

Children's Environmental Health International Initiatives

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

January 2010

Earthquake in Haiti

On 12th January 2010 an earthquake measuring 7.0 on the Richter scale struck Haiti close to the nation's capital of Port-au-Prince. The latest reports from the Government of Haiti estimates the number of deaths to be over 112,000 with 196,000 people injured. Around 700,000 people are living in temporary shelter sites in the capital city.

“I am proud of the United Nations' response. Seldom in the face of such a disaster has the international community acted in such solidarity, nor so quickly in the face of so many difficulties... The immediate priorities continue to be medical assistance, water, sanitation, food and shelter, as well as fuel and transportation equipment to support the relief operation.” Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in address to the General Assembly, 22 January 2010.



UN/Sophia Paris

For more information:

[United Nations News Focus: Haiti Earthquake](#)

[Pan American Health Organization: full coverage of the earthquake in Haiti](#)

CHILDREN'S ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH NEWS

Press Releases

[UNICEF Humanitarian Operation in Haiti Zeroes in on Unaccompanied Children](#) Assistance to unaccompanied children, who have lost or became separated from their families, is a focus of UNICEF's Haitian humanitarian operations (UNICEF 27/01/2010)

[Call for support for appropriate infant and young child feeding in Haiti](#) UNICEF express caution about unnecessary and potentially harmful donations and use of breast-milk substitutes in Haiti (UNICEF 21/01/2010)

[UNICEF Solomon Islands: Schools to open despite emergency](#) UNICEF has provided temporary school shelters so children still have access to education after the emergency (UNICEF 15/01/2010)

[WHO spearheads health response to earthquake in Haiti](#) WHO is supporting the Haitian government to best coordinate international health assistance to the country (WHO 13/01/2010)

REPORTS AND DOCUMENTS

[Public Health Risk assessment and interventions: Earthquake – Haiti](#) This report outlines the major public health threats faced by the earthquake-affected population of Haiti (WHO)

[UNPFII Report Highlights Increased Vulnerability to Climate Change Among Indigenous Communities](#) The UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) has released the State of the World's Indigenous Peoples' Report, which highlights that indigenous peoples are among the first to feel the impacts of climate change even though their lifestyles are practically carbon neutral (UNPF)

JOURNAL ARTICLES

Air Pollution

[Baseline Repeated Measures from Controlled Human Exposure Studies: Associations between Ambient Air Pollution Exposure and the Systemic Inflammatory Biomarkers IL-6 and Fibrinogen](#)

This study demonstrates a significant association between ambient pollutant levels and baseline levels of systemic IL-6. These findings have potential implications for controlled human exposure studies

Environmental Health Perspectives

[Air pollution exposure during pregnancy and reduced birth size: a prospective birth cohort study in Valencia, Spain](#)

This study investigated exposure to air pollution during pregnancy and anthropometric measures at birth in a cohort in Valencia, Spain. The results suggest that maternal exposure to air

[UNICEF boosts relief efforts to tsunami-struck Solomon Islands](#) UNICEF Pacific is providing immediate support to the victims of a tsunami that hit Rendova and Tetepare Islands in the Solomon Islands on 4 January (UNICEF 05/01/2010)

In the Media

[Study: Mercury in canned tuna high](#) – more than half of canned tuna samples from a local grocery store failed to meet the strict Environmental Protection Agency safety level for mercury in fish (The Las Vegas Review Journal 29/01/2010)

[Public swimming ups risk of gastrointestinal ills](#) – a dip in the public pool or local lake may boost people's odds of catching a case of "stomach flu" (Reuters Health 28/01/2010)

[Stricter checks on milk products from China](#) – Malaysia has imposed stringent checks on milk and milk-related food products from China following reports of re-entry of banned tainted products containing melamine in shelves in some parts of China (New Straits Times 28/01/2010)

[Solvents in water related to risk of birth defects? Maybe](#) – study conducted in Massachusetts suggests that exposure to a solvent through drinking water may be associated with an increased risk for certain congenital anomalies, but the results are not entirely conclusive (Environmental Health News 28/01/2010)

