

## Children's Environmental Health International Initiatives

This is an international mailing list provided by [WHO](#) and [UNEP](#) dedicated to promoting healthy environments for children

September 2010

### Dr Jenny Pronczuk de Garbino Champion for Children's Environmental Health



Jenny Pronczuk de Garbino passed away in Geneva, Switzerland on September 20. She was 63 years old. A tireless

champion for children's environmental health, she inspired people around the world to take action to protect children from environmental hazards. Her infectious laugh, indefatigable spirit, and superb judgement will be greatly missed.

Dr Pronczuk de Garbino was originally from Montevideo, Uruguay, where she trained as a physician at the School of Medicine, Universidad de la Republica, completing post-graduate studies in Clinical Toxicology and in Occupational Health. She also trained at the Université de Paris, Lariboisière - St Louis (Hôpital Fernand Widal, Paris, France) and, through a Fulbright Scholarship, at the

### CHILDREN'S ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH NEWS

#### Press Releases

[New countries endorse the Paris Commitments to end the use of child combatants](#)

On September 27 new countries endorsed the 'Paris Commitments' to end the use of child soldiers. Adopted in 2007, the Paris Commitments on Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups are a voluntary promise by States to work together to halt child recruitment, support the release of children from armed groups and help reintegrate these children into civilian life. UNICEF (27/9/10)

[UNICEF sounds alert over alarming rates of child malnutrition in Chad](#)

An expanded programme to save the lives of children is being put in place after a survey of under-5s revealed high malnutrition rates in six of the country's regions. UNICEF (24/9/10)

[Peace Day trekking in Afghanistan](#)

School children and local community leaders were among the participants in a day-long walk in the Afghanistan's Central Highlands held by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to mark the International Day of Peace in 2010.

Medical Center in Houston, Texas. In Uruguay, Dr Pronczuk de Garbino was appointed Head Professor of Clinical Toxicology and Director of the National Poisons Centre in Montevideo.

She joined the World Health Organization (WHO) in 1991 and worked actively to promote chemical safety, setting up poison centres and medical toxicology training. In 1999 she set up the WHO Task Force on the Protection of Children's Environmental Health; one major outcome of the Task Force was that at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002 the WHO announced a global Healthy Environments for Children Alliance.

She convened numerous meetings and expert workshops that brought children's environmental health issues to the attention of policy makers, health educators, physicians, nurses, and others. She planned and coordinated the 1st International Conference on Children's Environmental Health in Bangkok, Thailand, in 2002, which released the Bangkok Statement, a call for action to protect children from environmental threats. In 2005 she organized the 2nd International Conference on Children's Environmental Health in Buenos Aires, Argentina and in 2009 she organized the 3rd International Conference on Children's Environmental Health in the Republic of Korea. After her retirement from WHO in June 2009, she continued her active support of the global children's environmental health movement.

She was recognized by the US Environmental Protection Agency as the 2008 International Children's Environmental Health Champion.

The theme for Peace Day in 2010 was "Youth, peace and development". UNEP's work in Bamyan Province brings these themes together in a practical way by fostering awareness and action by young people to maintain a healthy local environment through dialogue and mutual understanding at the community level. UNEP (24/9/10)

#### [ADB, UNICEF join forces for children with major agreement](#)

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) and UNICEF today signed a major agreement, joining forces across Asia and the Pacific region to fight disparities, reduce poverty, and ensure that equitable and sustainable development benefits all children. UNICEF (23/9/10)

#### [UNEP joins global initiative for clean energy cook stoves](#)

The UN Environment Programme (UNEP) has joined a new international alliance that aims to cut the estimated 1.6 million to 1.8 million premature deaths linked with indoor emissions from inefficient cook stoves by boosting the efficiency of around three billion cook stoves across Africa, Asia and Latin America. UNEP (21/9/10)

