Upcoming Events 2015

> 28 Sept–2 October
4th session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM4)

> 11–13 October
World Health Summit

> 25–31 October
International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week of Action

> 13–14 November
Live Earth ‘Road to Paris’

> 19 November
World Toilet Day

> 30 Nov–11 December
Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP21)

International lead poisoning prevention week of action

The World Health Organization (WHO) is preparing for the third International lead poisoning prevention week of action, with the elimination of lead paint as the theme. Lead exposure, particularly in childhood, can result in lifelong negative health impacts, including impaired cognitive development. No safe level of exposure to lead has been identified. The elimination of leaded gasoline in most countries has contributed to a significant reduction in exposure, as shown by declining mean population blood lead concentrations in those countries. However, lead paint remains an important source of exposure for children and workers in many countries.

A recent survey conducted by WHO and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) on behalf of the Global Alliance to Eliminate Lead Paint, found that more than 65 countries do not have legally binding controls on lead in paint. Market surveys in some of these countries have shown that paint containing large quantities of lead remain on sale to the public. More action is needed by governments to phase out lead paint. The campaign will take place 25–31 October 2015.

Country updates on social determinants of health

WHO and national multidisciplinary teams in Morocco and Nepal are undertaking a review process to improve health programme results, close coverage gaps and better meet population needs. Morocco is focusing on diabetes and its noncommunicable diseases programme, while Nepal is focusing on its national adolescent sexual and reproductive health programme. Review teams will be working to complete a diagnostic checklist on their selected programme, which will be followed by five-day training and review workshops in October and November 2015.

In Suriname, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), WHO and the United Nations are working to support implementation of the ‘Health in All Policies’ (HiAP) approach to addressing the social determinants of health. Over the past four months, a dedicated team has worked on the sub-region's first Quick Assessment of the Social Determinants of Health, which was presented at a National Consensus workshop.

For more information on country updates on the social determinants of health, click here.

WHO works with countries to develop national action plans on workers’ health

With its Resolution 60.26 on Workers’ Health: Global Plan of Action, the World Health Assembly urged countries to develop national action plans to protect and promote the health of working people. WHO is currently implementing a special project to support countries to assess the situation of workers' health and to devise strategic actions. Colombia, Cuba, Madagascar, Qatar, the Russian Federation, Tanzania and Viet Nam are participating as pilot countries. Colombia included occupational health – Salud y ambito laboral – among the eight priorities of the national ten-year action plan for health. In Qatar, occupational health was included as a special objective of the national health strategy.
Prevention-Intervention strategies to reduce exposure to e-waste

The United States National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) and WHO recently convened a workshop on developing prevention and intervention strategies to reduce exposures to e-waste among vulnerable populations (particularly children), through better surveillance, monitoring, capacity-building and risk communication.

The workshop followed a 2013 systematic review led by WHO and its Collaborating Centres, which looked at health outcomes related to e-waste exposure and showed that increases in spontaneous abortions, stillbirths, premature births, reduced birth weights and birth lengths are associated with exposure to e-waste. The workshop was held in Indonesia in August 2015.

Click here for more information on e-waste and child health.

WHO Collaborating Centres Network for Children's Environmental Health

Children are especially vulnerable to physical, chemical and biological environmental threats. Environmental factors account for one third of the global disease burden in children. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen global capacity for children's environmental health research and training to protect children’s health around the world. WHO and its Collaborating Centres Network for Children's Environmental Health prioritize preventing disease and injury and promoting children’s well-being through healthier environments.

For more information, click here.

Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health

WHO is providing strong leadership and support to development of a Global Strategy for Women’s, Children’s and Adolescents’ Health. The strategy builds on expertise and existing networks on health, as well as on other areas such as environmental health and human rights. Its objective is to achieve the related targets within the Sustainable Development Goals, identifying what actions and investments will have the greatest impact on saving lives and improving health. The strategy focuses on reaching everyone, in particular the poor and vulnerable, many of whom live in humanitarian and fragile settings. Once the strategy is launched, WHO will continue to support national governments as they put its recommendations into practice.

To read a related blog post, click here.