[Texas environmental agency finds high levels of cancer-causing benzene on Barnett Shale](#) – air testing over one of the nation's biggest natural gas fields revealed two sites with extremely high

pollution may retard fetal growth

Environmental Health

[Prenatal and Postnatal Tobacco Exposure and Behavioral Problems in 10-Year-Old Children: Results from the GINI-plus Prospective Birth Cohort Study](#)

Prenatal exposure to tobacco smoke is associated with behavioral problems in school-age children. Although our findings do not preclude the influence of postnatal exposure, prenatal exposure seems to be more important.

Environmental Health Perspectives

Chemicals

[Modulation of Cytokine Expression in Human Myeloid Dendritic Cells by Environmental Endocrine-Disrupting Chemicals Involves Epigenetic Regulation](#)

Study shows that two common endocrine-disrupting chemicals have functional effects on cultured human myeloid dendritic cells and subsequent influence on the T-cell cytokine responses

Environmental Health Perspectives

[Silver Impairs Neurodevelopment: Studies in PC12 Cells](#)

Exposure to silver is increasing because of silver nanoparticles in consumer products. This study shows that silver has the potential to evoke developmental neurotoxicity

Environmental Health Perspectives

[Global Gene Expression Analysis in the Livers of Rat Offspring Perinatally Exposed to Low Doses of 2,2',4,4'-Tetrabromodiphenyl Ether](#)

Altered expression of genes involved in metabolic and signaling pathways and functions

levels of cancer-causing benzene and 19 more with elevated levels of the chemical (Los Angeles Times 27/01/2010)

[Don't let your baby swim](#) - exposure to chlorinated pools may affect children's respiratory health particularly if they have a family history of asthma or respiratory allergies like hay fever (Asia One 27/01/2010)

[Allergy warning for start of school year](#) – one in seven Australian schools will encounter a student struck down by a potentially lethal food allergy this year (The Sydney Morning Herald 26/01/2010)

[Blood pressure harm from smoke 'may explain cot death'](#) – smoke exposure during pregnancy damages a baby's blood pressure control which may explain why such babies' risk of cot death is higher (BBC 26/01/2010)

[Traffic fumes increase the risks of child pneumonia](#) - children who live near a main road are in greater danger of catching pneumonia because pollution from passing traffic damages their lungs (The Guardian 24/01/2010)

[Birth Weights Fell From 1990 to 2005](#) – mothers are giving birth to lighter babies in the U.S., and no one is quite sure why (The Wall Street Journal 22/01/2010)

[Rickets warning from doctors as vitamin D deficiency widens](#) – computer-obsessed children who spend too long indoors and over-anxious parents who slap on excessive sunscreen are contributing to a sharp rise in cases of the bone disease rickets (The Guardian 22/01/2010)

of the organism occurs after perinatal exposure of rat offspring to BDE-47 at doses relevant for the general population

Environmental Health Perspectives

[Childhood Brain Tumors, Residential Insecticide Exposure, and Pesticide Metabolism Genes](#)

Exposure in childhood to organophosphorus and perhaps to carbamate insecticides in combination with a reduced ability to detoxify them may be associated with childhood brain tumors

Environmental Health Perspectives

[Blood Mercury Concentrations in CHARGE Study Children with and without Autism](#)

While some authors have reported higher blood mercury (Hg) levels in persons with autism, after accounting for dietary and other differences in Hg exposures, total Hg in blood was neither elevated nor reduced in CHARGE Study preschoolers with Autism compared with unaffected controls, and resembled those of nationally representative samples.

