



Learning and Developmental Disabilities Initiative

[of the Collaborative on Health and the Environment](#)



Biweekly Bulletin November 18, 2009

This bulletin lists upcoming events plus recent announcements, news and journal articles, calls for proposals and other items related to learning and developmental disabilities and environmental health. They are archived and searchable on LDDI's website:

www.healthandenvironment.org/working_groups/learning/r/bulletins (Note the new URL).

LDDI Highlights

LDDI Website Move and Update

LDDI's website is now fully transferred to its new location:

www.healthandenvironment.org/working_groups/learning. Additional features and updates will continue, but the old site has now been dismantled. Links to the old LDDI site, including fact sheets and other publications, are now obsolete; we and your website visitors would be grateful if you update them. Please contact [Nancy Snow](mailto:Nancy.Snow) if you have any questions.

Biomonitoring Project

The LDDI biomonitoring project is moving very rapidly, with a report release projected for February 2010. All participants have seen their results, and consultations are underway with the physician designated for the project. Media outreach is our key focus at this time, and LDDI is working with a communications firm, the Raben Group, to reach our goals. For more information, please contact Laura Abulafia, National Coordinator for LDDI: laura@healthandenvironment.org

Radio Interview

Laura Abulafia of AAIDD's Environmental Health Initiative was interviewed on WTIC's [Greener living with Dr. G](#). She spoke about environmental impacts on learning and developmental disabilities.

LDAA Annual Meeting

The Learning Disabilities Association of America is hosting their [annual meeting](#) in February 2010 in Baltimore, Maryland, including a symposium on toxic chemicals and brain development at which leaders from LDDI will be speaking. Additional speakers include policymakers such as Maryland Assemblyman James Hubbard, who introduced environmental-health legislation in Maryland on BPA and other chemicals and heads a group of state legislators on TSCA reform.

Announcements

A daily news feed with articles and announcements is available on CHE's website:

<http://www.healthandenvironment.org/news/announce>.

[Call for presenters: 2nd Annual NW Environmental Health Conference.](#)

A variety of leading edge presentations addressing research, patient care, healthcare facilities, community based work, and current and emerging policy issues in the field of environmental health are being accepted for the conference March 5-6, 2010.

[AMA adopts Endocrine Society Resolution calling for new policies to decrease](#)

[public exposure to endocrine-disrupting chemicals.](#)

The American Medical Association's (AMA) House of Delegates adopted a resolution calling on the AMA to work with the federal government to enact new federal policies to decrease the public's exposure to endocrine-disrupting chemicals (EDCs). Medical News Today.

[EPA seeks comment on new permit for animal feeding operations in Idaho.](#)

The public is encouraged to take a close look at a new proposed Clean Water Act permit that would affect animal feeding operations in Idaho.

[Call for comments: Draft Guidelines For Green Cleaning.](#)

The New York State Office of General Services is posting for public comment the revised Green Cleaning Guidelines draft. Comments must be received by November 20, 2009 and will be considered with respect to issuance of the final Guidelines.

[Radiofrequencies: Afsset recommends reducing exposure.](#)

The report by the French Agency for Environmental and Occupational Health Safety (Afsset) shows that radiofrequency radiation affects cellular functions, as reported by around ten experimental studies considered by Afsset as being indisputable.

[See related journal articles: [Exposure to 1800 MHz radiofrequency radiation induces oxidative damage to mitochondrial DNA in primary cultured neurons](#) and [Experts urge tracking of X-rays, CT scans](#)]

[U.S. EPA makes available data on compliance with hazardous waste, air regulations.](#)

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released new information on EPA and state enforcement of hazardous waste and air regulations. In addition, the EPA posted data that allows the public, for the first time, to compare toxic releases with compliance data from facilities.

[EPA proposes new pesticide labeling to control spray drift and protect human health.](#)

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has rolled out proposed guidance for new pesticide labeling to reduce off-target spray and dust drift. The new instructions, when implemented, will improve the clarity and consistency of pesticide labels and help prevent harm from spray drift.

[Million Baby Crawl events.](#)

Babies everywhere are "crawling to Washington" and saying NO to toxic chemicals found in household products. Attend your local Crawl to Action event or create a new event for your community.

