



# Collaborative on Health and the Environment's Fertility/Reproductive Health Working Group



E-Bulletin March 31, 2011

This e-bulletin lists news and journal articles, organizational reports, calls for proposals, upcoming events and other items related to fertility, reproductive health and the environment. E-bulletins are archived and searchable on our website:

<http://www.healthandenvironment.org/fertility>

## CHE-Fertility Highlights

### New CHE-Fertility Partners

*CHE-Fertility welcomes the following new members to the group:*

- Lisa Drouillard, MBA, Maryland
- Kelly Grant, PhD, Washington, DC
- Jeannette Watts, MPH, Washington
- Stephanie Theirl, Wisconsin
- Marjorie Scheikl, MSN, Virginia
- Deborah Watkins, MPH, Massachusetts
- Waheeda Tehseen, PhD, Virginia

### [American Fertility Association Blog: BPA & IVF](#)

*March 2, 2011*

BPA disrupts the endocrine system, and may have an effect on fertility. Over the last decade, animal studies have found that BPA has a negative effect on the quality of eggs produced. Now, two studies published in 2010 found negative effects on human fertility associated with BPA.

### [CHE-Fertility Call: BPA, IVF and Implications for Practice- mp3 now available](#)

*March 17, 2011*

Dr. Victor Fujimoto from UCSF and Dr. Michael S. Bloom from SUNY-Albany presented the results of their recent study on the effects of bisphenol A (BPA) on *in vitro* fertilization (IVF). Dr. Valerie Baker from Stanford University led a discussion on the translation of research into practice, describing how research findings such as this can be used when counseling infertility patients. Visit the [call page](#) to listen to the mp3 recording.

### [Submit your Visionary Ideas](#)

*Deadline for comment: April 30, 2011*

The National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) is seeking input from the public as well as researchers for its new strategic plan. To get involved, submit an idea for research or nominate a workshop participant.

### [Call for Abstracts: American Society of Reproductive Medicine](#)

*Deadline for Submission: May 2, 2011*

The ASRM is a non-profit organization whose members must demonstrate the high ethical principles of the medical profession, and evince an interest in infertility, reproductive medicine and biology. ASRM's Environmental Health Special Interest Group is soliciting abstracts on environmental contaminants and their impact on reproduction. The 67th Annual Meeting will take place in Orlando, Florida on October 15-19, 2011.

**[Call for Abstracts: Association of Reproductive Health Professionals](#)**

*Deadline for Submission: May 15, 2011*

Abstract submissions are invited for Reproductive Health 2011, the annual clinical and scientific meeting of the Association of Reproductive Health Professionals (ARHP). This year's conference will include a module on Environmental Health. The conference will take place in Las Vegas, Nevada on September 15-17, 2011.

## New Science

*A sampling of new research articles that are available on-line are gleaned from [Environmental Health News](#), and presented here.*

**[Maternal Ghrelin Deficiency Compromises Reproduction in Female Progeny](#)**

*March 28, 2011*

Ghrelin has a well-known role in the regulation of appetite, satiety, energy metabolism, and reproduction; however ghrelin has not been implicated in reproductive tract development. This study demonstrated altered uterine development in mice following *in utero* exposure to ghrelin deficiency. *Endocrinology*.

**[Maternal Exposure to Ambient Benzene Linked to Spina Bifida in Infants](#)**

*March 27, 2011*

Occupational exposure to hazardous air pollutants such as benzene has been linked in some studies to neural tube defects (NTDs), yet to date no one had studied whether exposure to ambient levels of benzene may similarly lead to adverse outcomes. A new study now reveals a positive association between exposure to ambient benzene in outdoor air and increased prevalence of spina bifida. *Environmental Health Perspectives*.

**[Residential Exposure to Outdoor Air Pollution during Pregnancy and Anthropometric Measures at Birth in a Multicenter Cohort in Spain](#)**

*March 27, 2011*

A growing body of research suggests that prenatal exposure to air pollution may be harmful to fetal development. Researchers assessed the association between exposure to air pollution during pregnancy and anthropometric measures at birth in four areas within the Spanish INMA mother and child cohort study. Exposure to ambient nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) and benzene was estimated for each woman's residence. Outcomes included birth weight, length, and head circumference. *Environmental Health Perspectives*.

