Network Meeting Report 2017

The report of the 2017 WHO Chemical Risk Assessment Network Face-to-Face Meeting is now available. The report summarizes the meeting proceedings and highlights the activities and discussions of meeting participants.


WHO Chemicals Road Map

The WHO Road map to enhance health sector engagement in the strategic approach to international chemicals management towards the 2020 goal and beyond (Chemicals road map) was approved by the World Health Assembly in May 2017. The road map identifies actions to engage the health sector in the strategic approach to international chemicals management (SAICM) taking into account the need for multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder cooperation. These actions are organized in four areas: risk reduction; knowledge and evidence; institutional capacity; and leadership and coordination. Individual member states and other stakeholders can use the road map to identify areas of primary focus for engagement and additional actions. More information about the road map and the final version in all 6 UN languages can be found at: [http://www.who.int/ipcs/saicm/roadmap/en/](http://www.who.int/ipcs/saicm/roadmap/en/)

Network Capacity Building Strategy

The WHO Chemical Risk Assessment Network recently published the Strategic Plan for Enhancing Chemical Risk Assessment Capacity in Network Participants—Strategic Plan: 2018-2020. The Strategic Plan is aimed at increasing chemical risk assessment capacity among Network Participants and thereby strengthen environmental health decision-making. It operationalizes capacity building related actions of the chemicals road map, specifically actions to strengthen national institutional capacities to address health threats from chemicals and fill gaps in knowledge and methodologies in risk assessment.

[www.who.int/ipcs/network/Network_Capacity_Building_Strategy.pdf](http://www.who.int/ipcs/network/Network_Capacity_Building_Strategy.pdf)

Risk Assessment Tools Available

The WHO Human Health Risk Assessment Toolkit: Chemical Hazards is now available in French and Spanish (though the external tools and resources referenced in the publication are still mostly only available in English). The Toolkit provides road maps to guide how to perform a chemical...
risk assessment, identifies the information required to complete an assessment and provides key references and electronic links to international resources to obtain information and methods needed for an assessment. All versions of the Toolkit can be found at: http://www.who.int/ipcs/methods/harmonization/areas/ra_toolkit/en/.

Latest Publications

IARC Monograph Volume 120 – Carcinogenicity of Benzene
The latest evaluation of the carcinogenicity of benzene will be published in the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) Monograph Volume 120. The IARC Monographs identify environmental factors that can increase the risk of cancer. The latest evaluation of benzene (classified as carcinogenic to humans [IARC Group 1] since 1979) was undertaken to review the latest epidemiological and mechanistic evidence and to characterise quantitative relationships for cancer risk and for biological endpoints related to the cancer mechanisms associated with exposure to benzene. A summary of the evaluations has been published in an article in The Lancet Oncology, and the full Monograph will be published later by IARC at http://monographs.iarc.fr.

WHO Fact Sheet on Arsenic
The WHO fact sheet on arsenic has been updated. Arsenic is a toxic metal (especially in inorganic forms) which causes a range of adverse health effects. People are exposed to elevated levels of inorganic arsenic in many countries, through contaminated water which is used for drinking, food preparation and irrigation of food crops. Arsenic has also been identified by WHO as one of 10 chemicals of major public health concern (http://www.who.int/ipcs/assessment/public_health/chemicals_phc/en/). The WHO fact sheet on arsenic has recently been revised to describe the latest conclusions on the health effects of long-term exposure to inorganic arsenic. http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs372/en/

Phasing Out Mercury-Containing Devices in Health Care
Mercury exposure from spills or broken equipment such as thermometers or blood pressure devices poses a health threat in health care settings. Governments made a commitment to reduce risks to human health from releases of mercury when they signed the Minamata Convention on Mercury in 2013. The Convention sets a phase-out date of 2020 for these mercury-containing devices. The WHO provides guidance in the report, Developing national strategies for phasing out mercury-containing thermometers and sphygmomanometers in health care, including in the context of the Minamata Convention on Mercury. The step-by-step guidance discusses health system-wide strategies in four parts: developing a stakeholder engagement strategy; situation assessment and inventory; strategy development and implementation; and monitoring and reporting. This publication recently became available in French and Spanish.

http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/247195/1/9789241510271-eng.pdf

WHO publications on mercury can be found at: www.who.int/ipcs/assessment/public_health/mercury

Recycling Used Lead-Acid Batteries: Health Considerations
A new document – Recycling Used Lead-acid Batteries: Health Considerations – explains how recycling used lead-acid batteries can cause significant environmental contamination and human exposure to lead. The document provides information about how lead is released during recycling, how people are exposed, and the associated burden of disease. It further describes how lead exposure can be assessed and how lead emissions and exposures can be reduced. The goal of the publication is to inform health sector workers and policy makers on the issues and health risks of lead exposure from battery recycling to promote better practices to protect human health. A short summary document in 4 languages has has also been published.

The document is available in English, Spanish and French at: http://www.who.int/ipcs/publications/ulab/en/