INNOV8 APPROACH FOR REVIEWING NATIONAL HEALTH PROGRAMMES

Launched On 22 November 2016, the Innov8 Approach for Reviewing National Health Programmes to Leave No One Behind is a resource that supports the operationalization of the Sustainable Development Goals and the progressive realization of universal health coverage and the right to health. Innov8 is an 8-step review process undertaken by a multidisciplinary national review team. The Innov8 approach can be adapted to, feed into and be aligned with specific regional, national or programmatic contexts and existing programme planning and review processes. It complements and links with other existing tools, processes and capacity building efforts developed by WHO or other partners.

It results in recommendations to improve programme performance through concrete action to address health inequities, support gender equality and the progressive realization of universal health coverage and the right to health, and address critical social determinants of health.

About the Innov8 approach

The Innov8 approach for reviewing national health programmes to leave no one behind: technical handbook

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Air Pollution

Association between ambient particulate matter exposure and semen quality in Wuhan, China

CHILDREN’S ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH NEWS

Press Releases

Progress towards defeating hunger slows down in Asia-Pacific, obesity on the rise, as diets change

Progress toward defeating hunger in the world’s most populous region has slowed and countries of Asia-Pacific must redouble their efforts if the Sustainable Development Goal of zero hunger is to be met by 2030, the UN’s Food and Agriculture Organization warned today. Since 1990, the region as a whole managed to reduce hunger by half – a key objective of the former Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). But most of those gains were made in the earlier part of that quarter-century. Presently, 12 percent of the region’s population remains undernourished – some 490 million people – most of them in Southern Asia. In the first post-MDG report of its kind, FAO’s 2016 Asia and the Pacific Regional Overview of Food Insecurity – Investing in a Zero Hunger Generation, warns that progress in reducing hunger and improving nutrition has slowed in more recent years and many countries must pick up the pace in order to meet the SDG global goal of zero hunger by 2030. The report reveals that, region-wide, nearly one in three children suffers from stunting. FAO (6/11/2016)

Daily iron supplementation in postpartum women

This guideline provides a global, evidence-informed recommendation on iron supplementation in postpartum women, as a public health intervention for the purpose of improving maternal and infant health outcomes. The guideline aims to help Member States and their partners in their efforts to make informed decisions on the appropriate nutrition actions to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular, Goal 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote
Health effects of exposure to particulate matter (PM) on male reproductive health remain unclear. Only a limited number of studies have investigated the effects of PM$_{2.5}$ or PM$_{10}$ exposure on semen quality, and the results were largely inconsistent. The aim of this study was to assess the exposure-response association between PM exposure and semen quality in Chinese men who were exposed to a wide concentration range of PM. Participants were 1759 men from Wuhan, China, who were partners of women undergoing assisted reproductive technology procedures, and had semen examined at least once between 2013 and 2015. Individual PM$_{2.5}$ and PM$_{10}$ exposures during 0–90, 0–9, 10–14 and 70–90 days before each semen examination (corresponding to the entire and three key periods of sperm development, respectively) were retrospectively estimated by inverse distance weighting interpolation. Results suggest that ambient PM exposure during sperm development adversely affects semen quality, in particular sperm concentration and count.

*Environment International*

**Maternal exposure to ozone and PM2.5 and the prevalence of orofacial clefts in four U.S. states**

While there is some evidence that maternal exposure to ambient air pollution is associated with orofacial clefts in offspring, the epidemiologic studies have been largely equivocal. This study evaluated whether maternal exposure to elevated county-level ambient fine particulate matter with aerodynamic diameter ≤2.5 μm (PM$_{2.5}$) and ozone during early gestation was associated with a higher prevalence of orofacial clefts. Birth data consisting of 4.7 million births from 2001 to 2007 were obtained from National Birth Defects Prevention Network for four states — Arizona, Florida, New York (excluding New York City), and Texas. It was found that PM$_{2.5}$ significantly increased the risk of cleft palate alone, but did not change the incidence of cleft lip with or without palate, and ozone levels did not correlate with incidence of orofacial clefts.

