Network Meeting

Due to travel restrictions introduced as a result of COVID-19, the 3rd meeting of the Network which had been planned for June 2020 had to be postponed. As an interim measure, a series of online training events and presentations about Network activities is being planned for the second half of 2020. The face-to-face meeting will be rearranged when travel restrictions allow.

Systematic Review Framework

A meeting of authors of the WHO Framework on Systematic Review in Chemical Risk Assessment was convened 28-30 October 2019. The meeting was hosted by the WHO Collaborating Centre for Environmental Health Sciences at the NIEHS at their premises in Research Triangle Park, NC, USA. The authors discussed the draft chapters of the proposed framework publication which had been prepared by different groups of authors working via teleconference.

The aim of this publication is to provide a high-level overview of the principles and processes involved in applying systematic review to a chemical risk assessment. The revised text of the publication is currently undergoing invited peer review, and it is anticipated that the framework will be published and shared with the Network in Summer 2020.

Latest Publications

Risk of immunotoxicity associated with exposure to nanomaterials

This Environmental Health Criteria (EHC) series publication presents an overview of the current knowledge and evidence on principles and basic mechanisms of immunotoxicity caused by engineered nanomaterials (ENMs). Guidance is provided on principles and methods for hazard and risk assessment of different ENMs and groups of ENMs on the immunological system in the body. The key cell types and elements and the functioning of the human immunological system are described, and information...
provided on the effects of various ENMs on these cells and elements of the immune system.

Environmental Health Criteria Series, No. 244; 2020, 380 pages


WHO Fact Sheet on Lead Poisoning
The WHO fact sheet on lead poisoning and health has been updated. Lead is a toxic metal which has caused extensive environmental contamination and health problems through widespread use in many parts of the world. Lead is a cumulative toxicant that affects multiple body systems, and children are particularly vulnerable to the neurotoxic effects of lead, even at relatively low levels of exposure. Lead has been identified by WHO as one of the 10 chemicals of major public health concern (http://www.who.int/ipcs/assessment/public_health/lead/en/).

The WHO fact sheet on lead poisoning and health has been revised, including the latest estimates on the burden of disease from lead exposure, which indicate an increase in the number of deaths and years of healthy life lost compared to previous estimates. http://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/lead-poisoning-and-health

Latest Publications

IARC Monograph Volume 121 – Styrene, Styrene-7,8-oxide and Quinolene
IARC Monograph Volume 122 – Isobutyl Nitrite, β-Picoline and Some Acrylates
IARC Monograph Volume 123 – Some Nitrobenzenes and Other Industrial Chemicals

All publications from the IARC Monographs Programme can be accessed at http://monographs.iarc.fr

Mercury in Skin Lightening Products
Mercury is toxic to human health, posing a particular threat to the development of the child in utero and early in life. Mercury exists in various forms, which all have different toxic effects. An information document describing the use and potential health risks of mercury in skin lightening products and other cosmetics was updated and published in 6 languages.


Latest IARC Monographs

The IARC Monographs identify environmental factors that can increase the risk of cancer. The Monographs evaluating the carcinogenicity of three groups of chemicals have been published. In IARC Monograph Volume 121, Styrene and Styrene-7,8-oxide were evaluated as “possibly carcinogenic to humans” (Group 2A) and Quinolene was evaluated as “possibly carcinogenic to humans” (Group 2B). In IARC Monograph Volume 122, Isobutyl Nitrite and four high production volume acrylates were evaluated as “possibly carcinogenic to humans” (Group 2B), while β-Picoline was evaluated as “not classifiable as to its carcinogenicity to humans” (Group 3). In IARC Monograph Volume 123 four nitrobenzene compounds and four other industrial chemicals were all evaluated as “possibly carcinogenic to humans” (Group 2B).
Community of Trainers

As part of the Network Strategy for Capacity Building, a Community of Trainers in the Network has been launched. The purpose of the Community of Trainers is to provide a forum to share information between institutions that deliver training and expand training capacity amongst Network institutions. A group of Network institutions involved with training met in November 2019 at the Institute of Environmental Medicine at the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm, Sweden. The aim of the meeting was to review progress in the development of the Community of Trainers and to plan activities for 2020. In addition to this meeting, webinars have been hosted in October, November and December 2019 and in April and May 2020 to present training courses and resources which are available from different institutions. The Community of Trainers will continue through 2020 to coordinate the sharing of information on training courses and resources, including a platform for the sharing of materials.