



Learning and Developmental Disabilities Initiative

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



Biweekly Bulletin December 2, 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. The site will also soon be accessible through an additional URL that's more meaningful and easier to remember. Look for more information in a future issue of this bulletin.

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

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.

New Members

The Learning and Developmental Disabilities Initiative welcomes these new members:

- Richard Adusa-Poku, MSc, Everett, Massachusetts
- Eric Apeageyi, MSc, Waltham, Massachusetts
- Trudi Ferguson, Redding, California
- Shirra Freeman, Boston, Massachusetts
- Cathy Stern, OD, FCSO, FCOVD, Canton, Massachusetts

Announcements

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

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

[EPA issues rule to reduce water pollution from construction sites.](#)

The final rule requires construction site owners and operators that disturb one or more acres to use best management practices to ensure that soil disturbed during construction activity does not pollute nearby water bodies.

[**New interactive tools show continuing SO2 reductions at coal-fired power plants.**](#)

Using interactive charts and Google Earth satellite maps, the public can now observe recent changes in SO2 emissions and other indicators at individual coal-fired power plants in the Acid Rain Program.

Upcoming Events

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

1) 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

2) 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

3) 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

4) National Conversation on Public Health and Chemical Exposures Leadership Council Meeting

Friday December 11, 2009

9:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Washington, DC and virtual

at the Omni Shoreham Hotel, 2500 Calvert Street NW

Sponsor: US Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry

This meeting will be open to the public, on a first come, first served basis, limited by the space available. An opportunity for the public to listen to the meeting by phone may be provided. If you would like to receive additional information on attending the meeting or the potential opportunity to listen to the meeting by phone, please use the contact information below.

Price: free

[Visit the website](#)

Contact: nationalconversation@cdc.gov

5) 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](#)

News and Journal Articles

[First BPA detection In U.S. infant cord blood](#)

Wednesday, December 2, 2009

The tests identified the plastics chemical in 9 of 10 cord blood samples from babies of African American, Asian and Hispanic descent. Environmental Working Group.

[See related articles: [Infuriated mom: Why can't I protect my body? Study pinpoints chemicals in moms-to-be.](#) and [The toxins of life, discovered in a body burden test](#)]

Many get extra radiation from needless CT scans.

Tuesday, December 01, 2009

Every year, many patients undergo unnecessary computed tomography (CT) scans that are not indicated, exposing them to more radiation than is necessary, according to new research presented here at the annual meeting of the Radiological Society of North America. Reuters Health.

[See related articles: [With cancer screenings, 'more is not always better'; Cancer screening: What could it hurt? A lot, actually](#) and [Study questions safety of mammograms for young women at high risk of cancer](#)]

Bhopal water still toxic, 25 years on.

Monday, November 30, 2009

Groundwater at the site of the world's worst industrial accident in India's Bhopal city is still toxic and making residents sick 25 years after a gas leak there killed thousands, a study said Tuesday. Agence France-Presse.

[See related articles: [Study shows heavy metal contamination of Lagos ground water](#), [Synthetic fertilisers polluting Punjab groundwater: Greenpeace](#), [Study finds chemicals widespread in Minn. waters](#), [Radioactive waste contaminating Canadian water supply: Report](#), [EPA: Uranium from polluted mine in Nev. wells](#) and [Effects of using ash remain unknown](#)]

Another reversal haunts a federal health agency.

Monday, November 30, 2009

Some lawmakers are accusing the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry of cursory evaluations, getting the science wrong and ignoring independent studies. New York Times.

[See another article about US federal agency functioning: [White House tells Markey it won't interfere with independent EPA testing](#)]

Review: H2Oil.

Saturday, November 28, 2009

A searing indictment of the Alberta oilsands project, that massive industrial enterprise that Prime Minister Stephen Harper has compared to the building of the pyramids and the Great Wall of China. Neither of those, however, has been linked to arsenic in the drinking water and mercury in fish. Canwest News Service.

Fired up about trash crisis.

Saturday, November 28, 2009

Landfills and incineration are the two most common methods of waste treatment in China, and both have dangers. Landfills can leak and release toxic gas, while burning rubbish at incinerators releases dioxins. China Daily.

[See another article about air pollution concerns: [African dust bringing toxic chemicals to U.S., Caribbean: is it killing corals? Hurting people?](#)]

Council to review lead level standard.

Friday, November 27, 2009

Following widespread criticism, Australia's peak health and medical advisory body will reconsider its guidelines for blood lead levels. Sydney Australian, Australia.

Feds links Chinese drywall to corrosion.