*Environmental Research*

**Influence of Air Pollution on Some Pregnancy Outcomes and Burden of Pneumonia on Children Under Five Years Old in Mongolia**

The aim of this study was to evaluate the association between air pollution and low birth weights (LBW), stillbirth and premature birth, and estimate burden of pneumonia on children aged less than five in Mongolia. Data on total birth cases, LBW, premature infant, stillbirth, the morbidity and mortality from respiratory diseases sustainable agriculture. The recommendation in this guideline is intended for a wide audience, including policy-makers, their expert advisers, and technical and programme staff at organizations involved in the design, implementation and scaling-up of programmes for anaemia prevention and control, and in nutrition actions for public health. This guideline is intended to contribute to discussions among stakeholders when selecting or prioritizing interventions to be undertaken in their specific context. This document presents the key recommendations and a summary of the supporting evidence. World Health Organisation (8/11/2016)

**9th Global conference on health promotion: Global leaders agree to promote health in order to achieve Sustainable Development Goals**

Leaders from governments and United Nations organizations, city chiefs, and health experts from around the world today made 2 landmark commitments to promote public health and eradicate poverty. The 9th Global conference on health promotion, co-organized by WHO and the National Health and Family Planning Commission of the People’s Republic of China in Shanghai on 21–24 November, has agreed to: The Shanghai Declaration on Health Promotion, which commits to make bold political choices for health, stressing the links between health and wellbeing and the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals, and The Shanghai Healthy Cities Mayors’ Consensus, which contains a commitment by more than 100 mayors to advance health through improved management of urban environments. WHO Director-General Dr Margaret Chan says underpinning these commitments is the need for government action that protects people from health risks, provides access to healthy choices and spreads awareness of how to be and stay healthy.

World Health Organisation (21/11/2016)

**Almost half of Mosul’s children cut off from clean water as fighting intensifies - UNICEF**

Nearly 300,000 children in Mosul – almost half of all the children in the city – and their families have reportedly been cut off from access to clean water after a major water pipeline was destroyed amid the ongoing conflict. The broken pipeline – one of three major water conduits serving civilians in eastern Mosul – is located in parts of the city still held by the so-called Islamic State (ISIL), making it impossible to repair quickly. "Children and their families are facing a horrific situation in Mosul. Not only are they
among children under five, and air quality were collected from relevant institutions in Mongolia. A case-control study was applied to determine the relationship between air pollution and stillbirth. DALY was estimated considering influence of small particles on children with pneumonia. It was found that increased air pollution causes reduction of birth weight by 138 grams, elevated levels of large particles and SO2 increase the risks of premature birth and stillbirth by two. Implementation of rational actions against air pollution would decrease years of lost lives of children under five from pneumonia influenced by air pollution.

*The Journal of The International Society for Pharmacoeconomics and Outcomes Research*

**Chemicals**

*Arsenic levels among pregnant women and newborns in Canada: Results from the Maternal-Infant Research on Environmental Chemicals (MIREC) cohort*

Arsenic is a common environmental contaminant from both naturally-occurring and anthropomorphic sources and human exposure can be detected in various tissues. Its toxicity depends on many factors including the chemical form, valence state, bioavailability, metabolism and detoxification within the human body. Of paramount concern, particularly with respect to health effects in children, is the timing of exposure as the prenatal and early life periods are more susceptible to toxic effects. Among the population of pregnant woman and newborns in the Maternal-Infant Research on Environmental Chemicals (MIREC) cohort, levels of arsenic measured in blood and urine were lower than national population figures for Canadian women of reproductive age (20–39 years). In general, higher arsenic levels were observed in women who were older, foreign-born (predominantly from Asian countries), and had higher education. Further research is needed to elucidate sources of exposure and factors that may influence arsenic exposure in pregnant women and children.

