pollution, cognitive deficits and brain abnormalities: A pilot study with children and dogs](#) Comparative studies were carried out in healthy children and young dogs similarly exposed to ambient pollution in Mexico City. The findings show the prefrontal cortex was a target anatomical region in children and its damage could have contributed to their cognitive dysfunction. L Calderón-Garcidueñas. PubMed. 10 June 2008.

[Air quality and acute respiratory disorders in children](#) A time series ecological study was carried out in three public health posts in a region of the city of Rio de Janeiro with the aim of assessing the relationship between air pollution and acute respiratory disorders in children between April 2002 and March 2003. M. Moura. Rev. Saúde Pública. June 2008

(c) Environmental Tobacco Smoke/Smoking

[Smoking and smokeless tobacco consumption: possible risk factors for coronary heart disease among young patients attending a tertiary care cardiac hospital in Bangladesh.](#) The possible role of tobacco was investigated in an epidemiological study of the intima media thickness in the carotid artery of 207 middle-aged men with different tobacco consumption habits. M.A. Rahman. Journal of Public Health. 26 July 2008

[WHO welcomes new resources to fight tobacco use](#) WHO welcomes the announcement from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Bloomberg Philanthropies to inject significant new resources into the global fight against tobacco use. This contribution will help countries reduce tobacco use, and it offers WHO new opportunities to reverse this growing epidemic. WHO Statement. 23 July 2008

[The moderating role of parental smoking on their children's attitudes toward smoking among a predominantly minority sample: a cross-sectional analysis](#) The analysis were to examine

smoking initiation among their children while authoritative parenting style and open communication that demonstrates mutual respect between child and parent. A Wilkinson. PubMed. 14 July 2008

[Association of Environmental Toxicants and Conduct Disorder in U.S. Children: NHANES 2001–2004](#) The NHANES 2001–2004 is a nationally representative cross-sectional sample of the non-institutionalized U.S. population. The study measured prenatal tobacco exposure by parent report of cigarette use during pregnancy, and postnatal tobacco using serum cotinine levels. J Braun. EHP. July 2008

[Smoking practices and risk awareness in parents regarding passive smoke exposure of their preschool children: A cross-sectional study in Tehran](#) The aim of this study was to determine patterns of parental smoking, the level of parental awareness about hazards of secondhand smoke, and the effect of risk awareness on smoking behavior. Shiva F. Indian Journal of Medical Sciences. June 2008.

(2) CHEMICALS:

(a) General

[Concentrations of the Sunscreen Agent Benzophenone-3 in Residents of the United States: National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey 2003–2004](#) Results from animal studies—primarily dietary studies that affected body weight gain—showed alterations in liver, kidney, and reproductive organs in rats and mice administered BP-3 dermally and orally. A. Calafat EHP. July 2008

[UN: Rich countries' toxic waste overwhelming poorer nations](#) The world's poorest nations can't cope with huge backlogs of toxic waste sent for disposal by rich countries with tougher environmental laws, as dangerously high stockpiles continue to build up in African, Asian and some Latin American countries. Rich countries are dumping everything from poisonous chemicals to electronic. cbc.ca. 25 June 2008.

(b) Lead

[Reduction of Elevated Blood Lead Levels in Children in North Carolina and Vermont, 1996–1999](#) This study used routinely collected surveillance data from the North Carolina and Vermont state surveillance databases to determine the length of time and risk factors associated with reducing elevated BLLs in children below the level of concern of 10 µg/dL. T Dignam. EHP. July 2008.

[Association of Lead Exposure with Survival in Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis](#) This study aimed to determine whether lead exposure, assessed by measuring blood and bone lead levels, is associated with ALS survival in 110 cases from a case–control study conducted in New England in 1993–1996 that included measurements of blood and bone lead. F Kamel. EHP. June 2008.