#### [UNEP Report : Green Economy can reduce poverty and help meet Millennium Development Goals](#)

Investing in clean energy, sustainable transport, forests and environmentally-friendly agriculture is essential, if internationally-agreed goals to reduce poverty are to be achieved. UNEP (20/9/10)

#### [Maternal deaths worldwide drop by third](#)

The number of women dying due to complications during pregnancy and childbirth has decreased by 34% from an estimated 546 000 in 1990 to 358 000 in

## Farewell Jenny Pronczuk de Garbino

The children of the world lost a champion with the untimely death of Dr. Jenny Pronczuk de Garbino (Jenny) on September 20th in Geneva. Jenny worked tirelessly to improve the health of children, especially those most vulnerable living in developing and low-income countries. Jenny was also personally responsible for encouraging and guiding the initial WHO Collaborating Centres in Children's Environmental Health through the designation process. Together with the late Terri Damstra, Jenny led the long-standing WHO-NIEHS collaborative agreement through its most productive phase, expanding into Children's Environmental Health with an emphasis on education and training and fostering collaborative research. Those of us, who were privileged to know Jenny, will miss her infectious smile and good nature. Jenny Pronczuk de Garbino, gone but not forgotten.

### **WHO Collaborating Centres in Children's Environmental Health:**

*WHO Collaborating Centre for Research on Children's Environmental Health. Perth, Australia.*  
Director: Professor Peter Sly

*WHO Collaborating Centre on Health Risk Assessment and Children's Environmental Health San Luis Potosí, Mexico.* Director: Dr Fernando Diaz-Barriga.

*WHO Collaborating Centre for Capacity Building and Research in Environmental Health Science and Toxicology. Bangkok, Thailand.* Director: Your Highness Prof. HRH Princess Chulabhorn Mahidol. Professor Dr Khunying Mathuros Ruchirawat

*Collaborating Centre in Children's Environmental Health and Human Environmental Toxicology. Montevideo, Uruguay.* Director: Dr Amalia Laborde

2008, according to a new report, Trends in maternal mortality, released by the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the World Bank. WHO (15/9/10)

### [Palestinian children deprived of basic rights to education](#)

The Minister of Education and Higher Education, UNICEF, and the United Nations relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) warn that educational standards have plummeted to an unacceptable level, despite the efforts of the Palestinian Authority and the support of the international community. UNICEF (15/9/10)

### [World Bank Pledges New Agriculture, Education, and Health Spending to Help Poor Countries Achieve Millennium Development Goals by 2015](#)

The World Bank Group has announced that it will mobilize significant new funding for health, education, and agriculture to help countries achieve their MDGs by 2015. The World Bank now estimates that as a result of the food, fuel and financial crises, 64 million more people are living in extreme poverty in 2010, and some 40 million more people went hungry last year. By 2015, 1.2 million more children under five may die, and about 100 million more people may remain without access to safe water. World Bank (13/9/10)

### [New UNICEF study shows MDGs for children can be reached faster with focus on most disadvantaged](#)

The global community can save millions of lives by investing first in the most disadvantaged children and communities. By comparing the effectiveness of different strategies for delivering critical health

## REPORTS AND DOCUMENTS

### Progress for Children: Achieving the MDGs with equity

When world leaders adopted the Millennium Declaration in 2000, they produced an unprecedented international compact, a historic pledge to create a more peaceful, tolerant and equitable world in which the special needs of children, women and the vulnerable can be met. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are a practical manifestation of the Declaration's aspiration to reduce inequity in human development among nations and peoples by 2015. The past decade has witnessed considerable progress towards the goals of reducing poverty and hunger, combating disease and mortality, promoting gender equality, expanding education, ensuring safe drinking water and basic sanitation, and building a global partnership for development. But with the MDG deadline only five years away, it is becoming ever clearer that reaching the poorest and most marginalized communities within countries is pivotal to the realization of the goals. In his foreword to the Millennium Development Goals Report 2010, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon argues that "the world possesses the resources and knowledge to ensure that even the poorest countries, and others held back by disease, geographic isolation or civil strife, can be empowered to achieve the MDGs." That report underscores the commitment by the United Nations and others to apply those resources and that knowledge to the countries, communities, children and families who are most in need.<sup>1</sup> 'Achieving the MDGs with Equity' is the focus of this ninth edition of Progress for Children,

interventions to those in greatest need, the study found that targeting to the poorest and most disadvantaged children could save more lives per US \$1 million spent than the current path. UNICEF (7/9/10)