*Environmental Research*

**Reproductive Health**

*Serum Testosterone Concentrations and Urinary Bisphenol A, Benzophenone-3, Triclosan, and Paraben Levels in Male and Female Children and Adolescents: NHANES 2011–2012*

in danger of getting killed or injured in the cross fire, now potentially more than half a million people do not have safe water to drink," said Peter Hawkins, UNICEF Representative in Iraq. The Iraqi authorities are currently trucking water from some 35 kilometres away into eastern Mosul, but this supply is not enough to meet the needs of residents. Unless running water is restored in the next days, civilians will be forced to resort to unsafe water sources, exposing children to the risk of waterborne diseases such as severe diarrhoea and the threat of malnutrition. UNICEF (30/11/2016)

*West African countries ban Europe’s dirty fuel imports*

Five West African countries have agreed to ban importing Europe's dirty fuels, a move that will dramatically reduce vehicle emissions and help more than 250 million people breathe safer, cleaner air. Together, the countries of Nigeria, Benin, Togo, Ghana, and Cote d'Ivoire agreed on 1 December in Abuja, to introduce strict standards to ensure cleaner, low sulfur diesel fuels and vehicles emissions standards, effectively cutting off Europe's West Africa market to export its dirty fuels. Alongside the introduction of the new standards, the West African group has agreed to upgrade the operations of their national refineries, both public and privately owned, to produce fuels of the same standards by 2020. Erik Solheim, the head of UN Environment said: "West Africa is sending a strong message that it is no longer accepting dirty fuels from Europe. Their decision to set strict new standards for cleaner, safer fuels and advanced vehicle emission standards shows they are placing the health of their people first.

UNEP (5/12/2016)

**WHO Fact sheets**

*Malaria* Updated December 2016

*Universal health coverage (UHC)* Updated November 2016

*Maternal mortality* Updated November 2016

**In the Media**

*Old, polluting cars to be banned in Beijing during smog alerts*

Beijing will next year ban high-polluting old cars from being driven whenever air quality alerts are issued in the city or neighbouring regions, the city's
Exposure to environmental phenols (e.g., bisphenol A, benzophenone-3, and triclosan) and parabens is widespread in the population. Many of these chemicals have been shown to have anti-androgenic effects both in vitro and in vivo. The study examined the association of bisphenol A (BPA), benzophenone-3 (BP-3), triclosan (TCS), and parabens with serum total testosterone (TT) levels in child and adolescent participants (ages 6–19 years) in the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) 2011–2012. BP-3 and BPA were associated with significantly lower TT in male adolescents, and BPA was associated with significantly higher TT in female adolescents. TT was not consistently associated with TCS or total parabens in children or adolescents of either sex. To the authors’ knowledge, this is the first study to report an association of both BP-3 and BPA with serum TT in adolescents. Associations between BPA and TT differed according to sex in adolescents, with inverse associations in boys and positive associations in girls. BP-3 was associated with significantly lower TT in adolescent boys only. However, because of the limitations inherent to the cross-sectional study design, further studies are needed to confirm and elucidate on our findings. Environmental Health Perspectives

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

Intestinal polyparasitism with special emphasis to soil-transmitted helminths among residents around Gilgel Gibe Dam, Southwest Ethiopia: a community based survey

One third of the world population is estimated to be infected with intestinal parasites. The most affected people are children and the poor people living in tropics and subtropics. Polyparasitism (the concurrent infection with multiple intestinal parasite species) is found to be the norm among the same population although accurate estimate of its magnitude is unknown. The aim of this study was to determine the prevalence and distribution of intestinal polyparasitism with special emphasis on Soil-Transmitted Helminths (STH) among residents around Gilgel Gibe dam located in Jimma zone of Oromia regional state, Ethiopia. The study indicated the presence of high prevalence of parasites as well as distribution of polyparasitism in the area. Moreover, the detection of Schistosoma mansoni in the community living within close proximity of the newly constructed dam would be taken as an indication of future risk factor. Further investigation on the predictors of polyparasitism and the assessment of effects of environmental protection bureau has said. China has adopted various measures over the years to reduce the blankets of smog, which shroud many of the country's northern cities in the winter, causing hazardous traffic conditions and disrupting daily life. As of February 15, vehicles which do not meet the Government's current standard on emissions — in practice, those which are more than 10 years old — will be banned in Beijing's main urban area whenever orange or red alerts are issued in Beijing or neighbouring Hebei province and Tianjin city, the bureau said. ABC News (21/11/2016)

