

HECANET *** June - July 2007

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ARTICLE HIGHLIGHTS

Air pollution articles in this issue refer to different interventions to reduce indoor exposures and how different areas of the world are affected by and tackle outdoor air pollution. England went smoke-free last July and the new measures seem to be accepted by the population. In the chemicals areas, an article focuses on children's special susceptibility to chemical exposures at different stages of life. Another article looks at the association between persistent organic pollutants and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. Regarding heavy metals, lead from China becomes a global problem, as Peru becomes concerned about smelters in La Oroya. The EU Parliament considers a ban on mercury imports and exports by 2010. In the water and sanitation section, China also faces the rising costs from filthy air, soil and water and the production of ethanol is sucking dry some areas. A possible association is found between manganese in drinking water and infant mortality in Bangladesh. In other topics, several articles deal with the ecological and health consequences of global change and endocrine disruptors are feared in

plastics and consumer products to which children are exposed. Also, two articles deal with childhood leukaemia in the proximity of nuclear establishments.

In the Americas, a project in Argentina will bring wind and solar energy to 125 rural schools currently without electricity. In Haiti, deforestation continues and clogs rivers, while its neighbour, the Dominican Republic, sees a ray of hope regarding its most polluted town. Up north, Canada's new government launches the world's first air quality health index program. In Asia, the relief for flood victims in Pakistan arrives a little too late and many are evacuated in China after a week of rain. The situation of Iraqi children keeps getting worse, as mothers are even afraid of sending them to school. Education is also a problem in Afghanistan, where more than half of the schools have no buildings. In Africa, a water channel poses a health hazard in Senegal, whereas in Malawi children suffer from poor hygiene, lack of access to health facilities and malaria. Child soldiers in Chad undergo rehabilitation programs. Finally, in Europe, parents and health experts try to ease Italy's pollution, while the EU Commission recommends to use less water and pay more for it.

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.

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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). It aims to provide up-to-date information on relevant global, regional and national indicator activities. 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) World Environment Day

[World Environment Day](#) (WED), commemorated each year on 5 June, is one of the principal vehicles through which the United Nations stimulates worldwide awareness of the environment and enhances political attention and action. The World Environment Day slogan selected for 2007 was "Melting Ice: a Hot Topic?" In support of International Polar Year, the WED theme selected for 2007 focused on the effects that climate change is having on polar ecosystems and communities, and the ensuing consequences around the world.

The main international celebrations of the World Environment Day 2007 were held in Norway. 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 ensures all nations and peoples enjoy a safer and more prosperous future. World Environment Day was a people's event with colourful activities such as street rallies, bicycle parades, green concerts, essays and poster competitions in schools, tree planting, as well as recycling and clean-up campaigns.

(4) EHC 238: Extremely Low Frequency Fields. WHO.

This [Environmental Health Criteria \(EHC\) monograph](#) addresses the possible health effects of exposure to extremely low frequency (ELF) electric and magnetic fields. It reviews the physical characteristics of ELF fields as well as the sources of exposure and measurement. However, its main objectives are to review the scientific literature on the biological effects of exposure to ELF fields in order to assess any health risks from exposure to these fields and to use this health risk assessment to make recommendations to national authorities on health protection programs.

The frequencies under consideration range from above 0 Hz to 100 kHz. By far the majority of studies have been conducted on power-frequency (50 or 60 Hz) magnetic fields, with a few studies using power-frequency electric fields. In addition, there have been a number of studies

concerning very low frequency (VLF, 3–30 kHz) fields, switched gradient magnetic fields used in magnetic resonance imaging, and the weaker VLF fields emitted by visual display units and televisions. Key gaps in knowledge were also identified and the research needed to fill these gaps has been summarized in the section entitled “Recommendations for research”.

(5) Preventing Skin Cancers. WHO.

As part of an ongoing campaign to remind people of the importance of preventing skin cancers, cataracts and other damage from the sun, the WHO Department of Public Health and Environment in June/July has produced internet and intranet stories and a podcast on how to protect your skin while enjoying the summertime fun and the sun. You can hear the podcast on <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/multimedia/podcasts/en/index.html> A public service announcement in three languages will be available shortly.

(6) Protection from exposure to second-hand tobacco smoke. Policy recommendations. WHO.

The last several years have seen a wealth of new evidence on the health effects of exposure to second-hand tobacco smoke (SHS), the benefits of smoke-free environments and best practice in implementing smoke-free policies. Compiling and disseminating this evidence is critical to raising awareness among decision makers and public health advocates about the necessity for smoke-free environments to protect health and their broad acceptance and endorsement. It is for this reason that WHO is now publishing [policy recommendations on protection from SHS exposure](#). A clear scientific consensus on SHS exposure’s dangerous health effects has developed, based on accumulated evidence and copious new data, which show that SHS causes serious and fatal diseases in adults and children. Several current reports, including the 2004 monograph from the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), the 2005 report from the California Environmental Protection Agency (Cal/EPA) in the United States of America and the 2006 report of the United States Surgeon General, have synthesized this evidence and reached unambiguous and solid conclusions on SHS exposure’s adverse consequences. These conclusions provide a strong imperative for eliminating indoor SHS exposure.

(7) Childhood pneumonia – preventing the world’s biggest killer of children: call for papers for WHO Bulletin.

The past decade has seen a significant increase in the amount of funds available for international health activities. This is due largely to the generosity of private foundations, particularly the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and some bilateral donors. Although this increase in support has already made a significant impact on the health of peoples in developing countries, the allocation of funds for disease-specific activities has become unbalanced, with some areas receiving generous support and others almost none. The most dramatic example of this is shown by the resources made available to fight AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria – the so-called “big three” – and those devoted to the two main killers of children, pneumonia and diarrhoeal disease.

Pneumonia, the world's most important cause of child death, has attracted remarkably little attention over the past decade. In March 2007, WHO and UNICEF convened a meeting in Geneva to establish a Global Action Plan for Pneumonia (GAPP). The meeting was attended by experts in the four areas that offer the best prospects for pneumonia control – case management (IMCI), vaccination (Hib and pneumococcal), environmental health (reduced indoor air pollution) and nutrition. The group unanimously concluded that attention to all of these areas will be needed to control the global problem of childhood pneumonia, and urged that the global response to pneumonia mortality be balanced and equitable. As an initial step, group members will prepare a series of review papers summarizing the evidence that specific interventions will lead to reductions in pneumonia incidence and/or pneumonia mortality. These papers will be accompanied by analyses of the comparative or additive impact of these interventions in different settings and an analysis of their potential to reduce inequity in child health and mortality. In Spring 2008, the WHO Bulletin (BLT) WHO will publish shortened versions of some of these papers in a theme issue on childhood pneumonia prevention and control.

To complement these commissioned papers, the Bulletin welcomes submissions of papers on childhood pneumonia for this theme issue with a particular interest in research, lessons from the field or perspectives dealing with epidemiology of pneumonia, improved methods for the diagnosis of pneumonia, etiology of pneumonia, the impact on pneumonia mortality of case management, vaccines, and environmental and nutritional interventions. Manuscripts should be submitted to <http://submit.bwho.org> by 1 October 2007, respecting the Guidelines for Contributors and accompanied by a cover letter mentioning this call for papers. For more information, please go to <http://www.who.int/bulletin/volumes/85/7/07-044032/en/index.html>

(8) Conference Regulating Chemical Risks: Science, Politics and the Media. Stockholm, Sweden. 15-17 August 2007

[Conference Regulating Chemical Risks: Science, Politics and the Media](#). Stockholm, Sweden. 15-17 August 2007.