#### [UNEP calls for 'greener' laws to avert world water crisis](#)

Governments and law-makers need to integrate environmental concerns into water-use legislation to avert an impending global water crisis, according to a new report from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), titled "Greening Water Law". Nearly 1.8 million children under the age of five die annually from diarrheal diseases (such as cholera, typhoid, and dysentery) attributable to a lack of safe drinking water and basic sanitation. The UNEP report warns that if the international community fails to take action to improve freshwater supplies for drinking, sanitation, and hygiene purposes, as many as 135 million preventable deaths could occur by 2020. UNEP (7/9/10)

#### In the Media

##### [Secondhand smoke affecting nation's youth](#)

Cancer-causing pollution levels inside one of Beirut's busiest passageways are roughly equal to those found in 15 of the capital's restaurants that sold water pipes, research conducted by the Health Ministry-affiliated National Tobacco Control Program has revealed. Levels in the tunnel proved to be almost 18 times higher than acceptable levels, while those in cafes were on average 15 times the levels considered safe for human health by the WHO. Second Hand Smoke (SHS) in general is blamed for causing some 600,000 premature deaths every year and

UNICEF's report card series that monitors progress towards the MDGs. This data compendium presents a clear picture of disparities in children's survival, development and protection among the world's developing regions and within countries. While gaps remain in the data, this report provides compelling evidence to support a stronger focus on equity for children in the push to achieve the MDGs and beyond.

[Read the report](#)

## JOURNAL ARTICLES

### Air Pollution

[Prenatal Exposure to Airborne Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons and Children's Intelligence at 5 Years of Age in a Prospective Cohort Study in Poland](#)

Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), such as benzo[a]pyrene, are released into ambient and indoor air from combustion sources (e.g., coal burning power plants, diesel and gasoline-powered vehicles, home heating and cooking) and are present in tobacco smoke and charred foods. The authors studied the role of prenatal exposure to urban pollutants in the pathogenesis of neurobehavioral disorders in a prospective cohort study of Caucasian mothers and children in Krakow, Poland. The authors report that higher prenatal exposure to airborne PAHs was associated with decreased scores of nonverbal reasoning ability at 5 years of age. The reduction in nonverbal reasoning ability associated with high airborne PAH exposure corresponded to an estimated average decrease of 3.8 IQ points. The authors conclude that prenatal exposure to airborne PAHs adversely affects children's cognitive development by 5 years of age.

the NTCP estimates that some 75 percent of Lebanese children are regularly exposed to SHS. Beirut Daily Star (30/9/10)

[Toxins in city garbage killing children](#)

A toxic chemical that causes mental retardation has been found in the blood of school children living near Kiteezi landfill, where Kampala City Council dumps its garbage. One fifth of the children in schools near the landfill had lead levels in their blood that usually cause mental retardation. Kampala New Vision. Uganda (23/9/10)

[WA introduces Australia's toughest anti-smoking laws](#)

From September 23, 2010 smoking will be banned in Western Australia in cars with children, between the flags at beaches and within 10 metres of playgrounds. Australian Associated Press (23/9/10)

[UN sends crisis team to Nigeria after lead deaths](#)

The U.N. says it has sent an emergency team to Nigeria after more than 200 children have died there this year from lead poisoning. Heavy exposure to lead can cause brain damage, blindness and death, especially in children. Associated Press (21/9/10)

[Kids without food in Pakistan floods face death](#)

More than 100,000 children left homeless by Pakistan's floods are in danger of dying because they simply do not have enough to eat, according to UNICEF. Children already weak from living on too little food in poor rural areas before the floods are fighting to stay alive. Associated Press (20/9/10)

These findings have potential implications for school performance.