Artificial sports pitches ‘should be torn up’ to prevent risk of cancer

Nearly all artificial sports pitches contain high levels of substances that can cause cancer, according to research made public at the weekend. A survey of 60 rubber-based pitches found that 58 contained between 1.5 and 3.7 times more carcinogenic compounds than are permitted in consumer products. In the most extreme cases the level was six times as high. There is no legal standard for synthetic sports fields. The findings prompted cancer specialist Bob Löwenberg to call for artificial pitches to be replaced. Löwenberg, professor of hematology at Rotterdam’s Erasmus Medical Centre, said ‘There is absolutely no evidence that artificial grass pitches are bad for you, but we can’t say they are safe. I think there is every reason to be concerned about artificial grass pitches.’ Dutch News (28/11/2016)

As Soda Taxes Gain Wider Acceptance, Your Bottle May Be Next

For more than a decade, Coca-Cola, Pepsi and other beverage companies have fought mightily against efforts to tax sugary sodas, defeating more than three dozen such proposals around the country. But this month, voters in San Francisco, Oakland and Albany, California, as well as Boulder, Colorado, stunned the industry by approving ballot measures in favour of soda taxes. Cook County, Illinois, followed a few days later, bringing a soft-drink tax to Chicago and surrounding areas. They are joining Berkeley, California, which passed a tax two years ago, and Philadelphia, which passed one in June, bringing to seven the number of American communities with soda taxes. Advocates say the recent sweep represents a watershed moment in the fight for soft-drink taxes. Once viewed as measures likely to find support only in largely health-conscious cities like Berkeley and Boulder, soda taxes have emerged as a bountiful revenue source for cash-strapped...
polyparasitism on the population are needed. Finally, there is a need to undertake integrated control strategies which involve improved sanitation, health education and chemotherapy that targets the whole community instead of only certain segments of populations.

BMC Public Health

An extensive burden of giardiasis associated with intestinal schistosomiasis and anaemia in school children on the shoreline of Lake Albert, Uganda

Water-borne parasitic diseases associated with poverty still blight the lives of African school children. In Uganda, intestinal schistosomiasis is still common along the shoreline of Lake Albert, despite ongoing control, and co-infection with giardiasis and malaria is poorly described. To shed light on putative interactions between diseases, a prospective cross-sectional parasitological survey was undertaken in five primary schools. Intestinal schistosomiasis (46.5%), giardiasis (41.6%) and malaria (56.2%) were common, and a quarter of children were anaemic (<115 g/L). Up to 87.0% of children were excreting *Giardia* DNA and the prevalence of heavy infection by real-time PCR (Ct≤19) was 19.5%, being positively associated with light, moderate and heavy egg-patent schistosomiasis, as well as with anaemia. In this setting, an extensive burden of giardiasis was revealed with heavy intensity infections associated with egg-patent intestinal schistosomiasis and anaemia. To improve child health, greater attention on giardiasis is needed along with exploring joined-up actions across diseases that promote better water hygiene and sanitation measures.

*Transactions of the Royal Society of Tropical Medicine & Hygiene*

E-waste

Pilot study on the internal exposure to heavy metals of informal-level electronic waste workers in Agbogbloshie, Accra, Ghana

Informal-level electronic waste (e-waste)-processing activities are performed at hotspots in developing countries such as India, China, and Ghana. These activities increase the ambient burden of heavy metals and contribute to the toxic exposure of the general population. However, few data exist on the internal exposure of populations involved in these informal activities and in close contact with fumes from the direct combustion of electronic waste products in these countries. The aim of this study was to analyze blood, urine, and hair samples from 75 e-waste workers residing in local governments to fund early childhood education, public safety and deficit reduction. The New York Times (26/11/2016)

*Can old computers bring Palestinians and Israelis together?*

An innovative plan is taking shape to clean up the electronics recycling industry in the Hebron Hills. Yaakov Garb, an environmental scientist at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev in Sde Boker, Israel is working with local leaders, government agencies and nongovernmental organizations to remediate the toxic sites and replace burning with non-polluting recycling methods that still allow residents to earn a living. The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) plans to provide US$2.7 million to support the project, which is awaiting approval by the Palestinian Authority. And in a rare example of cooperation, the Israeli and Palestinian governments are nearing agreements to put the plan into action, says Garb. *Nature* (30/11/2016)