(9) Peer Consultation on a Draft Framework to Evaluate Adult-Child Differences in Inhalation Dosimetry of Gases: Application to Selected Systemically-Acting Volatile Organic Chemicals. 21 August 2007

The Toxicology Excellence for Risk Assessment (TERA) will conduct a peer consultation on a Draft Framework to Evaluate Adult-Child Differences in Inhalation Dosimetry of Gases: Application to Selected Systemically-Acting Volatile Organic Chemicals. A panel of expert scientists will discuss and evaluate the revised draft framework and provide direction for finalizing it. In 2005, the same panel of experts met and held a peer consultation on the original draft framework. The authors have revised the framework based on the feedback received during the 2005 peer consultation. The original and revised framework and background materials were prepared by scientists from TERA and include ideas from several leading researchers in toxicokinetics and physiologically-based pharmacokinetic (PBPK) modeling. The outcome of this peer consultation will be used to further refine the process of children's risk assessment. Funding for the peer consultation is through a cooperative agreement between the U.S. EPA and TERA.

The peer consultation will be a web meeting, using a conference call for the audio, and linking to a web meeting program site for the presentation slides. The web meeting will be on Tuesday, August 21, 2007, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. The meeting will be open to the public. TERA has established a website for meeting registration at

<http://www.tera.org/peer/adultchildtk/actkwelcome.htm> The revised framework, panel membership, and additional meeting details will be posted on the website when they become available. Interested persons are encouraged to submit written technical comments for the panel's consideration. A specific time during the meeting will be set to allow any observers to ask clarifying technical questions or make comments. For more information, please write and email to P Nance at: nance@tera.org or to J. Patterson at patterson@tera.org

(10) 2007 Tribal Nations Children's Environmental Health Summit. Denver, U.S. 22-23 August 2007

A unique [CEH summit](#) will be held in Denver, Colorado, U.S., on 22-23 August 2007, co-sponsored by the Regions 6, 8 and 10 Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Units (PEHSU) sites along with the U.S. EPA.

(11) Accreditation on Children's Environmental Health (CEH). Athens, Greece. 25 August 2007.

The Pediatric Environmental Health Leadership Institute will offer the first Pediatric Environmental Health Examination on August 25, 2007 in Athens, Greece, in the context of the upcoming [25th International Congress of Pediatrics](#) which will take place at The Megaron Athens International Conference Centre from 25 August to 30 August 2007.

The [International Pediatric Association](#) (IPA) is providing the opportunity for Paediatricians (and MDs) to get an accreditation on Children's Environmental Health (CEH), provided they fulfill the following criteria: i) Attend a training workshop on children's health and the environment; ii) Present a seminar about children's environmental health at a hospital or university; iii) Record, file and analyze pediatric environmental history forms from children with illnesses from environmental contaminants and record and report environmentally-related cases from pediatric practice; iv) Propose and discuss a community project on an environmental health problem; v) Present a second seminar after the community-oriented project has been implemented, in order to present and discuss the results with the community.

Those who pass the examination - about 3 hours long- will receive a certificate of proficiency in pediatric environmental health. Once certified, pediatricians will become Diplomates of the Pediatric Environmental Health Leadership Institute. Diplomates are expected to participate in teaching workshops, serve as resources for information requests, provide clinical consultation upon request, and advise policymakers and the public health sector. For more information, please contact Dr. Ruth Etzel at raetzel@southcentralfoundation.com

(12) ISEE 19th Conference. Translating environmental epidemiology into action: Interventions for a healthy future. Mexico City, Mexico. 5-9 September 2007

Topics of interest of the International Society for Environmental Epidemiology (ISEE) 19th Conference include: Environmental health training programs focusing on developing countries; Implementation of research results in Latin America and Caribbean countries; Urban sprawl and mega cities in the developing world; Water, air quality/pollution and inherent health risks; Possible environmental health risks due to urban/rural poverty, quality of life; Noise pollution and vehicular traffic; Globalization and the risk of climate change; Weather and re-emergent illness issues; Pesticides; Gene-environment interactions and indoor air pollution; Sustainability and environmental health; Para-occupational exposures and health risks; Health risks in schools; Teaching environmental/occupational epidemiology; Environmental exposure to tobacco; Preventive strategies focusing on different demographics, mainly children and persons of advanced age; Natural disasters; Methods of assessing human health vulnerability; Direct effects of heat and heat waves; Other emerging health risks. For more information, please contact isee2007@correo.insp.mx or go to www.isee2007mx.org

(13) Tunza International Youth Conference 2007. Leverkusen, Germany. 8-12 September 2007

Tunza International Youth Conference in Leverkusen, Germany. 8-12 September 2007. For more information on the Conference and to submit a nomination from your organization please go to <http://www.unep.org/tunza/youthconference>

(14) Best Practice Use for Indoor Residual Spraying with DDT for Malaria Control. Baltimore, Maryland, USA. 14-15 September 2007

Best Practice Use for Indoor Residual Spraying with DDT for Malaria Control. Baltimore, Maryland, USA. 14-15 September 2007. For more information, please contact Melissa Riedesel at mriedes1@jhmi.edu

(15) Pediatric Environmental Health Course. Murcia, Spain. September - November 2007.

Organized by the Foundation for Health Research and Training of Murcia and the Pediatric Environmental Health Centre of Murcia. Classes once a week for 2 months. For more information on the course (in Spanish), please go to: <http://www.ffis.es/pec2007/mostrarcursos.php?id=46&ed=1>

(16) 9th International HCH and Pesticides Forum for Central and Eastern European, Caucasus and Central Asia Countries. Chisinau, Republic of Moldova. 20-22 September 2007

9th International HCH and Pesticides Forum for Central and Eastern European, Caucasus and Central Asia Countries. Chisinau, Republic of Moldova. 20-22 September 2007. For more information: www.hchforum.com and www.moldovapops.md

(17) National Workshop on Reducing dependency on Mercury: Usage, Processes and Impacts in India. New Delhi, India. 27-28 September 2007.

Toxics Link in partnership with Zero Mercury-Working Group (International Coalition of NGOs against mercury) is organizing a national level workshop on Mercury on 27th and 28th of September 2007 at Conference Hall, ICSSR, Aruna Asaf Ali Marg, New Delhi, India. The workshop has aimed to cover various sectors where mercury is used or is a by-product. The specific objectives are: Provide an opportunity for bringing together all stakeholders including national and international (Policy, NGO, Healthcare, Industry and Academia); Increasing awareness on mercury toxicology, exposure pathways, use and release in products and processes as well as its management; Promote the exchange of information and experience on mercury product and process substitution and best management practices; To discuss policy and strategic issues on mercury reduction in India. For participation and further queries please contact: Prashant Pastore, Senior Programme Coordinator, at prashant@toxicslink.org

(18) 14th International Symposium on Environmental Pollution and its Impact on Life in the Mediterranean Region with focus on Environment and Health. Seville, Spain. 10 - 14 October 2007

14th International Symposium on Environmental Pollution and its Impact on Life in the Mediterranean Region with focus on Environment and Health. Seville, Spain. 10 to 14 October 2007. For more information, please go to <http://www.mesaep.net/symp2007/first.html>

(19) VIII National Conference of the Polish Society of Environmental Medicine. Wrocław, Poland. 19-21 October 2007

The Polish Society of Environmental Medicine, the Medical Academy of Wrocław and the Foundation for Children of the Copper Basin are pleased to announce the VIII National Conference of the Polish Society of Environmental Medicine will be held on 19-21 October 2007 in Wrocław, Poland. The conference will provide an opportunity to share experiences and to discuss human health impacts of exposure to chemical, biological, physical stressors, as well as socio-economic and cultural factors, in particular: Children's environmental health – activities on local, national, and the European levels; Training in environmental medicine and environmental health; Intersectoral cooperation in environmental health; The role of civil society, NGOs, and youth involvement in environmental health. Deadline for registration is 15 August 2007; deadline for abstract submission is 15 August 2007 and deadline for payment of registration fee is 15 September 2007. For more information, please contact: konferencja2007@imp.sosnowiec.pl

(20) 12th PBC International Conference. Beijing, China. 26-29 October 2007.