**[Most plastics leach hormone-like chemicals.](#)**

*March 03, 2011*

Most plastic products, including those labeled 'BPA-free', can release chemicals that act like the sex hormone estrogen. In some cases, BPA-free products released chemicals having more estrogenic activity than BPA-containing products. *Environmental Health Perspectives*.

## Newsire and Useful Resources

*Below you will find recent news, science, and other resources, gleaned from the [CHE Fertility Online Library](#), hosted by [Environmental Health News](#), and the [CHE daily news feed](#).*

### **[Packaged food raises levels of bisphenol A](#)**

*March 31, 2011*

Forgoing packaged foods such as canned soups and vegetables could dramatically lower levels of a hormone-disrupting chemical, bisphenol A, that has been linked to myriad health problems, including birth defects, autism and reproductive issues, according to a study released today. San Francisco Chronicle.

### **[Resource: My Hopeful Journey website](#)**

*March 30, 2011*

A free on-line calendar tracking system, My Hopeful Journey offers women experiencing challenges to fertility a unique way to organize treatments, appointments, medications and physical symptoms. The website will include information on strategies to reduce exposures to chemicals that may impact fertility.

### **[Superfund improves infant health](#)**

*March 27, 2011*

University scientists report the first evidence that cleanups of Superfund sites protect babies in the womb. In a March working paper issued by the National Bureau of Economic Research, researchers compare the health of more than 620,000 infants born to families near these hazardous sites. Birth defects, which typically occur early in pregnancy, fell 20 to 25 percent in the five years after cleanups compared with the five years before cleanups started, especially among families living within 2,000 meters of Superfund sites.

### **[Radioactive substances and their impact on health](#)**

*March 25, 2011*

Exposure to large amounts of radioactivity can cause nausea, vomiting, hair loss, diarrhea, hemorrhage, destruction of the intestinal lining, central nervous system damage, and death. It also causes DNA damage and raises the risk of cancer, particularly in young children and fetuses. Reuters.

### **[Are Japanese pregnant women in danger?](#)**

*March 24, 2011*

Studies of radiation exposure during pregnancy are mainly based on a one-time exposure. The problem with Japan is that there is the potential for continuous low-dose exposure for a long period of time. Pregnant women should adhere to the guidelines that experts have put into place, advising that people stay at least 50 miles away from the nuclear plant disaster.

### **[Chemicals in plastics linked to early onset menopause](#)**

*March 23, 2011*

Man-made chemicals found in a variety of everyday products from food containers to clothes may be causing early menopause in women, say scientists. Researchers from West Virginia University looked at levels of PFCs in blood samples from 26,000 U.S. women, and found levels were highest in those over 42 who had gone through menopause. London Daily Telegraph.

### **[C8 exposure linked to onset of menopause](#)**

*March 23, 2011*

Women exposed to higher levels of the toxic chemical C8 were more likely to have experienced menopause, according to a new West Virginia University study that offers some of the strongest evidence to date that such chemicals disrupt the human body's natural hormone system. Charleston Gazette, West Virginia.

### **[Lead, other chemicals taint some urban gardens](#)**

*March 23, 2011*

With remnants of once-legal lead paint, leaded gasoline and other pollutants from the nation's industrial past tainting land in U.S. cities, soil researchers warn that the growing

number of urban farmers and community gardeners need to test their dirt and take steps to make sure it's safe. Associated Press.

### [Herbicide lawsuit has survived 7 judges](#)

*March 21, 2011*

Seven years after water districts filed suit against the makers of atrazine, the class-action lawsuit is still mired in legal machinations in Madison County. Attorney Steve Tillery has argued that the water districts only want Syngenta to help with the costs of filtration. Belleville News-Democrat, Illinois.

### [Fertility drugs may increase risk of degenerative brain disorders](#)

*March 24, 2011*

Fertility drugs used by thousands of women may increase the risk of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, a rare and universally fatal brain disorder, a Canadian-led international research team is reporting. Postmedia News.

### [Yale study links obesity and early uterine cancer](#)

*March 17, 2011*

Researchers have long known that obesity in women increases the risk of uterine cancer, but now researchers at Yale have established a link between early weight gain and cancer. Hartford Courant, Connecticut.