Toxic hell of Syria’s oil fields

The satellite images tell the story: black, T-shaped marks littered across areas of the land in eastern Syria controlled by the Islamic State (IS). On closer inspection, these are small, makeshift oil refineries – analysts have counted nearly 6,000 sites near Deir Ezzor, the main centre of Syria’s oil industry, and say there are thousands more spewing thick black smoke into the air located throughout IS territory – and in areas to the north now controlled by Kurdish forces. Pax, an interchurch organisation based in the Netherlands which focuses on conflict resolution around the world, recently published an extensive report on the environmental and health impacts of oil refining activities in both IS and Kurdish-held areas of Syria. It says people working at these oil installations – many of them children orphaned by the war – are being increasingly exposed to a range of highly toxic compounds. Oil fires release a range of harmful substances into the air including lead, sulphur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide and carbon monoxide. *Middle East Eye* (1/12/2016)

London mayor issues pollution warnings at bus stops and tube stations

Air quality alerts have been issued at bus stops, tube stations and roadsides across London because of high pollution levels, said a spokeswoman for the mayor of London, Sadiq Khan. The alerts will notify Londoners on Thursday evening during their commute home from work. People in London who suffer from lung or heart
and/or working on a large e-waste recycling site in Agbogbloshie, Accra, Ghana, and compare the results against those of 40 individuals living in a suburb of Accra without direct exposure to e-waste recycling activities. It was found that exposure to some of the heavy metals tended to be a citywide phenomenon, but populations directly exposed to e-waste recycling are experiencing higher exposure levels and have concentration levels much higher than those of the general population. Of particular concern is the high blood lead levels, of up to several hundred micrograms per liter, as many of the workers in Agbogbloshie are children or adolescents who are in developmental stages and are at a particular risk for negative health effects.

*Environmental Science and Pollution Research*

**New Publications**

**Two Decades of Enhancing Children’s Environmental Health Protection at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency**

This article provides an overview of public health efforts by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) during the past two decades to protect children’s health from environmental hazards. It highlights examples of concrete steps and accomplishments toward improving environmental protection and health outcomes achieved through public policy, rules and regulations, increased scientific understanding, and public health messaging. Additionally, examples of future challenges for better understanding and improving children’s environmental health are discussed. The evolution and expansion of children’s environmental health protection over the past two decades has been remarkable.

*Environmental Health Perspectives*

**Identifying Chemical Groups for Biomonitoring**

Regulatory agencies face daunting challenges identifying emerging chemical hazards because of the large number of chemicals in commerce and limited data on exposure and toxicology. Evaluating one chemical at a time is inefficient and can lead to replacement with uncharacterized chemicals or chemicals with structural features already linked to toxicity. The Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) has developed a process for constructing and assessing chemical groups for potential biomonitoring in California. OEHHA screens for chemicals with significant exposure problems have been warned to avoid strenuous exercise. The risks from heightened levels of air pollution enveloping the city have been exacerbated by settled and cold conditions, which have prevented pollutants from being dispersed. Individuals at risk have been warned to particularly avoid outdoor exercise, while those with asthma may need to use their inhaler more often, according to the London Air Quality Network, based at King’s College University. Anyone from the wider population who experiences sore eyes, a cough or sore throat should also consider reducing their physical activity, particularly outdoors, the pollution monitoring service said. The Guardian (2/12/2016)

**Ban on smoking in cars with children comes into force**

A new law making it illegal to smoke in a car with anyone under the age of 18 has come into force in Scotland. Legislation aimed at protecting children from second-hand smoke was unanimously passed at Holyrood in 2015. Smokers’ rights campaigners have dismissed the change as pointless "virtue signalling". Public Health Minister Aileen Campbell said the “poisonous chemicals in second-hand smoke” were particularly dangerous to children. People caught breaking the new law could face a fine of up to £1,000. But Ms Campbell said the point of the law was to change behaviour rather than punish people. Speaking on BBC Radio’s Good Morning Scotland programme, she said: “Six months from now, from the point when the legislation goes live today, we are seeking there to be no on-the-spot fines so there is a concentration on awareness raising and education across the country.” A similar law came into force in England and Wales in 2015, although there have been difficulties over enforcing the ban. BBC News (5/12/2016)