[Call for proposals: State Supplemental Funding for Healthy Communities, Tobacco Control, Diabetes Prevention and Control, and Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System.](#)

Recovery Act funds must be used for obesity, nutrition, physical activity and tobacco control strategies to change systems, develop and implement policies, change the environment in which eating, tobacco use, and physical activity occur, and impact population groups rather than individuals within the two-year timeframe for this award.

[Call for proposals: Federally-recognized Indian tribes located within the greater Puget Sound basin.](#)

EPA is soliciting proposals that implement strategies and actions that are of high ecosystem or human health priority to tribes, and that are consistent with the EPA-approved plan for restoring and protecting Puget Sound.

[Call for proposals: Increasing scientific data on the fate, transport and behavior of engineered nanomaterials in selected environmental and biological matrices](#)

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the National Science Foundation (NSF), and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), are seeking applications proposing research to provide data that improves the scientific understanding of fate/transport and behavior of engineered

nanomaterials. Applications are due February 2, 2010.

[Job opening: Virginia.](#)

The Association of State and Territorial Health Officials has an opening for Director, Environmental Health to be responsible for directing policy development and analysis, and program implementation on environmental health issues that may include issues such as climate change, natural disasters, land use, healthy housing, chemical exposure, food safety, safe water, and environmental health infrastructure and capacity.

[Job opening: Washington, DC.](#)

Earthjustice, the nonprofit law firm for the environment, currently has an opening for a Advocacy/Communications Campaign Manager.

Upcoming Events

Online Calendar. These and more upcoming events are listed in a searchable calendar: <http://www.healthandenvironment.org/cgi-bin/searchevents.cgi>

1) World Congress on Disabilities Conference and Expo

Thursday and Friday, November 19 - 20, 2009
Jacksonville, Florida
at the Prime F. Osborn III Convention Center

Sponsor: World Congress on Disabilities

The conference will present issues facing the disability community from experts. Some presentations address nutritional and other environmental contributors to disabilities, especially autism spectrum disorders. See the full list of sessions on the website.

Price: \$150 until October 16th, \$175 from October 17th to November 15th, or \$195 after that

[Visit the website](#)

Contact: WCD, 201-722-9233 or info@wcdexpo.com

2) Healthy People 2020 Public Meeting

Friday November 20, 2009
Seattle, Washington
at Red Lion Hotel on Fifth Avenue

Sponsor: US Department of Health and Human Services

This meeting will help set national public health goals and objectives for Healthy People 2020. The public meeting is open to everyone, but seating is limited. The public is invited to submit a question or comment ahead of time, via the website, about the development of Healthy People 2020. Your questions will be addressed at the public meeting. An agenda will be posted before the meeting.

Price: free

[Visit the website](#)

Contact: 2020regional@air.org

3) New Habits of Mind for New Solutions

Friday November 20, 2009
8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Seattle, Washington
at NWETC Headquarters, 650 South Orcas Street, Suite 220

Sponsor: EOS Alliance

This eight-hour class is about systems thinking, systems in the natural world, and ways to increase our ability to address complex problems. Our class will give you the competence and confidence to start using systems thinking in your organizations and communities to better understand complex problems - whether you find them in the natural environment or in social systems. Participants will learn what makes a system a system, and why systems thinking is so useful and so necessary in our world. We'll share our understanding of the ways and habits of systems thinking, as well as how to apply these habits. We'll learn about some systems thinking tools, such as causal loops and behavior over time graphs, and how to identify feedback loops. We'll use the "iceberg model" to deepen our understanding of leverage points for change. At the end, we'll put it all together - applications and practice. Learning will occur through hands-on activities such as small group conversations, large group dialogue, individual reflection, system thinking games, viewing personal stories through a new lens, and the collaborative exploration of complex problems. Both instructors' intense interest in the natural world has been enriched through the study and application of systems thinking.