*Environmental Health Perspectives*

### [Traffic-Related Particulate Matter and Acute Respiratory Symptoms among New York City Area Adolescents](#)

Exposure to traffic-related particulate matter (PM) has been associated with adverse respiratory health outcomes in children. Although diesel exhaust particles (DEPs) are a local contributor to levels of urban fine PM [ $\leq 2.5 \mu\text{m}$  in aerodynamic diameter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>)], evidence linking ambient DEP exposure to acute respiratory symptoms is relatively sparse. The authors examined associations between daily concentrations of ambient black carbon (BC; an indicator of DEP) and daily respiratory symptoms among asthmatic and nonasthmatic adolescents in New York City and in a nearby suburban community. The authors found that increases in BC were associated with increased wheeze, shortness of breath, and chest tightness. Multiple lags of nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) exposure were associated with symptoms. For several symptoms, associations with BC and NO<sub>2</sub> were significantly larger in magnitude among urban subjects and asthmatics compared with suburban subjects and nonasthmatics, respectively, but PM<sub>2.5</sub> was not consistently associated with increased symptoms. The authors conclude that acute exposures to traffic-related pollutants, such as DEPs and/or NO<sub>2</sub>, may contribute to increased respiratory morbidity among adolescents and that urban residents and asthmatics may be at increased risk.

*Environmental Health Perspectives*

### [Cholera epidemic: Far from being over](#)

The recent cholera outbreak witnessed in Nigeria can be described as an epidemic of monumental proportion. So far, the death toll recorded in 11 states has been put at about 352, while the number of those infected has risen to 6, 437. Cholera can be fatal if not well treated on time. Children and the aged are more susceptible to death from disease. Lagos Daily Sun. Nigeria (20/9/10)

### [Manganese in water tied to kids' low IQ](#)

An IQ comparison shows that Canadian regulations on manganese in drinking water should be updated to protect children, Quebec researchers say. The average IQ of children whose tap water was in the upper 20 per cent of manganese concentration was six points below children whose water contained little or no manganese. Manganese is a naturally occurring metal found in groundwater. It is an essential nutrient, but in excessive amounts, it can damage the nervous system. CBC Canada (20/9/10)

### [Child's cancer risks rise 'before pregnancy'](#)

The chances of getting cancer begin even before conception, according to one of the world's leading experts in nutrition. Women's lifestyles before getting pregnant and while carrying their baby have a major impact on whether their child will develop the disease, Professor Ricardo Uauy said. London Observer (19/9/10)

### [Families 'devastated' after Isa brain damage report](#)

The lawyer heading a legal case against the mining giant Xstrata says a new scientific report showing children in the town of Mount Isa have suffered brain damage because of lead poisoning is devastating for the families concerned. Australia ABC News (17/9/10)

## Chemicals

### [Association of maternal serum concentrations of 2,2', 4,4',5,5'-hexachlorobiphenyl \(CB-153\) and 1,1-dichloro-2,2-bis \(p-chlorophenyl\)-ethylene \(p,p'-DDE\) levels with birth weight, gestational age and preterm births in Inuit and European populations](#)

Blood samples were collected from interviewed pregnant women in Greenland (572), Kharkiv (611) and Warsaw (258) and were analyzed for CB-153 and p,p'-DDE by gas chromatography-mass spectrometry. Data on birth weight, gestational age and preterm birth were obtained for 1322 singleton live births. The authors conclude that their results provide some epidemiologic support for an association between in utero exposure to the POP biomarkers CB-153 and p,p'-DDE and reduction in birth weight and gestational age however, new insights as to why results vary across studies were not apparent. Because observed birth weight reduction was independent of gestational age the authors note that their findings suggest detrimental effect of the exposure on intrauterine growth as well as on length of gestation. *Environmental Health*