Pacific Basin Consortium for Environment and Health Sciences (PBC) [12th International Conference](#) Beijing, China. 26-29 October, 2007.

(21) The Effect of Environmental Pollutants on Foetal and Child Development: A Global Issue. A Programme for Global Paediatric Research Symposium. Hangzhou, China. 26-27 October 2007.

Presented by The Programme for Global Paediatric Research and the Chinese Pediatric Society of The Chinese Medical Association in cooperation with The Children's Hospital of Zhejiang University School of Medicine, Shanghai Children's Medical Center and Xinhua Hospital, affiliated with Shanghai Jiao Tong University School of Medicine. The Programme for Global Paediatric Research ("PGPR") includes paediatric researchers, societies, and other organizations committed to child health. It was formed in January 2004 to address the disparity between the scientific research resources available in high-income countries and the quantity of scientific research focused on the health of children in mid- and low-income countries. PGPR works at the centre of a global network to inform, educate, facilitate international research cooperation and collaboration, and advocate for research to improve the health of all children.

PGPR's sixth symposium will be held October 26 and 27, 2007 in association with the Chinese Society of Pediatrics of The Chinese Medical Association. The sessions will focus on the effects of environmental pollution on foetal and child development. Particular emphasis will be placed on child health in developing countries. The symposium will be comprised of expert presentations providing an overview of the problems, issues and instances of work that is being done; oral presentations from selected abstracts on related issues; and structured panel discussions and open forums focused on determining research that is needed. Colleagues from throughout the world, who are working in fields related to environmental pollutants and childhood development, are invited to meet at this important symposium in order to examine the critical issues and establish clear plans for collaborative study. One of the goals of the symposium is to discern the next research steps that should be taken. For more information, please go to the conference website: www.chinamed.com.cn/pgpr2007 or contact the conference co-chairs: [Alvin Zipursky](#) and [Xiaoming Shen](#)

(22) The Interface of Chemistry and Biology in the "Omics" Era: Environment & Health and Drug Discovery. Bangkok, Thailand. 25-29 November 2007

Sixth Princess Chulabhorn International Science Congress - "[The Interface of Chemistry and Biology in the 'Omics' Era](#)" Bangkok, Thailand. 25-29 November 2007.

(23) Second International Conference on Health & Biodiversity. Galway, Ireland. 25-28 February 2008

The [Second International Conference on Health and Biodiversity](#), COHAB 2, will take place from 25 to 28 February 2008 in Galway, Ireland. The conference will aim to advance dialogue and collaboration across sectors on issues linking biodiversity with human health and well-being, and highlight practical cross-sectoral and holistic approaches to addressing the issues. COHAB 2 will review research and action on the links between health and biodiversity since the first COHAB conference in 2005, and highlight relevant developments in international and regional policies on biodiversity, public health and the MDGs. The outputs and impacts of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment will be discussed, while relationships with other multi-lateral projects on climate change, biodiversity conservation, human development and environmental sustainability will be examined. The conference will work to produce a series of evidence-based reports on key issues, for consideration at subsequent multilateral meetings on the environment, health and development. The conference will mix broad discussions with presentations of

individual case studies, highlighting examples where ecosystem approaches have been taken to address community health and welfare needs.

(24) Sixth session of the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety. Nairobi, Kenya. September 2008.

The sixth session of the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety (Forum VI) will be held in September 2008. The theme of Forum VI is: IFCS Global Partnerships for Chemical Safety, Contributing to the 2020 Goal. Plenary agenda topics include: Nanotechnology and Nanomaterials: opportunities and challenges, Lead and cadmium: need for international action?, Substitution and alternatives, Ecologically sound and integrated pest and vector management. Poverty reduction and the special vulnerability of children will be considered as cross cutting issues. Further information is available at: <http://www.who.int/ifcs/forums/six/en/index.html>

(25) The Faroes Statement: Human Health Effects of Developmental Exposure to Chemicals in Our Environment

The [International Conference on Fetal programming and Developmental Toxicity](#) (PPTOX) took place in Torshavn Faroe Islands on 20-24 May 2007. It focused on fetal and early postnatal development as the most vulnerable stages of human life, in regard to adverse effects of environmental hazards. Recent research has revealed that subtle effects during early development can lead to functional deficits and increased disease risks later in life. This “fetal programming” hypothesis has gathered much support from both experimental and epidemiological studies. Substantial evidence now suggests that the prenatal and early postnatal environment is of crucial importance for gene expression, thereby affecting normal development and disease risks through adult life. This thriving research area is likely to expand in the future, with substantial implications for public health. The conference helped set the stage for future accomplishments in this field. All abstracts and some speaker slides and posters are available on the conference's website.

The PPTOX International Scientific Committee has updated the conference conclusions [The Faroes Statement: Human Health Effects of Developmental Exposure to Chemicals in Our Environment](#), and the outcome has now been published as an “OnLineEarly” open-access article in Basic & Clinical Pharmacology & Toxicology (BCPT). The print version will be published with the conference proceedings in the first 2008 issue of BCPT. A related podcast on developmental toxicity is also available at <http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/multimedia/audio/2007/grandjean1/>

(26) Workshop to Reduce Use and Release of Mercury in Products. Bangkok, Thailand. 17-19 May 2007

UNEP has organized a “Workshop to Reduce Use and Release of Mercury in Products.” UNEP Chemicals and Thailand’s Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources organized the workshop, which convened from 17-19 May 2007, in Bangkok, Thailand, with the support of the US Environmental Protection Agency. The workshop was organized in response to the call of the UNEP Governing Council 24th session, for increased efforts to address the global challenges to

reduce risks from releases of mercury by reducing the global mercury demand related to use in products and production processes. The workshop was attended by 24 governments, as well as representatives from six nongovernmental organizations, two industry organizations, and two intergovernmental organizations. Participants identified several areas in which action could be taken to decrease the use of mercury in products, including through: raising awareness of political decision makers and consumers/users of mercury; providing for information exchange, including inventory development and cooperation at the regional and national levels; and supporting capacity building efforts to transfer and apply best management practices and new technologies on substitutes to mercury containing products. For further information, please go to: <http://www.chem.unep.ch/saicm/meeting/asiapacific/may%2007/default.htm> or http://www.chem.unep.ch/mercury/new_partnership.htm or <http://www.chem.unep.ch/mercury/Sector-Specific-Information/Mercury-in-products2.htm>

(27) Workshop on Children's Environmental Health. Port-au Prince, Haïti. 3-6 June 2007

A Workshop on children's Environmental Health was held at the Hotel Montana in Petion-Ville, Haiti on 3-6 June. It was organized by the Haitian Pediatric Association, the International Pediatric Association and WHO. Selected modules in French from the WHO Training Package for the Health Sector on children's environmental health were presented and adapted to the local situation. Over 70 professionals participated, mainly paediatricians, nurses, veterinarians and representatives from other sectors in Haiti, plus representatives from selected NGOs and from the International Child Health Activities section of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP).