Price: \$195, \$155 reduced tuition for Native American tribes; government employees; nonprofits; students; and NAEP, NEBC, NWAEP members

[Visit the website](#)

Contact: Northwest Environmental Training Center, 206-762-1976

4) Making Healthy Babies, Raising Healthy Children: Living Well in a Toxic World

Saturday November 21, 2009

9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Berkeley, California

at the UC Berkeley Art Museum Theatre, 2625 Durant Avenue

Sponsor: Sage Femme, Ryder Foundation, Midwifery Today, Autism Recovery Consortium

The 2009 CIA World Factbook ranks the USA 45th among nations for infant mortality -- the worst among all industrialized countries. The autism rate in our country is now 1 in 100. How can we understand and take appropriate steps to ensure healthy mothers, births and children? Take a unique look at the entire system that affects our future generations. This symposium brings together scientists, doctors, researchers and professionals for a compelling conversation about environmental influences around birth and childhood. It features plenary speakers, panels, audience questions and film clips. Revolutionary new software will also be introduced that will help parents assess the risks our children may encounter from the environment before birth, at birth and during childhood. Our three-part program will make clearer to attendees what they should know about environmental health, their world, and how it affects them and their children.

Price: \$60 until October 31st, \$75 after that; a student discount is available

[Visit the website](#)

Contact: see the [Contact page](#)

5) Endocrine-disrupting Chemicals (EDCs): What Can a Novelist and a Pediatrician Tell Us about Them?

Tuesday, December 1, 2009

2:00 - 4:30 p.m.

Seattle, Washington and virtual

at Antioch University Seattle, Room 100

Sponsor: Collaborative on Health and the Environment - Washington

Join Doug Abrams, author of *Eye of the Whale*

(www.healthandenvironment.org/articles/homepage/6468), and Sheela Sathyanarayana, MD, MPH (depts.washington.edu/mrhr/sathyana.html), researcher and assistant professor at the University of Washington and Seattle Children's Hospital, to learn more about EDCs and how they can impact the health of wildlife and humans. Doug, who is flying in

from California for this meeting, will offer a dynamic presentation that weaves together readings from his novel with the research he did to inform his writing. Sheela will then provide some of the latest science on EDCs and what we can do to reduce our exposures to them. Plus, the last hour of the meeting will focus on next steps for protecting children's environmental health in this region - a follow-up to the incredibly successful Northwest Children's Environmental Health Forum held in early October. The entire event will also be available as a live conference call.

Price: free

[Visit the website](#)

Contact: info@healthandenvironment.org

6) A Presentation on the National Child Health Study

Thursday December 3, 2009

12:30 - 1:20 p.m.

Seattle, Washington

at the University of Washington Department of Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences Room T-435

Sponsor: University of Washington Department of Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences

Elaine Faustman, PhD, professor of Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences and adjunct professor of the Evans School, will speak.

Price: free

[Visit the website](#)

Contact: Sarah Fischer fischs@u.washington.edu

7) PPTOXII: Role of Environmental Stressors in the Development of Origins of Disease

Monday through Thursday, December 7 - 10, 2009

Miami Beach, Florida

at Loews Hotel

Sponsor: Society of Toxicology

Fetal and early postnatal development constitutes the most vulnerable time period of human life, in regard to adverse effects of environmental hazards. Subtle effects during development can lead to functional deficits and increased disease risk later in life. This hypothesis, which states that environmental exposures lead to altered programming leading to increased susceptibility to disease/dysfunction later in life, has gathered much support from both experimental and epidemiological studies. The objective of the conference is to examine the animal and human data supporting this hypothesis of a developmental basis of disease, disease by disease, in order to review the current state of the literature and to identify mechanisms for the effects as well as to identify research gaps and challenges and to integrate the basic and applied science. Because of its International nature, the multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary nature of the speakers, and the attendance and participation of students from multiple disciplines, we expect this meeting to stimulate collaborations that will lead to the development and validation of biomarkers of exposure and disease susceptibility, improvement of exposure assessment and extrapolation across species and routes of exposure.