### [Radiation and pregnancy](#)

*March 13, 2011*

Concerns are raised that the Japanese government may not be doing enough to warn pregnant women to leave areas at risk of radiation exposure.

### [Passive smoking increases stillbirth risk](#)

*March 12, 2011*

Fathers-to-be should stop smoking to protect their unborn child from the risk of stillbirth or birth defects, scientists say. University of Nottingham researchers found that pregnant women exposed to smoke at work or home increased their risk of stillbirth by 23% and of having a baby with defects by 13%. BBC.

### [Rural women protest use of toxic agrochemicals](#)

*March 04, 2011*

Thousands of women farmers in Brazil demonstrated this week against the use of toxic weedkillers and pesticides on crops and in favour of agricultural techniques that protect their families' health. Inter Press Service.

### [Scientists want to help regulators decide safety of chemicals](#)

*March 04, 2011*

Groups representing 40,000 researchers and clinicians are urging federal agencies responsible for the safety of chemicals to examine the subtle impact a chemical might have on the human body rather than simply ask whether it is toxic, particularly for chemicals that disrupt the endocrine system. Washington Post.

### [Low sperm counts linked to fetal exposures](#)

*March 04, 2011*

Scientists report a correlation between a man's ability to father children and the distance between his genitals and anus a measurement also associated with elevated concentrations of chemicals known as phthalates in urine collected from the boys' mothers during prenatal visits. Science News.

### [Infants irradiated](#)

*February 28, 2011*

X-rays and unshielded infants raise alarms. The errors at Downstate raise questions about the competence, training and oversight of technologists who operate radiological equipment that is becoming increasingly complex and powerful. New York Times.

## Announcements & Grant Opportunities

A daily news feed with these announcements is now available on CHE's website:  
<http://www.healthandenvironment.org/news/announce>.

### **[Request for Applications: Dietary Influence on the Human Health Effects of Environmental Exposures \(R21\)](#)**

*Application Receipt Date(s): April 21, 2011*

National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (RFA-ES-11-002)

The goal of this research program is to produce new research findings that will expand our understanding of how environmental toxicants and diet/nutrition interact to influence human health and enable the development of effective primary prevention and intervention strategies to mitigate environmentally-induced diseases.

### **[Request for Proposals: Developing High-throughput Assays for Predictive Modeling of Reproductive and Developmental Toxicity Modulated through the Endocrine System or Pertinent Pathways in Humans and Species Relevant to Ecological Risk Assessment](#)**

*Deadline: Thursday May 5, 2011*

Sponsor: US Environmental Protection Agency EPA is seeking applications for research in development of high-throughput assays for use in analyzing chemicals or mixtures of chemicals to explain how exposure can be causally related to adverse, apical outcomes related to development and reproduction. These applications can address toxicity modulated by chemical effects on the endocrine system or via a variety of other pathways. Assay systems of interest are those relevant to humans and other species relevant to human health and/or ecological risk assessment. Potential funding per award is up to a total of \$1.2 million, including direct and indirect costs, with a maximum duration of three years.

## Calendar of Events & Submission Deadlines

***Online Calendar.*** These and more upcoming events and abstract deadlines are listed in the [CHE-Fertility searchable calendar](#).

### **[CHE Café Call: Carl Cranor - "Legally Poisoned: How the Law Puts Us at Risk from Toxicants"](#)**

*April 20, 2011*

10:00 a.m. Pacific / 1:00 p.m. Eastern

Sponsor: Collaborative on Health and the Environment

Author Carl Cranor, PhD, will discuss his new book "Legally Poisoned: How the Law Puts Us at Risk from Toxicants." Based on his broad understanding about the harm toxic chemicals can cause to human and ecosystem health, Dr. Cranor describes the current legal structures designed to prevent harm, why they are ineffective and inadequate to protect public health, and suggests alternative.