(28) 4th International Conference on Children's Health. Vienna, Austria. 10-12 June 2007

4th International Conference on Children's Health and the Environment organized by the International Network on Children's Health, Environment and Safety (INCHES) the Institute of Public Health (University for Health Sciences, Medical Informatics and Technology - UMIT - Tirol, Austria) and the Institute of Environmental Health (ZPH) of the Medical University of Vienna, Austria. This cross-sectional conference was intended for health professionals, scientists (clinical, environmental epidemiological and community oriented) and policy makers who have a special interest in children's environmental health, as well as leaders from the private sector, non-governmental organizations and community organizations, and all levels of government. It addressed many important areas for Children's Environmental Health (CEH), including scientific research, CEH indicators, training, interventions and policy issues, with an emphasis on air and water pollution and on emerging issues, such as climate change and endocrine disrupters. About 200 participants attended, mainly from Europe. WHO staff participated in a wide range of events at the Conference, including a Round Table on The Global Initiative on Children's Environmental Health Indicators (CEHI), a Plenary Opening Lecture, a lecture on "Life-stage approaches to assessing risks due to chemicals in Children", and sessions on Regional Threats to Children's Health, on Paediatric Environmental Health (PEH) Centres, on Lead and Children, on the Settings Approach, on Training Activities on CEH, and on Reproductive Health and the Environment. For more information on WHO's CEH activities, please go to www.who.int/ceh For more information and copies of the presentations, please go to <http://www.inchesnetwork.net> or send an email to inches@umit.at

(29) CEHAPE Intergovernmental Midterm Review (IMR). Vienna, Austria. 13-15 June 2007

The CEHAPE [Intergovernmental Midterm Review](#) in Vienna was attended by around 300 participants in representation of 50 European Member States, NGOs, IGOs and a delegation of youths.

Country delegations and other participants shared experiences and lessons learnt on the implementation of actions to improve children's environment and health, as a progress towards the commitments taken in 2004 at the Budapest Conference. The reporting covered the four regional priority goals of the Children's Environment and Health Action Plan (CEHAPE) and the Budapest Declaration. Some common general conclusions were drawn, including: investment in research, good surveillance, monitoring and information system was recommended as a basis for taking action, with special focus on the specific needs and problems of countries in eastern Europe; choice and prioritization of interventions was recognized as essential at the planning and implementation phases to use resources efficiently; multisectoral approaches to problem-solving were deemed necessary, under the coordination of national legislation to define roles and responsibilities of the different sectors; commitment of different levels of governance is required for international policy instruments, such as THE PEP and the Protocol on Water and Health, to facilitate intersectoral work; international collaboration and involvement of new stakeholders is essential to ensure political support, action and efforts; open and transparent communication with the public is a key factor to successful actions. Public awareness and communication campaigns using success stories and case studies are an effective mean to stimulate and retain political interests; children and youth involvement in decisions that affect them is important to ensure their contribution. The meeting also discussed the future of the environment and health process, making a general recommendation to WHO/Europe to clearly define the priorities to focus action.

In a press conference, attended by around forty national and international journalists, WHO launched a global report on [Country profiles of environmental burden of disease](#), presenting the latest evidence on environmental threats to health. Also a web-based service providing access to information and indicators was presented: www.enhis.org. A parallel conference was held by youth participants. On the last day of the Review, they presented the youth-friendly version of an action plan on children's health and environment, incorporating their perspective on the implementation of the CEHAPE regional priority goals, as well as of the European Commission action plan on Environment and Health 2004–2010. All country delegations agreed in involving youth on decision-making. The youth expressed their need to be equipped with the right tools, including education and training to be more effective, and asked to be involved in all preparatory steps of the next Ministerial Conference. The winners of the NGO Best Practice Award on pan-European children's environment and health were announced. An award was presented to the 15 most sharing, inspiring, innovative and concrete activities that made a difference in improving children's environmental health in the WHO European Region.

(30) Tunza Regional Children's Conference on the Environment. Cameroon. 30 July - 2 August 2007

[The Regional Children's Conference in Cameroon](#) took place from 30 July to 2 August 2007, discussing a variety of topics concerning Africa and the environment. The main themes of discussion were: Climate change and food security; Forest and biodiversity (including a visit to a forest), and the Survival of the Great Apes; Water (clean water and sanitation, situation in slums and other poor areas due to the lack of water and sanitation; Waste management and recycling; Dry lands and Deserts (including information on the Billion Tree Campaign).

(31) Activities of the International Society of Doctors for the Environment (ISDE) and Asociación Argentina de Médicos por el Medio Ambiente (AAMMA)

New book: "The Climate Change Challenge and the Failure of Democracy" by David Shearman (ISDE Australia), Joseph Wayne Smith. Description: Climate change threatens the future of civilization, but humanity is impotent in effecting solutions. Even in those nations with a commitment to reduce greenhouse emissions, they continue to rise. This failure mirrors those in many other spheres that deplete the fish of the sea, erode fertile land, destroy native forest, pollute rivers and streams, and utilize the world's natural resources beyond their replacement rate. In this provocative new book, Shearman and Smith present evidence that the fundamental problems causing environmental destruction – and climate change in particular – is the operation of liberal democracy. Its flaws and contradictions bestow upon government – and its instructions, laws, and the markets and corporations that provide it sustenance – an inability to make decisions that could provide a sustainable society.

Postgraduate course on Environmental Health of the Child and the Woman: "Improving the capacity for diagnosis, prevention and management of children and women's diseases linked to the environment". The course, which will take place In Buenos Aires, Argentina, will last from August 2007 until July 2008 and starts on 15 August with opening lecture by Dr. Ana Soto (Tufts University, Boston, U.S.). For more information, please send an email to asociacioncursos@medicos-municipales.org.ar

New Book: "Argentinean Assessment on Agrochemicals' Use and Pesticides Containers; its effects on Workers' Health and the Environment" National Research Program of the National Ministry of Health of Argentina. Coordinated by the Argentinean Society of Doctors for the Environment. In Spanish, launched June 2007.

Project: "Our Community, Our Future" - Multicentric Research Study on toxic exposure by openly burnt waste at Alto Verde District, Santa Fe city, Argentina. Developed by the Argentinean Society of Doctors for the Environment together with the National University of Litoral. Supported by the National Ministry of Health of Argentina (May 2007-April 2008).

Project "Sound Management of Pesticides in Agro-technical Schools in critical areas of Argentina" Developed by the Argentinean Society of Doctors for the Environment. Supported by Pan American Health Organization, PAHO.