Price: see the [registration information on the website](#)

[Visit the website](#)

Contact: Society of Toxicology headquarters, 703-438-3115

8) To Ban or Not to Ban: A Review of Atrazine from Both Sides of the Atlantic

Tuesday December 8, 2009

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

Sponsor: Collaborative on Health and the Environment

If the same science is available on both sides of the Atlantic, why would Europe choose to ban the use of atrazine while the US has not? Join CHE as we explore this question and other pesticides issues with speakers from both Europe and the US. We will discuss the findings of the Agricultural Health Study recently conducted by NIH and the EPA, look closer at the scientific literature addressing atrazine and the implications for human health and conclude with a conversation with colleagues from the Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL) in Europe about pesticides, including their choice to ban atrazine.

Price: free

[Visit the website](#)

Contact: info@healthandenvironment.org

9) Break the Cycle of Environmental Health Disparities: A Model for Promoting Research and Advocacy among Students

Tuesday December 15, 2009

3:00 p.m. Eastern / noon Pacific time

Sponsor: National Association for the Dually Diagnosed

Children who grow up in circumstances of social and economic disadvantage are at greater risk for exposure to chemical, physical and psychological hazards in their environment. This presentation reports on the "Break the Cycle of Environmental Health Disparities" project, in which an interdisciplinary group of university students were recruited to develop awareness of environmental health disparities and to cultivate a focused interest and set of skills to enable them to become the leaders of the future who will bring positive change with them. Leslie Rubin, MD, will present. Handouts will be available three days prior to the teleconference for participants to access online.

Price: \$65 for NADD members, \$85 for nonmembers

[Visit the website](#)

10) Pacific Rim Conference on Disabilities

Monday and Tuesday, April 12 - 13, 2010

Honolulu, Hawaii

at the Hawai'i Convention Center

Sponsor: see the [Community Partners page](#)

A topic area devoted to environmental toxins includes this description: "What is the relationship between environmental toxins and disabilities? In this topic area, we explore this question by looking at the factors and conditions that give rise to disabilities as a result of exposure to heavy metals, including depleted uranium, and chemicals, which are more pervasive today than in any time in history. Current research suggests that the effect of these toxins is related to rising occurrences of disabilities including cognitive learning impairments and other disabilities."

Price: see the [Registration page](#)

[Visit the website](#)

Contact: 808-956-7539 or cccrocke@hawaii.edu

News and Journal Articles

[Going green and fighting toxins at home and at work.](#)

Tuesday, November 17, 2009

A nurse with environmental health experience spoke to EHS Today about minimizing contact with everyday toxins and taking steps to create greener workplaces.

[Mystery of Bangladesh's mass arsenic poisoning solved.](#)

Monday, November 16, 2009

Researchers have pinpointed the source of what is probably the worst mass poisoning in history, according to a study published Sunday. Agence France-Presse.

[See a related article: [Arsenic makes good cells go bad](#)]

[CDC study shouldn't rule out antibiotics for pregnant women, doctor says.](#)

Monday, November 16, 2009

A recent Centers for Disease Control and Prevention study on the association between antibiotics and certain birth defects may be a bit unsettling to pregnant women.

Cleveland Plain Dealer, Ohio.

[Missing out on brain food puts kids at risk.](#)

Monday, November 16, 2009

An overwhelming majority of children do not eat enough fish, placing them at risk of heart disease, asthma, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and retarded brain development, new research says. Sydney Morning Herald, Australia.

[See related articles: [EPA: Toxic chemicals in freshwater fish widespread](#) and [If you eat fish, know the risk from mercury](#)]

[Toxicants in plastic 'feminise boys.'](#)

Monday, November 16, 2009

Chemicals in plastics alter the brains of baby boys making them "more feminine", say US researchers. Males exposed to more phthalates in the womb went on to be less likely to play with boys' toys like cars or to join in rough and tumble games. The research adds to concerns about the safety of phthalates, found in vinyl flooring and PVC shower curtains. BBC.

[Ecuador's Amazonians sue Chevron over poison waterways.](#)

Sunday, November 15, 2009

Tens of thousands of Ecuadoreans living in the Amazon rainforest are suing Chevron, the US oil company, for poisoning their waterways in what is billed as one of the biggest environmental lawsuits in history. London Daily Telegraph, United Kingdom.