### **[Conference: 6th Copenhagen Workshop on Endocrine Disrupters](#)**

*April 26-29, 2011*

Copenhagen, Denmark

The field of endocrine disrupting chemicals (EDC) is continuously expanding as scientific evidence of new health effects of xenobiotics appears. EDCs effect the thyroid gland, pancreas, the nervous system, breast tissue, the prostate and the reproductive organs may be sensitive to EDC exposure. Additionally, the foetal basis of adult disease turns the focus towards the impact of EDCs exposure during vulnerable stages of development. The overall aim of the workshop is to improve our understanding of the role of EDCs for human health, and to share results, information, doubts and ideas.

**[ENDO 2011: 93rd Annual Meeting & Expo](#)**

*June 4-7, 2011*

*Boston, Massachusetts*

Sponsor: The Endocrine Society

Whether you are a researcher or a practitioner, in-training or established, ENDO 2011 has offerings for everyone. ENDO 2011 is the ideal venue to learn and present the best and latest endocrine science, exchange ideas, and network with more than 7,000 endocrine researchers and practitioners. Deadline for early registration discount is April 5, 2011.

**[Conference: 75th Annual Educational Conference & Exhibition](#)**

*June 15-18, 2011*

Sponsor: National Environmental Health Association

The conference is designed to educate and inform people who have an interest or career in environmental health and protection, as well as to build a professional network of environmental health colleagues, exchange information, and discover new and practical solutions to environmental health issues.

**[Conference/Seminar: 2011 National Healthy Homes Conference](#)**

*June 20-23, 2011*

Denver, Colorado

Sponsor: US Department of Housing and Urban Development

This year's theme, "Leading the Nation to Healthy Homes, Families, and Communities," reflects the growing demand for building and sustaining housing and communities that are healthy, safe and green for America's families. The conference will offer over 100 educational sessions covering eight topic areas.

**[Conference: 6th International Conference on the Impact of Environmental Factors on Health](#)**

*July 25-27, 2011*

Riga, Latvia

Sponsor: Wessex Institute of Technology and the Journal of Safety and Security Engineering. Health problems related to the environment have become a major source of concern all over the world. The health of the population depends upon good quality environmental factors including air, water, soil, food and many others. The interaction between environmental risk and health is often complex and can involve a variety of social, occupational and lifestyle factors. This emphasises the importance of considering an interdisciplinary approach.

**[Conference: Reproductive Health 2011](#)**

*September 15-17, 2011*

Las Vegas, Nevada

Sponsor: Association of Reproductive Health Professionals

This clinical conference combines the latest research science with interactive, hands-on training and offers take home points for immediate practice improvement. This year's conference includes a module on environmental health. The program content is developed by leading experts in the field with a focus on evidence-based education that can be directly applied to practice change.

**[Conference: American Society of Reproductive Medicine](#)**

*October 15-19, 2011*

Orlando, Florida

Sponsor: American Society of Reproductive Medicine

The 67th Annual Meeting of ASRM will explore the theme of Realizing Scientific Dreams. ASRM is a non-profit organization whose members demonstrate the high ethical principles of the medical profession, and evince an interest in infertility, reproductive medicine and biology.

**[Conference: World Congress on Controversies in Obstetrics, Gynecology & Infertility \(COGI\)](#)**

*November 17-20, 2011*

Paris, France

The groundbreaking series of COGI Congresses provide a unique platform to discuss controversial issues in all fields of Obstetrics, Gynecology and Infertility. The ability to discuss only controversial topics with emphasis on clinical solutions in cases where no agreed-upon answers or consensus exist, provides clinicians with an insight and a take-home message that ameliorates treatment in the most difficult situations.

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The Collaborative on Health and the Environment offers this information as a service but does not endorse any of the events, articles or announcements.

Please email Karin Russ, CHE's Fertility/Reproductive Health Working Group Coordinator, at [karin@healthandenvironment.org](mailto:karin@healthandenvironment.org) with any questions, comments, or suggestions.

If you would like to join the Collaborative on Health and the Environment (CHE) and the Fertility/Reproductive Health Working Group, please complete the application on the CHE website: <http://www.healthandenvironment.org/application>. Joining CHE means receiving up to four email messages a month from the CHE National listserv. CHE costs nothing to join and the benefit is shared information and opportunities for further engagement, if you choose. Be sure to mark that you want to join the CHE Fertility/Reproductive Health Working Group at the bottom of the application.

Karin Russ

**Collaborative on Health and the Environment**

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