For more information on these projects, please visit: www.aamma.org and www.isde.org

(32) EPA activities on children's environmental health

EPA's Toxicity and Exposure Assessment for Children's Health (TEACH) project has added a chemical summary on Dichlorvos. It can be found at the [TEACH website](#). The addition of the Dichlorvos Chemical Summary to the TEACH website brings the number of completed [Chemical Summaries](#) to 15, including: 2,4-Dichlorophenoxyacetic Acid (2,4-D); Arsenic (As); Atrazine; Benzene; Benzo(a)pyrene (BaP); Dichlorvos; Diethyltoluamide (DEET); Formaldehyde; Manganese; Mercury (elemental); Mercury (inorganic); Nitrates/Nitrites; Permethrin and Resmethrin (Pyrethroids); Trichloroethylene (TCE); Vinyl Chloride. TEACH Background : The TEACH Web site contains a searchable database of scientific literature relevant to children's environmental health. The TEACH database currently includes 18 chemicals of concern. In addition, the TEACH website is developing chemical summaries for these chemicals which provide a survey of the scientific literature and U.S. federal regulations relevant to children's environmental health. The goal of the TEACH project is to complement existing children's health resources. TEACH does not provide an evaluation or critique the validity of the relevant scientific studies; nor does TEACH derive toxicity values. Instead, the goal of TEACH is to summarize, compile, and organize information obtained from numerous resources into one online resource. TEACH is designed to support numerous efforts throughout the country that target the protection of children's health. The objective of the TEACH project is to improve the information base on children's environmental health risks in order to streamline and facilitate the search for current children's health information in scientific literature; support existing children's health efforts; identify data and information gaps in literature on children's environmental health. It is also possible to provide feedback about TEACH at <http://www.epa.gov/teach/teachsurvey.html>

5th Annual Conference on Children's Health and the Environment. October 6, 2007 at the Hyatt Reston, Virginia, U.S. The conference is organized by the Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Unit (PESHU) of Region 3; the Mid-Atlantic Center for Children's Health and the Environment (MACCHE). MACCHE is a joint effort between the George Washington University Medical Center and the Children's National Medical Center. The conference is targeted to health care providers, public health professionals and the interested public. Topics will explore the intersection between the environment and child health issues and will include: A discussion of possible environmental factors influencing autism; Environmental terrorism and preparedness in school settings; Environmental changes and its contribution to the obesity epidemic; Forecasting child health issues due to climate change; The how- to on greening your medical practice and home; Air pollution and compromised respiratory function; A presentation and discussion of case studies in pediatric environmental health. For details, visit the website at: <http://www.gwu.edu/~macche/restonconference07/>

(33) Report: An Assessment of Heavy Metals in Packaging: Screening Results Using a Portable X-Ray Fluorescence Analyzer. June 2007.

Nineteen U.S. states have toxics in packaging laws that prohibit the sale or distribution of packaging containing intentionally added cadmium, lead, mercury, and hexavalent chromium, and set limits on the incidental concentration of these materials in packaging. The purpose of these laws is to prevent the use of toxic heavy metals in packaging materials that enter landfills, waste incinerators, recycling streams, and ultimately, the environment. With funding from the

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Toxics in Packaging Clearinghouse (TPCH) initiated the first comprehensive test program of packaging in the U.S. TPCH screened 355 packaging samples between October 2005 and February 2006 for the presence of the four restricted metals using a portable x-ray fluorescence (XRF) analyzer. The packaging samples were selected to represent different packaging materials (aluminium, glass, paper, plastic, and steel) and product types, mostly in the retail sector.

Of the packages tested, 16% exceeded the screening threshold of 100 parts per million (ppm) for the presence of one or more of the restricted heavy metals, and may be in violation of state toxics in packaging laws. Cadmium and lead were the most frequently detected of the four regulated metals. Historically, these metals were used in colorants and inks, and as stabilizers to retard the degradation of plastics exposed to heat and ultraviolet light. The average cadmium concentration detected in the samples that failed the screening test was 449 ppm while the average lead concentration was 1,740 ppm. Test results for one package, a plastic mailing bag, indicated that the package was almost 1% (10,000 ppm) lead by weight.

There were two types of packaging that dominated the samples failing the screening test: 1) Flexible polyvinylchloride (PVC) packages. 2) Inks and colorants used on plastic shopping/ mailing bags.

As a result of the compliance-screening project, the Toxics in Packaging Clearinghouse began a new outreach and education campaign aimed at increasing awareness of state restrictions on heavy metals in packaging. The California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC), a TPCH member, is also undertaking a project designed to compare different test methodologies for determining total concentration of the restricted metals in packaging samples. This project will provide guidance to the regulated community on acceptable test methods. TPCH, in conjunction with its member states, also plans to conduct additional compliance screening programs in the future to detect trends in compliance with state toxics in packaging requirements. To access the report, please go to

http://www.toxicsinpackaging.org/adobe/TPCH_Final_Report_June_2007.pdf

(34) A father day's report: Men, boys and environmental health threats. CPCHE. June 2007.

The health of all children living in Canada is at risk from exposure to environmental hazards. Hundreds of toxic substances, such as air pollutants and pesticides are known, or are suspected of contributing to adverse child health outcomes. Much remains to be understood about environmental links to adverse health impacts. In the meantime, it is better to be safe than sorry. Much can be done to reduce or prevent exposures. According to Health Canada: 12.2 per cent of children in Canada have asthma; 26 per cent of children between the ages of six and eleven have one or more learning or behavioural problems; Birth defects are the leading cause of infant death; Several cancers are on the rise among young adults. For a number of these health outcomes boys seem to be particularly at risk. The prevalence of cancer, asthma, learning and behavioural disorders, and some birth defects appears to be greater among boys than among girls. Health outcomes where girls appear to be at higher risk include breast cancer among young women, asthma after the age of 15, and two birth defects, spina bifida and congenital hip dislocation. The reasons that boys appear to be at greater risk for the health outcomes discussed

in this report are largely unknown. Several reasons have been suggested including genetic, hormonal, and physiological differences between the sexes. Of concern is the fact that, according to US biomonitoring studies, men appear to have a greater body burden of certain chemicals than women including lead, polychlorinated dibenzofurans and some polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, organophosphate pesticides, and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). A father's exposure to toxic chemicals can affect the health of his children — male or female. This [report](#) summarizes the information currently available on the rates of diseases and disabilities of boys compared to girls and what is known about the environmental links to these health impacts. This report focuses on environmentally-linked diseases and disabilities amongst boys. It also examines the role fathers play in ensuring children's environmental health. The focus of this Father's Day report is also on exposure to toxic chemicals commonly encountered in the indoor and outdoor environment rather than on well-known hazards such as smoking, alcohol and drugs.

(35) Fact sheets on Green Chemistry

Chemistry has improved our quality of life, and made thousands of products possible. Unfortunately, this achievement has come at a price: our collective human health and the global environment are threatened. Our bodies are contaminated with a large number of synthetic industrial chemicals, many of which are known to be toxic and carcinogenic while others remain untested for their health effects. They come to us from unlabeled products, chemically contaminated food, air, water and dust while the developing fetus is exposed directly to chemicals in the womb. Many chemicals work their way up the food chain and circulate round the globe: pesticides used in the tropics are commonly found in the Arctic; flame retardants used in furniture and electronics are now commonly found in marine mammals.