### [Placental Transfer of Conjugated Bisphenol A and Subsequent Reactivation in the Rat Fetus](#)

Several studies in rodents have shown that exposure to bisphenol A (BPA) during pregnancy is associated with adverse effects in the offspring; however, there are few studies on the mechanism by which these effects might occur. Of particular concern is the possible route by which BPA is transferred from the mother to the fetus. Numerous studies in adult animals have shown that BPA is highly glucuronidated in the liver, and the resultant inactive metabolite BPA-glucuronide (BPA-GA) is

### [Scottish smoking ban cuts childhood asthma attacks](#)

A 2006 public smoking ban in Scotland reduced the number of serious childhood asthma attacks by 18 percent per year, researchers reported. Before the ban imposed in March 2006, the number of hospital admissions for asthma was rising by 5 percent a year among children under 15. The after-ban benefits were seen in both pre-school and school-age children. Reuters (16/9/10)

### [Home pesticides harmful to unborn babies, says expert](#)

A United States-based Filipino doctor who specializes in caring for premature babies or neonates yesterday warned against the use of pesticides and insecticides at home to combat mosquito-borne diseases such as dengue and malaria. Dr. Enrique Ostrea said popular insecticides such as Baygon and Katol (mosquito coils) contain toxic compounds such as propoxur and pyrethroids which are harmful to humans, especially to the unborn and children. Philippine Daily Inquirer (15/9/10)

### [No link found between vaccine mercury and autism](#)

A new government study adds to the evidence that thimerosal, a mercury-based preservative until recently found in many vaccines, does not increase children's risk of autism. It shows kids who had been exposed as babies to high levels of the preservative -- through vaccines they received or their mothers received while pregnant -- were no more likely to develop autism, including two distinct subtypes of the condition. Reuters Health (13/9/10)

### [Group calls for non-toxic toys as Christmas season looms](#)

Expecting higher demand for children's

excreted primarily into bile. The authors hypothesized that BPA-GA produced by the mother can pass to the fetus through the placenta, where it may be reactivated to BPA in the fetus. Using uterine perfusion with BPA-GA in pregnant rats, these investigators studied the expression and localization of the placental transporters for drug metabolites and the deconjugation of BPA-GA in the fetus. They observed BPA-GA and deconjugated BPA in the fetus and amniotic fluid after perfusion, thus providing a potential mechanism to explain long-term adverse effects in animals whose mothers were exposed to BPA during pregnancy.

*Environmental Health Perspectives*

#### [Intellectual Impairment in School-Age Children Exposed to Manganese from Drinking Water](#)

This cross-sectional study included 362 children ages 6 to 13 years living in communities supplied by groundwater. Manganese concentration was measured in home tap water (MnW) and children's hair (MnH). The median MnW in children's home tap water was 34 µg/L. MnH increased with manganese intake from water consumption, but not with dietary manganese intake. Higher MnW and MnH were significantly associated with lower IQ scores. The authors suggest that exposure to manganese at levels common in groundwater is associated with intellectual impairment in children.

*Environmental Health Perspectives*

#### **Global Change**

#### [Evaluation of Spatial Relationships between Health and the Environment: The Rapid Inquiry Facility](#)

The initiation of environmental public health tracking systems in the United States and the United Kingdom has provided an

environment group asked the government to ensure that those that will be sold in the market are free of toxic chemicals. Citing a study by the Consumer Association of Singapore (CASE) last month, EcoWaste said that 23 of the 50 toys tested contained high levels of phthalates, lead, or both. Toys brightly and colorfully painted indicate possible presence of excessive lead, while soft and pliable toys indicate the presence of excessive phthalates — a colorless oily ester used chiefly as a solvent, plasticizer, pesticide, and insect repellent — according to the study. GMANews (12/9/10)