(c) Pesticides

[Pesticide-ridden Punjab to begin cancer registration](#) The Punjab government has decided to begin a cancer registry programme. Two recent reports have revealed the fast-deteriorating public health in the state. A report by Punjabi University, Patiala, revealed the high rate of DNA damage among farmers was due to pesticide use. [ScienceandEnvironemnt](#). 8 August 2008.

[Renal cell carcinoma, occupational pesticide exposure, and modification by glutathione S-transferase polymorphisms](#) This study investigated associations between occupational pesticide exposure and renal cell carcinoma (RCC) risk. They also investigated whether this association could be modified by glutathione S-transferase M1 and T1 genotypes. S Karami. [HighWire Press](#). 19 June 2008.

[Evaluation of genetic damage in a Brazilian population occupationally exposed to pesticides and its correlation with polymorphisms in metabolizing genes](#) The present study assessed if prolonged exposure to complex mixtures of pesticides leads to an increase in cytogenetic damage. The study involved 108 agricultural workers exposed to pesticides and 65 controls. J da Silva. [HighWire Press](#). 11 June 2008.

[Predicting outcome using butyrylcholinesterase activity in organophosphorus pesticide self-poisoning](#) This study aimed to assess the usefulness of admission BuChE activity, together with plasma OP concentration, for predicting death with two specific organophosphorus insecticides. A high OP concentration on admission was associated with worse outcome M. Eddleston. [HighWire Press](#). June 2008

(d) Mercury

[A Cloth to Cut the Mercury Risk From Light Bulbs](#) The light bulbs contain small amounts of mercury. They are supposed to be recycled so that the mercury (which is in vapour form) can be dealt with properly. But the tubes do occasionally crack or break, so mercury could be released in homes, posing a small risk to children. [NYtimes](#). 8 July 2008

[Low mercury concentrations cause oxidative stress and endothelial dysfunction in conductance and resistance arteries](#) The findings from this study indicate that chronic exposure to low concentrations of mercury promotes endothelial dysfunction as a result of the decreased NO bioavailability induced by increases in oxidative stress.G Wiggers. [HighWire Press](#). 3 July 2008.

[Hidden CDC Data Confirms Vaccine-Autism Link](#) Due to the ongoing debate over the role of mercury containing vaccines and autism, HAPI have decided to have some current vaccinations tested for mercury content. [AustismToday](#). 12 June 2008.

[Mercury fillings may harm children: U.S. FDA](#) Silver-coloured metal dental fillings contain mercury that may cause health problems in pregnant women, children and foetuses, the FDA said today after settling a related lawsuit. The FDA agreed to alert consumers about potential risks on

its website and to issue a more specific rule next year for fillings that contain mercury. [Healthzone.ca](#). 4 June 2008.

[Genetic Variation in Glutathione-Related Genes and Body Burden of Methylmercury](#) Exposure to toxic methylmercury (MeHg) through fish consumption is a large problem worldwide, and it has led to governmental recommendations of reduced fish consumption and blacklisting of mercury-contaminated fish. Karin Schläwicke Engström et al. [EHP](#). June 2008.

(3) WATER AND SANITATION

[Hand Washing Saves Newborn Lives](#) In developing countries, the concept of washing with soap before delivery to protect against infection is not well understood. According to this study in Nepal, there was 19% lower risk of death among newborns born at home in rural Nepal when the birth attendant washed their hands in preparation for delivery before delivery. [Eurekalaert.com](#). 7 July 2008.

[Breast-feeding Protects against Arsenic Exposure in Bangladeshi Infants](#) The aim of this study was to assess the arsenic exposure through breast milk in Bangladeshi infants, living in an area with high prevalence of arsenic-rich tube-well water. They analyzed metabolites of inorganic arsenic in breast milk and infant urine at 3 months of age. B Fängström. [EHP](#). July 2008

(4) GLOBAL CHANGE

[Extreme weather events can unleash a 'perfect storm' of infectious diseases, research study says](#) An international research team has found the first clear example of how climate extremes, can create conditions in which diseases that are tolerated individually may converge and cause mass die-offs of livestock or wildlife. [Eurekalaert.com](#). 24 June 2008