Yet as cancer rates rise and evidence increases about the link between certain chemicals and birth defects and learning disabilities our regulatory system has been unable to make chemical producers provide full testing information or promote inherently safer chemicals. While some efforts are under way to overhaul chemicals policy, most notably by the recent passing of the European Union's new chemicals policy, REACH, the focus must also be on overhauling the way chemicals are designed from the outset. This is what Green Chemistry sets out to do. Green chemistry is an approach to the design, manufacture and use of chemical products to intentionally reduce or eliminate chemical hazards. The goal of green chemistry is to create better, safer chemicals while choosing the safest, most efficient ways to synthesize them and to reduce wastes. Two Green Chemistry fact sheets are now available on "[Why we need green chemistry](#)" and "[Why promote green chemistry](#)". For more information, please contact Bev@CleanProduction.org

(36) Household Hazards: New report

A new report '[Household Hazards: Potential Hazards of Home Cleaning Products](#)' released today points to mounting evidence that links exposure to chemicals in cleaning products to a rise in health problems, particularly asthma and reproductive harm. A staff scientist with the national women's environmental health group Women's Voices for the Earth (WVE) drew information from over 75 reports and scientific studies, exposing a valid reason for concern about the ingredients in these products. The report highlights the pervasiveness of these health concerns

associated with household cleaning products, and the need for companies to label their products with a list of currently “hidden ingredients” which pose potential risks to human health.

(37) Asthma Children and Pesticides: What you need to know to protect your family. New book.

Since the mid-1980s, asthma rates in the United States have skyrocketed to epidemic levels, particularly in young children. In the U.S. alone, around 16 million people suffer from asthma. Asthma is a serious chronic disorder of the lungs characterized by recurrent attacks of bronchial constriction, which cause breathlessness, wheezing, and coughing. Asthma is a dangerous, and in some cases life-threatening disease. Researchers have found that pesticide exposure can induce a poisoning effect linked to asthma.

Did You Know? * Nearly 1 in 8 school-aged children have asthma. This rate is rising most rapidly in pre-school aged children. * Asthma is the leading cause of school absenteeism due to chronic illness. Every year, asthma accounts for 14 million lost days of school. * Asthma is the third-ranking cause of hospitalization among those younger than 15 years. * The number of children dying from asthma increased almost threefold from 1979 to 1996. * The estimated cost of treating asthma in those younger than 18 years is \$3.2 billion per year. * Low-income populations, minorities, and children living in inner-cities experience disproportionately high morbidity and mortality due to asthma. To order the booklet, please go to <http://www.shopbeyondpesticides.org/booklet-asthma-children-and-pesticides.html>

ARTICLES

(1) AIR POLLUTION:

(a) Indoor air pollution

[Pneumonia case-finding in the RESPIRE Guatemala indoor air pollution trial: standardizing methods for resource-poor settings](#) ALRI are the single most important cause of death of children under 5 years, responsible annually for approximately 20% of the 10 million under-5 deaths globally. Prevention strategies are required urgently, including control of risk factors. N. Bruce. WHO BLT. 7 July 2007.

[Childhood Asthma and Environmental Interventions](#) Contaminants encountered in many households, such as environmental tobacco smoke, house dust mite, cockroach, cat and dog dander, and mold, are risk factors in asthma. Young children are a vulnerable subpopulation for environmentally mediated asthma, and the economic burden associated with this disease is substantial. F. Wu. EHP. June 2007

(b) Outdoor air pollution

[EU eyes tighter air-pollution caps for heavy vehicles](#) By the end of 2007, trucks and buses could be faced with costly plans to reduce harmful emissions, such as particulate matter and nitrogen oxides. The Commission wants to see whether stakeholders prefer stricter limits for pollutant emissions or whether they would rather have more lenient Euro VI standards for lower CO2 levels. Euractiv. 17 July 2007

[OECD highlights Chinese pollution](#) China's air pollution will cause 20 million people a year to fall ill with respiratory diseases, the OECD estimated. The Paris-based club of industrialized countries said China was not doing enough to combat widespread and serious environmental degradation and should "redouble efforts" to implement its laws and policies. J. Anderlini. Financial Times. 17 July 2007.

[Ambient Air Pollution and Low Birth Weight in Connecticut and Massachusetts](#) Low birth weight is an important predictor of children's health and is associated with higher risk of infant and childhood mortality. Results indicate that exposure to air pollution, even at low levels, may increase risk of low birth weight, particularly for some segments of the population. M.L. Bell. EHP. July 2007.

(c) Environmental Tobacco Smoke/Smoking

[Smokefree England, One month on](#) 97 per cent of premises inspected in the two weeks after 1 July were smokefree as required by the new law, data published by the Department of Health reveals. Minister of State for Public Health, D. Primarolo, said: "When we introduced the smokefree law last month, we predicted that it would be largely self-enforcing based on experience elsewhere ". Smokefree. July 2007

(2) CHEMICALS: (a) General

[Childhood Growth Stages Determine What Harm Pollution Does](#) An increased risk of cancer, heart and lung disease in adults can result from exposures to certain environmental chemicals during childhood, WHO said. This finding is part of the first report ever issued by the agency focusing on children's special susceptibility to harmful chemical exposures at different stages of their growth. ENS. 27 July 2007.

[Site Of Toxic Ukraine Train Crash 'Safe'](#)- Ukrainian officials say toxicity levels at the site of a train crash are much higher than the norm -- but that there is no threat to the public. People in the contaminated area do not feel that way. A toxic cloud released by the fire contaminated an area of ninety square kilometers, and some seventy people were hospitalized, 19 of them children. RFR. July 18 2007

[Congress hasn't learned its lesson from China's tainted toothpaste](#) Counterfeit Colgate toothpaste containing diethylene glycol, a poisonous chemical used in antifreeze, recently turned up in discount grocery stores all over the U.S. East Coast. In 1997, for example, fever syrup laced with diethylene glycol traced to China killed dozens of Haitian children. P.J. Pitts. SeattlePi.com. 16 July 2007.

[Does Methylphenidate Cause a Cytogenetic Effect in Children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder?](#) ADHD is the most common psychiatric disorder in children and adolescents. Because the findings published in 2005 could not be replicated, the concern regarding an increase in the risk of developing cancer later in life after long-term MPH treatment is not supported. S. Walitza. EHP. June 2007.

[Association of serum concentrations of persistent organic pollutants with the prevalence of learning disability and attention deficit disorder](#) Laboratory and clinical studies on several neurodevelopmental toxicants show the unique vulnerability of the developing brain to environmental chemical agents at low exposure levels that have little or no effect on adults. DH Lee. J Epidemiol Community Health. 2007

(b) Lead

[CHINA: Lead Toxins Take a Global Round Trip](#) High levels of lead turning up in cheap jewellery from China are prompting recalls in the U.S. But some of the lead used by these Chinese manufacturers comes from an unconventional source: computers and other electronic goods discarded in Western countries and dumped in China. G. Fairclough, The Wall Street Journal. CorpWatch. 12 July 2007.

[Research Links Lead Exposure, Criminal Activity](#) Through much of the 20th century, lead in paint and gasoline fumes poisoned toddlers as they put contaminated hands in their mouths. The effects on crime occurred when poisoning victims became adolescents. Nevin does not say that lead is the only factor behind crime, but he says it is the biggest factor. S. Vedantam. Washington Post. 8 July 2007.

