MENTAL HEALTH ATLAS 2014

Authors: World Health Organization

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WHO’s Mental Health Atlas provides a comprehensive overview of mental health policies, plans and services worldwide. The fourth edition, with data from 172 countries shows dramatic differences in resources for mental health between high- and low- and middle-income countries.

This new edition of Mental Health Atlas, carried out in 2014, assumes new importance as a repository of mental health information in WHO Member States because it is providing much of the baseline data against which progress towards the objectives and targets of the Comprehensive Mental Health Action Plan 2013-2020 is to be measured.

WHO’s Mental Health Atlas series has established itself as the most comprehensive and widely used source of information on the global mental health situation.

Link to WHO to download the document

CHILDREN’S ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH NEWS

Press Releases

**Global health workforce, finances remain low for mental health**
Worldwide, nearly 1 in 10 people have a mental health disorder, but only 1% of the global health workforce is working in mental health. Huge inequalities in access to mental health services exist depending on where people live. WHO (14/7/15)

**UNEP Receives 2015 Africa Peace Award for Environmental and Development Work**
The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) received the Africa Peace Award, conferred by the United Religions Initiative-Africa to distinguished individuals or organizations for efforts towards sustainable peace, environmental protection, development, democracy and good leadership on the continent. UNEP (14/7/15)

**WHO lays out plans for financing new global health goal: to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages**
WHO urges countries to move towards universal health coverage and to scale up international investment in catalytic development funding. WHO (10/7/15)

**Millions of children in Syria at high risk of disease amid water scarcity and summer heat**
Dwindling supplies of safe drinking water during Syria’s scorching summer months are exposing
Air Pollution

**Blood Pressure and Same-Day Exposure to Air Pollution at School: Associations with Nano-Sized to Coarse PM in Children**

Ultraparticle particles (UFP) may contribute to the cardiovascular effects of particulate air pollution, partly because of their relatively efficient alveolar deposition. In this study, the authors assessed associations between blood pressure and short-term exposure to air pollution in a population of schoolchildren. The conclusion was that children attending school on days with higher UFP concentrations (diameter < 100 nm) had higher systolic blood pressure. The association was dependent on UFP size, and there was no association with the PM2.5 mass concentration. *Environmental Health Perspectives*

Chemicals

**Bisphenol S and F: A Systematic Review and Comparison of the Hormonal Activity of Bisphenol A Substitutes**

Increasing concern over bisphenol A (BPA) as an endocrine-disrupting chemical and its possible effects on human health have prompted the removal of BPA from consumer products, often labeled “BPA-free.” Some of the chemical replacements, however, are also bisphenols and may have similar physiological effects in organisms. Bisphenol S (BPS) and bisphenol F (BPF) are two such BPA substitutes. The authors conducted a systematic review based on the Office of Health Assessment and Translation (OHAT) protocol. This review was carried out to evaluate the physiological effects and endocrine activities of the BPA substitutes BPS and BPF. The authors also compared the hormonal potency of BPS and BPF to that of BPA before concluding that, based on the current literature, BPS and BPF are as hormonally active as BPA, and they have endocrine-disrupting effects. *Environmental Health Perspectives*
Reproductive Health
Maternal Blood Manganese and Early Neurodevelopment: The Mothers and Children’s Environmental Health (MOCEH) Study
Manganese is an essential trace element and common component of water, soil, and air. Prenatal manganese exposure may affect fetal and infantile neurodevelopment, but reports on in utero manganese exposure and infant neurodevelopment are rare. This study was conducted to investigate a relationship between maternal blood manganese level and neurodevelopment of infants at 6 months of age. The authors concluded that although no cut-off point has been established to define manganese toxicity, both high and low blood manganese levels may be associated with neurobehavioral function in infants. 

Environmental Health Perspectives

Association between maternal age at childbirth and child and adult outcomes in the offspring: a prospective study in five low-income and middle-income countries (COHORTS collaboration)
Both young and advanced maternal age is associated with adverse birth and child outcomes. Few studies have examined these associations in low-income and middle-income countries (LMICs) and none have studied adult outcomes in the offspring. The authors aimed to examine both child and adult outcomes in five LMICs. They concluded that children of young mothers in LMICs are disadvantaged at birth and in childhood nutrition and schooling. Efforts to prevent early childbearing should be strengthened. After adjustment for confounders, children of older mothers have advantages in nutritional status and schooling. Extremes of maternal age could be associated with disturbed offspring glucose metabolism.

The Lancet Global Health

Water And Sanitation
Risk of Adverse Pregnancy Outcomes among Women Practicing Poor Sanitation in Rural India: UMass Amherst scientist to study how estrogen-mimicking chemicals in the womb can increase breast cancer risk
Much attention has been paid to genetics in breast cancer as disease rates rise, but most women have no family history of the disease, suggesting that there is an environmental risk we don’t yet understand. News-Medical.net (14/7/15)

Pesticide content found in breast milk in Sirsa
The presence of such residues in mother's milk in Sirsa was pegged at 0.12 milligrams per kg, a figure about hundred times the estimates of the World Health Organization. India Today (13/7/15)

Improving Toxicity Testing For Better Decision-Making
Let’s help Congress, and the public, understand and accept the practice and promise of modern chemical testing to improve TSCA now and to improve life for the future. Chemical and Engineering News (13/7/15)