[Food vs. Fuel: Diversion of Crops Could Cause More Hunger](#) Biofuels are being promoted as energy sources that could reduce both dependence on imported oil and fossil fuel emissions. Not only are more crops being used to make fuel, but there is also increasing demand for food for human and animal consumption from growing consumer markets. D. Tenenbaum. [EHP](#). June 2008

[In Hot Water: Global Warming Takes a Toll on Coral Reefs](#) In 2005, months of unprecedented higher-than-normal water temperatures started bleaching, disease, and death among corals everywhere. Such events are increasing in frequency around the world and threaten these fragile ecosystems which shelter a wealth of biodiversity and provide sources of food and pharmaceuticals. C Schmidt. [EHP](#). June 2008.

(5) REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

[Association of Blood Lead Levels with Onset of Puberty in Russian Boys](#) Epidemiologic studies suggest a temporal trend of earlier onset and longer duration of puberty, raising concerns regarding the potential impact of environmental factors on pubertal development. This study looked at lead exposure and pubertal onset in boys. R Hauser. EHP. July 2008.

[Region-Specific Growth Effects in the Developing Rat Prostate Following Foetal Exposure to Estrogenic Ultraviolet Filters](#) This study examined the effects of two UV filters, 4-MBC and 3-BC, in the developing prostate of the fetal rat. 4-MBC exposure during development of the male reproductive accessory sex glands exhibited classical growth effects associated with estrogenic endocrine disruptors. EHP. L Hofkamp. July 2008.

(6) MISCELLANEOUS (a) General

[The Waste-Pickers of Delhi](#) The original Delhi recyclers have turned garbage into since long before recycling became fashionable in the West, and in Delhi, a 13-million-person metropolis, the waste-pickers number in the tens of thousands. Now, a carbon-credit-generating incinerator may put them out of business. Mother Jones Journal. July/August 2008

[A Comparison of Particulate Matter from Biomass-Burning Rural and Non-Biomass-Burning Urban Households in North-eastern China](#) In this study the researchers characterized indoor and personal particle exposure in six households in north-eastern China (three urban, three rural) and explored differences by location, cooking status, activity, and fuel type. R Jiang. PubMed. July 2008.

[Asthma-allergy study will track 5,000 Canadians from foetus to 5](#) A major study on asthma and allergies is being launched to follow 5,000 Canadian children from their mother's pregnancy until the age of five. Researchers will recruit pregnant women to investigate the role of environmental exposures, infections, nutrition and genetics in the development of asthma and allergies. Parentalcentral.ca. 5 June 2008.

(b) Americas

[Living near freeway could harm pregnant women](#) Women who live close to busy, pollution-spewing freeways are more likely than most to have a premature or low-birth-weight baby, concludes a new Canadian study that adds to the debate over vehicle emissions concludes. Results suggest planners ought to avoid building houses near existing highways, National Post. 30 July 2008.

[Lawmakers Agree to Ban Toxins in Children's Items](#) Congressional negotiators agreed yesterday to a ban on a family of toxins found in children's products, handing a major victory to parents and health experts who have been clamoring for the government to remove harmful chemicals from toys. Washington Post. 29 July 2008

[Self-rated health among Mayan women participating in a randomised intervention trial reducing indoor air pollution in Guatemala](#) Women's perception of their health was improved, but although smoke reduction was valued, this was linked mainly with alleviation of non-respiratory symptoms like eye discomfort and headache E Díaz [BMC](#). 1 July 2008.

[Argentina bans phthalates in baby products](#) On 11 June, the Argentinean Ministry of Health banned manufacture, import and export of baby products and toys containing concentrations higher than 0.1% of DEHP, DBP, BBP, DINP, DIDP or DNOP phthalates. [Read Argentina Ministry of Health resolution only in Spanish](#). [wecf.eu](#). 13 June 2008

[Air Pollution, Airway Inflammation, and Lung Function in a Cohort Study of Mexico City Schoolchildren](#) This study assessed the association of short-term air pollutant exposure with inflammatory markers and lung function in asthmatic and non-asthmatic school aged children living in Mexico City. A Barraza-Villarreal. [Environ Health Perspect](#). June 2008.