[Elevated Blood Lead Levels of Children in Guiyu, an Electronic Waste Recycling Town in China](#) Disposal of electronic waste, is an emerging global environmental issue, as these wastes have become the most rapidly growing segment of the municipal waste stream in the world. Primitive e-waste recycling activities may contribute to the elevated BLLs in children living in Guiyu. X. Huo. EHP. July 2007.

[Lead exposure in Peru raises concern](#) In La Oroya, a U.S.-owned smelter provides livelihoods. But its emissions are said to be stunting children's development. Parents recite their children's blood-lead readings the way moms and dads elsewhere recall their kids' birthdays. Epidemiological studies definitively linking the emissions to illness are lacking. P. McDonnell. Los Angeles Times. 18 June 2007.

[Zambia Penalizes Chinese Investors for Pollution](#) The lives of more than 60,000 children and adults are said to be at risk of lead poisoning by the Chinese-owned mine in Kabwe, a town situated some 150 kms north of Zambia's capital, Lusaka. Environmental and health officials say high traces of lead content were found in blood samples taken from children under six. D. Kaunda. Voanews.com. 12 June 2007

(c) Pesticides

[Rachel Carson's birthday bashing](#) Malaria's burden is enormous. Each year, the disease infects 350 to 500 million people and kills at least a million -- the vast majority in Africa, mostly children under 5. But blaming Carson and the environmental movement for malaria's death toll is not supported by evidence from generations of scientists and malaria researchers. K. Weir. [Salon News](#). 29 June 2007.

[Pesticides poison thousands of Canadians annually](#) More than 6,000 Canadians -- almost half of them children -- suffer acute pesticide poisoning every year, according to the first comprehensive national survey of the issue. "The numbers are shocking," says Gideon Forman, executive director of the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment. K. Patterson. [Canada.com](#). 21 June 2007.

[Give Us DDT](#) Though Africa's sad experience with colonialism ended in the 1960s, a lethal vestige remains: malaria. It is the biggest killer of Ugandan and all African children. Yet it remains preventable. G-8 leaders committed new resources to the fight against the mosquito-borne disease and promised to use every available tool. 3% of the local population carries the disease. S. Zaramba. [Afro-nets](#). 12 June 2007

(d) Mercury

[Kazakhstan: Environmentalists call for caution in mercury cleanup in north](#) The Committee for Water Resources said the mercury pollution presented a greater risk to the 1.5 million people living in the affected area than the operation to remove it. Mercury and most of its compounds are extremely toxic. It can be inhaled and absorbed through the skin and mucous membrane. [IRIN](#). 9 August 2007.

[MEPs call to ban mercury imports and exports by 2010](#) Parliament approved with amendments a draft regulation on the banning of exports and the safe storage of mercury. MEPs voted for the ban on exports to be brought forward to 1 December 2010 and for stricter rules on storage. They also voted for an import ban, not included in the Commission's draft legislation. [European Parliament](#). 20 June 2007.

(3) WATER AND SANITATION

[China faces rising costs from pollution](#) China's rapid urbanization, industrialization and economic growth over the last two decades has resulted in some of the world's filthiest air, soil and water. 190 million people are estimated to be suffering from illnesses related to dirty drinking water and more than 30,000 children die every year from diarrhea due to polluted water. A. Olesen. [Boston.com](#). 17 July 2007.

[Sucked dry](#) While technology is helping plants use less water, and efforts are under way to recycle some of the water used in the production process—many plants lag far behind in efficiency. Some use less than 3 gallons of water for every gallon of ethanol they produce, others use more than 5. On average, plants use about 4.3 gallons of water for every gallon of ethanol. C. Wilson. [CityPages](#). 4 July 2007.

[Association between Manganese Exposure through Drinking Water and Infant Mortality in Bangladesh](#) Manganese is a common natural contaminant of groundwater in Bangladesh. Associations between water manganese and infant mortality in the offspring of female participants was assessed, finding a possible association between manganese exposure and infant mortality. D. Hafeman. EHP. July 2007.

(4) GLOBAL CHANGE

[The starvation of the grey whale](#) It is a phenomenon which has alarmed scientists - grey whales showing worrying signs of malnutrition. Could this be another example of the ravages of climate change? For while climate change is seen as a dire threat to the planet in many parts, for a US increasingly concerned about the security of oil supplies, it is a potential bonanza. L. Doyle. The Independent. 10 July 2007.

[Death Rates Rise on Global Warming, Study Finds](#) Global warming may spur more deaths during the summer months because people are better adapted to cold snaps than periods of extreme heat, according to Harvard University researchers. Death rates increased by 5.7 % during periods of extremely hot weather, a rise that wasn't offset by fewer deaths in milder winters. C. Britt. Bloomberg.com. 28 June 2007

[G8 agrees 'substantial' climate deal](#) The G8 summit in Germany agreed a landmark deal on climate change with the west's leading economies pledging to make "substantial" cuts in greenhouse gas emissions. The European Union has been pushing for a 50% cut from 1990 emission levels, while the US and Canada favour 2007, which would represent a smaller reduction. L. Elliott. The Guardian. 7 June 2007.

[Health in a changing climate](#) Statement by Dr M. Chan, WHO DG, on World Environment Day. The focus of World Environment Day this year is on the impact of climate change on polar regions, their ecosystems and communities, and the consequences that will have for the world. Malaria, diarrhoea and malnutrition kill millions of people every year, mostly children. WHO Media Centre. 5 June 2007.

(5) REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

[Two words: Bad plastic](#) Scientists now fear a chemical used in baby bottles and CDs, food cans and dental sealants, can disrupt fetal development and even lead to obesity. EDs interact with the genetic receptors that determine a number of vital bodily mechanisms. In the case of bisphenol A, these may include egg cell, reproductive organ, and fat cell development. E. Grossman. Salon News. 2 August 2007.

[Pesticide trial begins against Dole, Dow](#) Dole Food Co. knowingly exposed Nicaraguan banana workers three decades ago to a pesticide made by Dow Chemical Co. that caused permanent sterility. Nearly three decades of legal struggle came to a head as a trial began in a case pitting impoverished Latino field hands against two of America's largest corporations. T.C. Miller, LA Times. GNN. 25 Jul 2007

[PBDEs linked to common birth defect in boys](#) Scientists have long suspected that children may be especially vulnerable to the endocrine-disrupting effects of polybrominated diphenyl ether flame retardants because the main route of exposure to chemicals is through consumer products at home. A new study is the first to link elevated PBDE levels with a human birth defect. ES&TonlineNews. 27 June 2007

[Declines in Sex Ratio at Birth and Fetal Deaths in Japan, and in U.S. Whites but Not African Americans](#) Sex ratio declines are equivalent to a shift from male to female births of 135,000 white males in the United States and 127,000 males in Japan. Whether avoidable environmental or other factors may account for some of these patterns is a matter that merits serious concern. D.L. Davis. EHP. June 2007.

(6) MISCELLANEOUS (a) General

[Study: Organic Dairy and Meat Improves Mothers' Breast Milk](#) A new study showed that organic dairy and meat products in a mother's diet positively affect the nutritional quality of her breast milk—markedly increasing beneficial fatty acids. Additional studies that look at the health status of newborns fed by breastfeeding mothers with an organic diet are under way. PRNewswire. 24 July 2007.