Welcome to 2050: Here's what the planet has in store
Welcome to 2050. The days are hotter, the sun is harsher and sea levels are up. A series of extreme storms have hit NSW that have been directly linked to the warm ocean temperatures associated with global warming. Melbourne Age, Australia (13/7/15)

Lyme disease is spreading faster than ever and humans are partly to blame
Two factors in particular seem to be making it easier for the tick that carries Lyme: One is an explosion in the populations of the creatures on whose blood it likes to feed. The other is global warming. Both, of course, are humanity’s fault. Quartz (9/7/15)

'Safer' Plastics Linked to Health Problems in Kids
Two chemicals commonly used in products such as plastic wrap are linked to an increased risk of high blood pressure and other health problems in children and teens, according to new research.
A Population-Based Prospective Cohort Study

The importance of maternal sanitation behaviour during pregnancy for birth outcomes remains unclear. Poor sanitation practices can promote infection and induce stress during pregnancy and may contribute to adverse pregnancy outcomes (APOs). The authors aimed to assess whether poor sanitation practices were associated with increased risk of APOs such as preterm birth and low birth weight in a population-based study in rural India. They conclude that, to their knowledge, this study provides the first evidence, that poor sanitation is associated with a higher risk of APOs. The results support the need to assess the mechanisms, both biological and behavioural, by which limited access to improved sanitation leads to APOs.

PLoS Medicine

Global Change

Increased food energy supply as a major driver of the obesity epidemic: a global analysis

The authors investigated associations between changes in national food energy supply and in average population body weight. In 56 countries, an increase in food energy supply was associated with an increase in average body weight. In 45 countries, the increase in food energy supply was higher than the model-predicted increase in energy intake. The association between change in food energy supply and change in body weight was statistically significant overall and for high-income countries (P < 0.001). They concluded that increases in food energy supply are sufficient to explain increases in average population body weight, especially in high-income countries. Policy efforts are needed to improve the healthiness of food systems and environments to reduce global obesity.

Bulletin of the World Health Organization

Recycling Rare Earths From E-Waste More Sustainably

New membrane solvent extraction system recovers lanthanides from scrap magnets in one step. Chemical and Engineering News (8/7/15)

Is your child coloring with asbestos?

Some children’s crayons and play crime lab kits contain cancer-causing asbestos fibers. Environmental Heath News (8/7/15)

UN: Goals helped lift 1 billion people from extreme poverty

A 15-year effort to implement eight goals adopted by world leaders at the start of the new millennium has helped lift more than one billion people out of extreme poverty, enabled more girls to go to school than ever before, and brought unprecedented results in fighting diseases such as HIV/AIDS, the U.N. chief said. Associated Press (7/7/15)

WHO urges governments to raise tobacco taxes to beat smoking

Too few governments make full use of tobacco taxes to dissuade people from smoking or help them to cut down and quit, the World Health Organization said, recommending that at least 75 percent of the price of a pack of cigarettes should be tax. Reuters (7/7/15)

Child Labor Rises Sharply in Syria, Upended by War and Mayhem

Before Syria was plunged into war more than four years ago, nearly all children went to school. Now, according to a new report on child labor, many of them — some as young as 6 — are working to supplement family incomes. New York Times (1/7/15)
E Waste

Step - solving the e-waste problem (taken directly from the Step website)

E-waste is an urgent global issue. Everyone needs to work together to manage the situation. As the problem of Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) increases exponentially, our world needs to take action to develop answers that address, tackle and solve critical issues and prevent the generation of more harmful e-waste.

- Step sets about establishing the facts and finding solutions our global environment urgently needs
- Step oversees numerous training programmes and workshops and produces research reports and policy briefs
- Step advises governments in the development of policies, legislation and management systems

Link to Step website for more information

UPCOMING EVENTS

Environment, Global Warming and Climate Change

16th International Conference of the Pacific Basin Consortium for Environment and Health,
10-13 August 2015. City of Depok, West Java.

Canadian Conference on Global Health 2015
5-7 November 2015. Montreal, Quebec.

Environmental Impact 2016
8 -10 June 2016. Valencia, Spain.

New Publications and Recent Events

Progress on Sanitation and Drinking Water: 2015 Update and MDG Assessment - Authors: WHO/UNICEF

Looking back on 25 years of water, sanitation and hygiene monitoring, this report provides a comprehensive assessment of progress since 1990. The Millennium Development Goal target for drinking water was achieved in 2010, but, in 2015, 663 million people still lack improved drinking water sources. The world has missed the sanitation target by almost 700 million people, with 2.4 billion still lacking improved sanitation facilities and 946 million practicing open defecation.

Link to UNICEF to download the publication
Link to WHO for additional information

Updated Fact Sheets

- Tobacco (Updated 6 July 2015)
  Key facts
  - Tobacco kills up to half of its users.
  - Tobacco kills around 6 million people each year. More than 5 million of those deaths are the result of direct tobacco use while more than 600 000 are the result of non-smokers being exposed to second-hand smoke.
  - Nearly 80% of the world's 1 billion smokers live in low- and middle-income countries.

Link to WHO and updated fact sheet

- Drinking-water (Updated 30 June 2015)

Link to WHO and updated fact sheet

- Sanitation (Updated 30 June 2015)

Link to WHO and updated fact sheet

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Have news for us?
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