[Adult smoking rises in U.S. for first time since 1994.](#)

Friday, November 13, 2009

Cigarette smoking rose slightly for the first time in almost 15 years, dashing health officials' hopes that the U.S. smoking rate had moved permanently below 20 percent. Associated Press.

[See related articles: [Smoking: why women are at great risk](#) and [Tobacco poison surrounds child workers](#)]

[Poor nutrition 'stunting growth.'](#)

Friday, November 13, 2009

Poor child nutrition still causes major problems in the developing world -- despite some progress, experts say. A third of deaths in children under five in those countries are linked to poor diet, a report by Unicef suggests. BBC.

[Food-borne ills can have lasting consequences: report.](#)

Friday, November 13, 2009

Researchers at the Center for Foodborne Illness Research & Prevention in Pennsylvania studied the five most common food-borne diseases and found they can cause life-long complications including kidney failure, paralysis, seizures, hearing or visual impairments and mental retardation. Reuters.

[Hunters warned after dioxin delays.](#)

Thursday, November 12, 2009

In Michigan, just because you catch something doesn't mean you should eat it. That's because a stretch of river in the state was polluted with dioxin -- decades ago -- but officials think old pollution from a Dow chemical plant poses a health risk today. Environment Report, Michigan.

[Plastics have more harmful impact than thought.](#)

Tuesday, November 10, 2009

Plastic pollution is not just a nuisance, it could be toxic. New research suggests that plastic is a source of dissolved substances that are easily dispersed by ocean currents and may be toxic to humans and animals. Albert Lea Tribune, Minnesota.

[See a related article: [EPA to impose standards on PVC plant emissions](#)]

[Gujarat refuses to let 'toxic ship' enter scrap yard.](#)

Tuesday, November 10, 2009

India blocked a former US naval ship heading for a scrap yard on its west coast, citing environmental and pollution concerns in a case that mirrors past scandals, a local official said. Agence France-Presse.

[Early life stress 'changes' genes.](#)

Tuesday, November 10, 2009

A study in mice has hinted at the impact that early life trauma and stress can have on genes, and how they can result in behavioural problems. Scientists described the long-term effects of stress on baby mice in the journal Nature Neuroscience. BBC.

[Soldiers claim war zone contractors exposed them to toxins.](#)

Monday, November 09, 2009

U.S. military contractors in Iraq and Afghanistan are fouling the nests of U.S. soldiers with pollution, poisoning the troops in the very bases meant to be their sanctuaries. That's the central allegation in a new set of lawsuits against three military contractors. Nashville Post, Tennessee.

[See related articles: [Veterans' benefits for Agent Orange exposure](#), [Huge rise in birth defects in Falluja](#) and [Critics say Marine Corps contract on Camp Lejeune is conflict of interest](#)]

[Symposium highlights unresolved issues of Minamata disease sufferers.](#)

Monday, November 09, 2009

The problems facing people suffering from fetal Minamata disease remain unresolved more than 50 years after the mercury-poisoning disorder was officially detected in 1956, a researcher of the disease said Sunday. Kyodo News, Japan.

[Toxic toy checkup offers peace of mind for concerned parents.](#)

Sunday, November 08, 2009

Organizers cautioned that, just because Congress passed legislation last year meant to rid children's toys of unsafe levels of lead and phthalates, there's still cause for concern about even small amounts of those toxins. Eugene Register Guard, Oregon.

[Association of low-dose exposure to persistent organic pollutants with global DNA hypomethylation in healthy Koreans.](#)

Saturday, November 07, 2009

We found that low dose exposure to POPs, in particular OC pesticides, was associated with global DNA hypomethylation in apparently healthy Koreans. Environmental Health Perspectives.

[More evidence nanoparticles damage DNA.](#)

Friday, November 06, 2009

Researchers in the United Kingdom have found some nanoparticles -- which can be found in common household items -- can damage DNA without even penetrating the cells. ABC News, Australia.

[See a rebuttal article: [Experts criticize nanoparticle study](#) and another related article: [Barrier capacity of human placenta for nanosized materials](#)]

[Red wine compound slows brain plaque linked to Alzheimer's disease, study](#)

[finds.](#)

Friday, November 06, 2009

A compound in red wine may offer yet another health benefit -- it may slow formation of the amyloid plaques associated with Alzheimer's disease. Environmental Health News.