Environmental Health Perspectives

Water And Sanitation

[Local population and regional environmental drivers of cholera in Bangladesh](#)

This study found that cholera is influenced by regional environmental variables during the pre-monsoon period and by local-level variables (e.g., water and sanitation) during the post-monsoon period *Environmental Health*

[Sewage runs, garbage piles up at Haiti quake camps](#) – sanitary conditions deteriorate as survivors camp out, emergency latrines needed (Reuters Health 21/01/2010)

[City touts cut in school bus exhaust](#) – diesel retrofits, enhanced exhaust filtering systems, have been placed on school buses to reduce diesel fine particle emissions by up to 30 percent (Telegram 21/01/2010)

[Industrial Chemicals Lurking In Your Bloodstream](#) - concern is heating up over whether common industrial chemicals found in plastics and other consumer goods could be harming children (Forbes 21/01/2010)

[City Agrees to Conduct a Study on the Risks of PCBs in Schools](#) – New York City school officials have agreed to assess the environmental risks posed by PCBs in school buildings and to come up with a plan for cleanups and for reducing potential exposure (New York Times 19/01/2010)

[Secondhand smoke may disrupt asthmatic kids' sleep](#) - asthmatic children exposed to tobacco smoke may have more nighttime breathing problems, which in turn disrupts their sleep (Reuters Health 19/01/2010)

[The high cost of cheap](#) – inexpensive cadmium-laced children's jewelry sparks health concerns (Federick News Post 18/01/2010)

[Keeping kids too clean may do more harm than good](#) – a growing body of scientific evidence is pointing to links between hypersanitary lifestyles and health problems (The Columbus Dispatch 16/01/2010)

Reproductive Health

[Individual Characteristics Associated with PBDE Levels in U.S. Human](#)

This large study measured polybrominated diphenyl ether (PBDE) concentrations in human milk samples collected 3 and 12 months postpartum. PBDEs were found in nearly all human milk samples, varying by maternal age and weight and over the course of breastfeeding
Environmental Health Perspectives

UPCOMING EVENTS

[5th International Conference on Children's Health and the Environment](#)

1 – 3 February 2010. Indian Institute of Science Campus, Bangalore, Karnataka, India

[NZ Institute of Environmental Health Conference](#)

22 – 24 February 2010. Great Lake Centre, Taupo, NZ

[5th Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health](#)

10 – 12 March. Parma, Italy

[Global Health and Innovation Conference](#)

17 – 18 April 2010. Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, USA

[17th International Conference on Children's Health](#)

20 – 21 May 2010. Legnica, Poland
Email: fundacjakonferencja@wp.pl

[4th International Conference on the History of Occupational and Environmental Health](#)

19 – 22 June 2010. California. University of California, San Francisco, USA

[F.D.A. Concerned About Substance in Food Packaging](#)

– in a shift of position, the US Food and Drug Administration is expressing concerns about possible health risks from bisphenol-A a widely used component of plastic bottles and food packaging that it declared safe in 2008 (The New York Times 15/01/2010)

[Teethers contain dangerous chemicals, finds CSE study](#)

– soft plastic teethers used by toddlers in India may contain phthalates, chemicals dangerous to the child health (Times of India 16/01/2010)

[Adults' breathing troubles may begin in childhood](#)

– how well your lungs function in adulthood and your risk of developing chronic breathing problems is partly determined in childhood (Reuters Health 14/01/2010)

[Contractors using dangerous pesticides in UK schools](#)

– survey finds that school children are being exposed to harmful pesticides, but schools claim safer alternatives would be 'uneconomic' (The Ecologist 14/01/2010)

[Lead damages child kidneys, even low levels: study](#)

– evidence of early kidney damage in children with lead levels far below what is normally considered dangerous (Reuters Health 11/01/2010)

[Phthalates may play a role in ADHD symptoms](#)

– new study finds that exposure to phthalate chemicals may be linked to attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in school-aged children (Environmental Health News 12/01/2010)

[Allergy epidemic may start in womb](#) – new study aims to help scientists gain a better understanding of what environmental factors may be contributing to allergies and asthma (Health Zone 02/01/2010)

[Levels of arsenic, iron exceed state standards at schools site](#) – test results from the site of New Hanover County's two newest schools show iron and arsenic levels exceeding state recommendations, but health officials say they are not high enough to pose a hazard to students (Star News Online 6/01/2010)

[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 with the subject line "INFORMATION FOR HECANET".

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