[Children And Young People Show Elevated Leukaemia Rates Near Nuclear Facilities](#) Leukemia rates in children and young people are elevated near nuclear facilities, but no clear explanation exists to explain the rise, according to a research review. Death rates for children up to the age of nine were elevated by between 5 and 24 %, depending on their proximity to nuclear facilities. Science Daily. 18 July 2007.

[Childhood Leukemia in the Vicinity of the Geesthacht Nuclear Establishments near Hamburg, Germany](#) Incidence in this region is significantly higher than the childhood leukemia incidence for Germany as a whole. To date, no unique hazards have been identified in this population. The fact that elevated rates have persisted in the community for >15 years warrants investigation. W.Hoffmann. EHP. June 2007.

[Investigation of a cluster of multiple sclerosis in two elementary school cohorts](#) The authors investigated a cluster of multiple sclerosis (MS) among people who had attended two elementary schools in El Paso, Texas, from 1948 through 1970. The community was concerned about the possibility of childhood exposure to heavy metals from a large nearby smelter. J.P. Henry. J Environ Health. June 2007

(b) Americas

[Argentina: Alternative Energy for Rural Schools](#) A project by ecologist and civil society groups in Argentina launched this month will bring wind and solar energy to 125 rural schools across the country that lack access to the electrical grid. There are some 700 rural schools without electricity in Argentina. Donations are usually aimed at purchasing electric and gas generators. Tierramérica. 23 July 2007.

[HAITI: A Land Crumbling Beneath Their Feet](#) Rivers in southern Haiti are clogged with silt and stones due to deforestation in the surrounding hills. The destruction is blamed on necessities of daily life here in this poor Caribbean nation, where the majority of the populace subsists on less than one dollar a day and public utilities are unreliable and far from universal. Carmen Gentile. IPS News. 17 July 2007.

[Canada's New Government Launches World's First Air Quality Health Index Program](#) The Minister of the Environment and the Minister of Health announced an investment to establish the world's first National Air Quality Health Index and to expand the Air Quality Forecast Program to support this initiative. An 18 month Air Quality Health Index pilot was launched. Environment Canada. 9 July 2007.

[Lula da Silva says ethanol won't hurt Amazon rainforest](#) da Silva said that Brazil's booming ethanol business won't hurt the Amazon forest, dismissing criticism that the fuel could cause deforestation. Some soy plantations in central Brazil are being transformed to sugarcane ethanol operations. Amazon weather conditions aren't favorable for the sugar cane used to produce ethanol. Mercopress. 10 July 2007.

[U.S. Mayors Champion the Greening of America's Schools](#) "Studies show that children in green schools are healthier and more productive because of improved indoor air quality, lower levels of chemical emissions and a generous provision of natural day lighting," said Mayor Cownie. "The benefit of cleaner indoor air quality have been linked to lower asthma rates, fewer allergies." USGBC. 3 July 2007.

['Most polluted' town sees ray of hope](#) Dominican Republic activists, as well as company and officials agree to studies. After a decade of complaints about persistent headaches and sick children, one of the world's most polluted towns met for the first time with a company whose former battery recycling plant is blamed for dangerously high lead levels in the townspeople. MSNBC. 20 June 2007.

(c) Asia

[Pakistan: Relief for Flood Victims - Too Little, Too Late](#) "Most people coming to us suffer from skin, gastrointestinal and respiratory infections," said Dr Ghulam Ali, TRDP. "Because of the scorching heat they keep going into the standing water causing skin rashes and boils. This is the water they use for both washing and drinking." Nobody has stoves to boil water. Z. Ebrahim. IPS news. 24 July 2007.

[One week of rain kills 152 in China, 386,000 evacuated](#) The death toll from a week of rain-triggered floods, landslides and mud flows in China has risen to 152, with hundreds of thousands of people evacuated from their homes, state media said. Since the start of the annual rainy season last month, floods have hit nearly half of China's regions and killed at least 400 people. Taipei Times. 23 July 2007.

[UN official says Iraqi children worse off](#) A UNICEF representative said that because of the violence, mothers were too afraid to send their children to school or take them to health centers to get checkups and nutritional supplements. Conditions for women and children in Iraq had worsened significantly since the 2006 bombing of a Shiite shrine in Samarra. Frank Jordans. The Boston Globe. 17 July 2007.

[Education in Afghanistan: A harrowing choice](#) More than half the schools have no buildings, the ministry reports; classes are commonly held in tents or beneath trees or in the brutal, sun-soaked openness. Only 20 percent of the teachers are even minimally qualified. Texts are outdated; millions of books need to be printed. And there is the violence. B. Bearak. International Herald Tribune. 9 July 2007.

[Experts refute claims that durians' fungicide causes cancer](#) The Central Plant Protection Department said that durians coated with the fungicide carbendazim would not put people at risk of cancer. Recent studies by health authorities have found alleged carcinogens in Vietnamese eggs, lipsticks imported from China, and soy sauce manufactured in Ho Chi Minh City. H Phuong. Thanh Nien Daily. 7 June 2007.

(d) Africa

[Senegal: Dakar water channel poses potential health hazard](#) A water channel running through the centre of Dakar, Senegal, may have been intended as a public recreation area and amenity, but the reality is different. Knee-level rubbish and stagnant water mean the channel, known locally as Canal 4, is generally considered to be a large, open sewer, and potentially poses a health hazard. IRIN. 23 July 2007

[Chad child soldiers scrutinised](#) Rehabilitation is likely to take several months. Supervisors say they hope that in a few months the boys can return to their families but the road back to normality will be long. UN Security Council is due to meet to discuss the issue of child soldiers in Chad. Thousands of boys are thought to be fighting in the national army, as well as paramilitary groups. BBC News. 19 July 2007

[Malawi: Rescuing Children From Malaria](#) Poor hygiene, lack of access to health facilities and non-compliance to health worker advice are some of the factors blamed for most of the childhood illnesses especially malaria. Almost 35 percent of children in the country are sleeping under insecticide treated nets (ITN) based on ministry of health statistics. Cedric Nkungula. AllAfrica.com. 16 July 2007.

[Lesotho: hungry for assistance](#) In the wake of the most severe drought in 30 years, the kingdom of Lesotho has declared a state of emergency and appealed for international assistance for over 400,000 people in need of urgent food aid. Besides food shortages, there is a critical shortage of water for human as well as livestock consumption. The number of orphans is increasing each day. IRIN. 18 July 2007.

(e) Europe

[Water: use less and pay more, says Commission](#) Citing "dramatic increases" in the intensity and frequency of water shortages and drought over last 30 years, the Commission has put forward a set of recommendations and policy options, including higher prices and conservation measures. Increased water demand, coupled with climate change are contributing to water scarcity. Euractiv. 18 July 2007

[A blighted Russian city pans for cash](#) A study by Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program, considered an authority on pollution in Russia's Arctic, found that the local population suffered from a number of maladies, including elevated levels of lung cancer, allergies, a skin lesion called "nickel eczema" and high levels of nickel in children's urine. A. Kramer. International Herald Tribune. 11 July 2007.

[Parents and Health Experts Try to Ease Italy's Pollution](#). By mid-May, Milan had already exceeded EU and WHO limits for particle pollution in the air on 80 days. Last year was bad, too. By the end of March, Milan had 64 such days, Turin had 77, Bologna 51 and Venice 49. Particulate pollution is tied to respiratory and heart disease, including asthma in children. E. Rosenthal. NY Times. 12 June 2007.