**Paris makes public transport free to battle pollution spike**

A spike in air pollution in Paris has pushed authorities on Tuesday to bar many drivers from using their cars, but they’ve also made public transport free for the day. Except the public transport isn’t all working. Authorities in Paris have decided to restrict vehicle use on Tuesday by imposing alternating traffic in the capital and its surrounding suburbs after air pollution once again reached high levels in the region. Only cars with an even number registration plate (the first set of numbers), electric or hybrid vehicles and vehicles with more than three people on board are allowed to drive on Tuesday. The rule does not impact
potential and propose possible chemical groups, based on structure and function. To support formal consideration of these groups by Biomonitoring California’s Scientific Guidance Panel, OEHHA conducts a detailed review of exposure and toxicity data and examine the likelihood of detection in biological samples. To date, 12 chemical groups have been constructed and added to the pool of chemicals that can be selected for Biomonitoring California studies, including \( p,p^-\)bisphenols, brominated and chlorinated organic compounds used as flame retardants, non-halogenated aromatic phosphates, and synthetic polycyclic musks. Evaluating chemical groups, rather than individual chemicals, is an efficient way to respond to shifts in chemical use and the emergence of new chemicals. This strategy can enable earlier identification of important chemicals for monitoring and intervention.

Environmental Health Perspectives

Multiple Threats to Child Health from Fossil Fuel Combustion: Impacts of Air Pollution and Climate Change

Approaches to estimating and addressing the risk to children from fossil fuel combustion have been fragmented, tending to focus either on the toxic air emissions or on climate change. Yet developing children, and especially poor children, now bear a disproportionate burden of disease from both environmental pollution and climate change due to fossil fuel combustion. The data summarized in this article show that by sharply reducing our dependence on fossil fuels we would achieve highly significant health and economic benefits for our children and their future. These benefits would occur immediately and also play out over the life-course and potentially across generations. Therefore, going beyond the powerful scientific and economic arguments for urgent action to reduce the burning of fossil fuels, is the strong moral imperative to protect our most vulnerable populations.

Environmental Health Perspectives

UPCOMING EVENTS

LSHTM/WHO Short Course Adolescent Health in Low and Middle Income Countries
5 - 16 June 2017. London, United Kingdom.

European Academy of Pediatrics 2017 Congress
12-15 October 2017. Ljubljana, Slovenia

vehicles used for ride sharing, emergency vehicles or vehicles used for delivering food or foreign vehicles. Authorities have also made public transport free across the city in a measure that could cost them up to €4million. The Local France (6/12/2016)

Londoners urged to leave cars at home as polluted air drifts in from Europe

Motorists in London were to leave their cars at home on Monday as air pollution drifted in from Europe. Westminster and the City were among the worst-affected areas, along with other busy roads, while the rest of London was issued with “moderate” warnings. Experts at King’s College’s pollution monitoring centre, London Air, said levels of toxic fumes were thought to be particularly bad in the capital as polluted air flows across the channel from France. Green Party Assembly Member Caroline Russell said car-free days were no replacement for decisive action on the capital’s traffic problem. “It’s great the Mayor has issued air pollution warnings but these don’t go far enough, you need to tackle pollution at its source not just tell people that it’s happening,” she told The Independent. “I have supported the Mayor’s idea for Paris-style ‘car free’ days but car free days are no substitute for decisive action on air pollution and traffic reduction.” The Independent (6/12/2016)

How plastics cause autism, diabetes, cancer, birth defects

Recent studies have associated the rise in autism, diabetes, cancer and birth defects to increase in the use of plastics in making everyday containers, toys and baby teethers or pacifiers. However, no studies have ever tested plastic teethers for the presence of toxins commonly found in plastic that have been linked to increased risk of cancer, heart disease and obesity. Now a study by the American Chemical Society warns that 100 percent of pacifiers tested contained Bisphenol A (BPA), Bisphenol S (BPS) or Bisphenol F (BPF) – so-called endocrine-disrupting chemicals. Most also contained parabens, and antimicrobials such as triclosan and triclocarban. The Guardian Nigeria (13/12/2016)
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