#### [Junk food binging ups cancer risk](#)

A staggering 30% of youngsters in Kolkata gorge on unhealthy snacks, turning grossly overweight by the time they are 30. Experts and doctors warn that many get hooked on fried, oily, carcinogen-rich stuff during the festive season and find it difficult to return to a regular, healthy diet afterwards. The result has been disastrous: there has been a 50% jump in the number of breast, uterine and prostate cancer patients in the 40-45 age group. The National (12/9/10)

#### [New law will set new standards for lead paint removal](#)

The Environmental Protection Agency now requires contractors working on older homes to be certified in lead paint removal and to follow federal guidelines before, during and after a project. Lead is a highly toxic metal that is particularly dangerous to children. Even low levels can cause learning disabilities and developmental problems in children. Post Star (12/9/10)

#### [Smoking: fertility affected at foetal stage](#)

opportunity to advance techniques for spatial epidemiological analysis that integrate both health and environmental data. The Rapid Inquiry Facility (RIF) is a tool that allows users to calculate adjusted and unadjusted standardized rates and risks. The RIF is embedded in ArcGIS so that further spatial functionality of geographical information systems (GIS) can be exploited and results can be exported to statistical packages for further analyses; the RIF also links directly to several statistical packages and displays the results in the GIS. The authors illustrate the application of the RIF using two case studies: an analysis of the risk of leukemia in areas surrounding oil refineries in Utah (USA) and an analysis of the geographical variation of risk of esophageal cancer in relation to zinc cadmium sulfide exposure in Norwich (UK). The authors conclude that the RIF will allow analyses such as risk assessment or disease mapping to be carried out across large geographical areas and over long time periods.

*Environmental Health Perspectives*

## **Reproductive Health**

### [Neonatal Exposure to Bisphenol A and Reproductive and Endocrine Alterations Resembling the Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome in Adult Rats](#)

Bisphenol A (BPA) is a component of polycarbonate plastics, epoxy resins, and polystyrene. Because BPA has been reported to have endocrine-disrupting effects, concerns have been raised about possible long-term effects on reproductive function after developmental exposure. The authors studied the effects of neonatal exposure to BPA on the release of gonadotropin-releasing hormone (GnRH) from hypothalamic explants and serum sexual hormone levels, ovarian morphology,

In a study, researchers found that a mother's smoking during early pregnancy dramatically reduces the numbers of germ cells (the cells that form eggs in females and sperm in males) and somatic cells (the cells that form every other part of the body) in the developing foetus. They believe that this may have an adverse effect on the fertility of the baby in later life. The Hindu (9/9/10)

### [U.S. smoking rate hasn't changed, CDC says](#)

After 40 years of continual declines, the smoking rate in the United States has stabilized for the last five years, with one in every five Americans still lighting up regularly. More than half of all children are exposed to toxic, secondhand smoke and 98% of those who live with a smoker have measurable levels of toxic chemicals in their blood stream, setting them up for future harm from cancer, heart disease and a variety of other ailments. Smoking remains the No. 1 cause of preventable deaths in the United States. Los Angeles Times (8/9/10)

### [Save the Children reports greater focus on poor children could have saved 4 million lives](#)

In a new analysis of national health data, Save the Children looked at 42 high-mortality countries and found that poorer children in those countries are far more likely to die. If all children had faced the same risk of death as the top 20 percent in their country, 4 million child deaths would not have occurred in the last 10 years.

Save the children (7/9/10)

### [Non-stick chemical linked to raised cholesterol](#)

The chemicals that are used to make non-stick cookware, microwave popcorn bags

ovulation, and fertility in laboratory animals. The authors report that neonatal exposure to a relatively high dose of BPA resulted in irreversible alterations in the hypothalamic–pituitary–gonadal axis, which led to anovulation and infertility. Exposure to a lower dose was associated with more subtle changes, such as subfertility. These findings support the hypothesis that some diseases appearing in adulthood may be associated with exposure to environmental agents during development.