(c) Asia

[China's air pollution monitors 'flawed'](#) Officials lavished \$17.6bn on cleaning up the capital with factories dozens of miles away closed down, construction halted, and over half the city's 3.3m cars cleared from the roads. Still, athletes and their coaches may have cause for concern. Many athletes have delayed arriving in Beijing until the last minute to avoid bad air. [Ninemsn](#). 31 July 2008

[Recycling boom adds to hazardous life of Cambodian children](#) Cambodia's growing demand for recyclables from bottles and cans to cardboard has seen a sharp rise in the number of child scavengers trawling through the capital's waste heaps, many of them press-ganged into one of the world's most hazardous forms of labour. [AFP](#). 4 June 2008.

[Systems for the management of respiratory disease in primary care - an international series: Pakistan](#) In villages in remote areas, access to government-run health care facilities can sometimes be quite difficult. Respiratory illnesses like asthma, allergy and COPD, are still a relatively low priority area. Yusuf MO. [Primary Care Respiratory Journal](#). June 2008.

(d) Africa

[Doctors, activists work to stop clay eating in Africa](#) The practice of geophagy, widespread among pregnant women, can be harmful to the mother as well as the fetus. Some researchers suspect the clay coats the gastrointestinal tract and absorbs toxins and can also contain harmful parasites and cause lead poisoning, intestinal obstruction and colon rupture. [The Globe and Mail](#). 16 July 2008.

[Indoor Residential Chemical Emissions as Risk Factors for Respiratory and Allergic Effects in Children: A Review](#) One cause of poor air quality, tobacco smoke, has been a leading cause of

low birth weight for infants. Low birth weight is tied to a range of ailments impacting a child's development, including high mortality rates, impaired growth and chronic disease. [InterScience](#). 11 June 2008

[Measuring the exposure of infants and children to indoor air pollution from biomass fuels in The Gambia](#) Children's PM exposure in biomass burning homes in The Gambia is substantially higher than concentrations in the world's most polluted cities. Evidence suggests a new class of residential risk factors for adverse respiratory effects. [Wiley InterScience](#). Dionisio. June 2008

(e) Europe

[Children's Environment Film](#) Primary school children in Dorset have created a short film which tells people to respect the environment. At the end of the short film, the children who produced it are interviewed and their views on why respecting the environment is important are told to it's audiences. [BBC](#). 24 July 2008.

[Home radon may have tie to childhood leukemia](#) Children who live in homes with high radon levels may be at increased risk for acute lymphoblastic leukemia during childhood, but not other childhood cancers, research from Denmark suggests. Higher rates of childhood cancer, and particularly leukemia, have been observed in geographic regions with higher levels of radon [Reuters Health](#). 18 July 2008

[Contribution of smoking and air pollution exposure in urban areas to social differences in respiratory health](#) This study assessed the contribution of occupational exposures, smoking and outdoor air pollution as competing factors for the association between socio-economic status and respiratory health indicators between 1985 and 1990. T Schikowski. [BMC](#). 20 June 2008

(e) Oceania

[Compared to placebo, long-term antibiotics resolve otitis media with effusion \(OME\) and prevent acute otitis media with perforation \(AOMwiP\) in a high-risk population: A randomized controlled trial](#) the study showed that Aboriginal infants receiving continuous amoxicillin had more normal ears, fewer perforations, and less pneumococcal carriage. A Leach. [BMC](#). 2 June 2008

[Disease burden and health-care clinic attendances for young children in remote Aboriginal communities of northern Australia](#) These Aboriginal children average about two visits per month to Primary Health Care (PHC) centres during their first year of life. Scabies and skin sores remain significant health problems. D Clucas. [Bulletin of the WHO](#). April 2008.