[Research shows pesticide-free homes can be bug-free, too.](#)

Friday, November 06, 2009

Now research has shown that these "good housekeeping" techniques not only minimize chemical use, but they are even more effective at controlling pests than hiring an exterminator to spray powerful, toxic pesticides. Environmental Health News.

[Target, Kmart and Toys R Us agree to settle lead claims.](#)

Friday, November 06, 2009

Three major retailers have agreed to pay nearly half a million dollars to settle a lawsuit stemming from the companies' sale of toys containing excessive amounts of lead, the California attorney general's office said Thursday. Los Angeles Times, California. [See related articles: [\\$2.5 million awarded in lead-paint lawsuit](#), [AG to area landlords: You must comply with lead laws](#), [Activists want to get lead out of city soil](#), [Environmental causes of violence](#), [Special Report: Some vinegars -- often expensive, aged balsamics -- contain a big dose of lead](#), [Feds powerless to recall toxic trinkets: audit](#), [China faces reckoning over lead production](#), [Interaction of stress, lead burden and age on cognition in older men: The VA Normative Aging Study](#)]

[More health for your buck: Health sector functions to secure environmental health.](#)

Thursday, November 05, 2009

Modifiable environmental risk factors are responsible for approximately one quarter of the global burden of disease. Bulletin of the World Health Organization.

[Healthy environment and economy.](#)

Thursday, November 05, 2009

We Californians pay for our exposure to toxic air pollution with our lives and our wallets. A 2008 report by Cal State Fullerton researchers found that the health impacts of air pollution, especially diesel emissions, costs the state \$28 billion annually. San Diego Union-Tribune, California.

[See related articles: [Air pollution at schools](#) and [Bay Area agency says check before you burn](#)]

[Troubled water.](#)

Thursday, November 05, 2009

Hundreds of gasoline spills, which contain carcinogens like benzene, have remained unresolved, and continue to pollute Long Island's subterranean water supply. Long Island Press, New York.

[3 yards and a cloud of what?](#)

Thursday, November 05, 2009

In the latest generation of artificial turf are thousands of tiny rubber crumbs made from pulverized tires. What if the crumbs end up in a player's mouth or lungs? At least 100 different chemicals and heavy metals like lead are found in tire crumbs. Are there long-term health risks from playing on these fields? Omaha World-Herald, Nebraska.

[Does vitamin D improve brain function?](#)

Wednesday, November 04, 2009

Scientists have now linked this fat-soluble nutrient's hormonelike activity to a number of functions throughout the body, including the workings of the brain. Scientific American.

[Groups oppose EPA review of atrazine.](#)

Wednesday, November 04, 2009

Farm groups joined the manufacturer of the popular herbicide atrazine Tuesday in accusing the Obama administration of bowing to environmentalist pressure in initiating a review of the chemical's safety. Des Moines Register, Iowa.

Premature births lift U.S. infant death rate.

Wednesday, November 04, 2009

Poor access to prenatal care, maternal obesity and smoking, too-early cesarean sections and induced labor and fertility treatments are among the reasons for preterm births, experts said. Associated Press.

Bishops ask banana growers to stop aerial spraying.

Wednesday, November 04, 2009

Four members of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines have challenged the banana industry to exercise corporate responsibility by stopping the aerial spraying of chemicals in banana plantations in Mindanao. Philippine Daily Inquirer, Philippines. Most of the news articles above come from [Environmental Health News](#).

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

Companion bulletins are available for different audiences:

- For those interested in general children's environmental health: http://www.healthandenvironment.org/working_groups/childrens_health/bulletins
- For those interested in environmental health in Washington State and the Pacific Northwest: <http://washington.chenw.org/bulletins.html>

While there is overlap with this bulletin, there are some events and announcements unique to those bulletins.

If you would like to join the Collaborative on Health and the Environment (CHE) and the LDDI 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 Learning and Developmental Disabilities Initiative Working Group at the bottom of the application.

Nancy Snow
Collaborative on Health and the Environment

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