*Environmental Health Perspectives*

#### [Bisphenol A Exposure during Pregnancy Disrupts Glucose Homeostasis](#)

Bisphenol A (BPA) is a widespread endocrine-disrupting chemical used as the base compound in the manufacture of polycarbonate plastics. Epidemiological evidence has suggested an association between exposure to BPA in human adults and a high risk of type 2 diabetes and heart disease. The authors studied the effect of environmentally relevant doses of BPA on glucose metabolism in mice during pregnancy and the subsequent impact of BPA exposure on these females later in life. The authors also investigated the consequences of in utero exposure to BPA on metabolic parameters and pancreatic function in offspring. Four months postpartum, BPA-exposed females weighed more and had higher plasma insulin, leptin, triglyceride, and glycerol concentration and greater insulin resistance than did controls. At 6 months of age, male offspring exposed to BPA in utero had reduced glucose tolerance, increased insulin resistance, and altered blood parameters. The authors conclude that BPA may contribute to metabolic disorders relevant to glucose homeostasis and may be a risk factor for diabetes.

*Environmental Health Perspectives*

and stain- and water-repellent fabric may also raise cholesterol levels in children, a new study suggests. CTV News (7/9/10)

#### [Report: Children's products may contain hazardous metals](#)

Rain coats, hair barrettes and jewelry seem harmless. But Consumer Reports magazine says a series of tests uncovered "worrisome levels" of potentially hazardous metals in such children's products currently on store shelves. Cadmium and lead levels are the focus of the magazine's report, which is based on tests of more than 30 products using an initial screening method called X-ray fluorescence and outside laboratory analyses. CNN (7/9/10)

#### [Fears the 'safe limit' of a toxic chemical found in food containers is wrong](#)

Scientists have called for an immediate review of the safety guidelines for a chemical linked with numerous illnesses including cancer amid charges to the evidence used by authorities is 20 years old. Food Standards Australia New Zealand advises that bisphenol A (BPA), which is used in many plastic food containers and in the linings of tin cans, can be "safely" ingested in concentrations up to 600 parts per billion or 50 micrograms per kilogram of body weight per day. The Sydney Morning Herald (2/9/10)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### [1st African Water and Youth Summit](#)

Topics related to water, sanitation and climate change  
October 14 - 18, 2010, Nairobi, Kenya.

### [The Sixth Biennial Scientific Symposium](#)

Prenatal & Early Life Exposures: How Environmental Toxins Affect the Course of Childhood.  
21-22 October 2010, Space Center  
Houston, Houston, Texas  
(Registration is Limited to 100 Participants)

### [Environmental Health 2011](#)

Environmental Health 2011: Resetting our Priorities  
6-9 February 2011, Salvador, Brazil

### [6th World Environmental Education Congress](#)

19 – 23 July 2011. Brisbane, Queensland, Australia

### [Oilsands boosts toxic metals in Athabasca watershed: study](#)

The oilsands industry increases the concentrations of dangerous metals, such as mercury, in locations downstream of development. The form of mercury that builds up in fish can damage nervous system development in children causing a decrease in IQ, delays in walking and talking, lack of co-ordination, blindness and seizures. Edmonton Journal (2/9/10)

### [Afghan school poisonings linked to toxic chemicals](#)

Blood samples taken from Afghan schoolgirls who collapsed in apparent mass poisonings showed traces of toxic chemicals found in herbicides, pesticides and nerve gas. Mercury News (1/9/10)

[Links to past issues and how to subscribe](#)

#### **Have news for us?**

If you would like to submit information to future HECANET issues, email us at [heca@who.int](mailto:heca@who.int) with the subject line "INFORMATION FOR HECANET".

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