Tuesday, November 24, 2009

Federal agencies investigating contaminated Chinese drywall have finally tied the tainted wallboard to corrosion of metals in affected homes, and went further Monday than ever before in potentially associating the material with the health problems residents have been complaining about -- some for a year or longer.

[See a related article: [Chemical lobby group attacks CPSC Chinese drywall study](#)]

Smoking ban 'did not lead to rise in home exposure.'

Tuesday, November 24, 2009

The smoking ban in the UK did not lead to children being exposed to more smoking at home, a study has concluded. One of the main criticisms of the ban in public places was that it could prompt people to swap pubs for drinking at home where they could smoke. BBC.

[See related articles: [Secondhand smoke worst for toddlers, obese kids](#); [Moms-to-be smoke less after workplace smoking ban](#); [Inhaling human pathogens with cigarette smoke](#); [UGA tests outside smoking risks](#) and [Smokers take their last legal puffs in Va. restaurants](#)]

Toxic playgrounds.

Tuesday, November 24, 2009

No kid should ever play in arsenic. Especially at school. Yet many probably do, according to findings of a study presented today. Science News.

[See a related journal article about arsenic exposures through food: [Probabilistic modeling of dietary arsenic exposure and dose and evaluation with 2003-2004 NHANES data](#)]

Cellphones affect the brain.

Monday, November 23, 2009

Cellphones and other cordless telephones have a biological effect on the brain, according to research from Sweden's Örebro University. It's still too early to say if any health risks are involved, but those cautious Swedes are recommending that people, especially children, should use headsets. Tech Generation Daily.

[See related articles: [Is electro smog causing your headache?](#) and ['Stay a safe distance away from screw-in fluorescent bulbs'](#)]

Water law will cost hardware stores.

Monday, November 23, 2009

Starting Jan. 1, plumbing materials sold or installed statewide that carry drinking water can contain no lead, meaning millions of dollars worth of existing inventory must be flushed down the proverbial drain. Vallejo Times-Herald, California.

[See a related article: [Builders prepare for stricter rules on lead paint](#)]

Clorox to stop using chlorine.

Sunday, November 22, 2009

Citing a desire to improve security, Clorox says it will stop making its namesake bleach out of chlorine and sodium hydroxide. Instead, the big household-products company will purchase high-strength bleach of up to 15% concentration and dilute it to household strength of 6%.

Phthalates exposure and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder in school-age children.

Saturday, November 21, 2009

The present study showed a strong positive association between phthalate metabolites in urine and symptoms of ADHD among school-age children. Biological Psychiatry.

[See related articles: [Study links ADHD to smoking, lead](#) and [Plastics chemical phthalate may shorten pregnancy](#)]

Health issues in middle age can lead to dementia.

Friday, November 20, 2009

People who smoke or who have high blood pressure or diabetes in middle age are more likely to develop dementia, a new study has found. ABC News.

[See a related article: [Obesity in adolescence may increase girls' MS risk](#)]

NIEHS Director: "We kind of jump from the proverbial fry pan into the fire" when replacing chemicals.

Friday, November 20, 2009

As head of the federal institute examining environmental health, Linda Birnbaum and her staff are taking on many controversial topics, including Bisphenol A and new flame retardants. She is concerned about what role chemicals play in cancer and other diseases. Environmental Health News.

[See related articles: [Effects of flame retardants on children's development unclear](#) and

[Deadly chemical shows up in San Francisco Bay\]](#)

[On the scent of danger.](#)

Thursday, November 19, 2009

Scientists at GE's Global Research Center in Niskayuna are developing sensors smaller than a penny that could be worn by their users to warn of chemical hazards in the air. Albany Times Union, New York.

[Silica nanoparticles flow in \(and out of\) waste.](#)

Thursday, November 19, 2009

New research highlights some of the issues swirling around nanomaterials in wastewater, but no answers are forthcoming. Environmental Science & Technology.

[Report details 'coal's assault on human health.'](#)

Thursday, November 19, 2009

Coal pollution is assaulting human health through impacts on workers, residents near mining operations and power plants, and the environment in coalfield communities, according to a new report by a group of physicians. Charleston Gazette, West Virginia.

[Putting madness in its place: Can the environment explain schizophrenia's hereditary patterns?](#)

Wednesday, November 18, 2009

Researchers believe the potential for schizophrenia starts to emerge during early brain development, beginning in the womb. Scientific American.

[Pesticides & birth defects may be linked.](#)

Wednesday, November 18, 2009

One out of every 33 babies in the U.S. are born with a birth defect, one of the leading causes of infant death in this country. Now, researchers say during certain times of the year, birth defects spike. Scripps Howard News Service.

[See a related article: [Bug spray 'can raise birth defect risk'](#)]

[Health group finds high lead levels in toys.](#)

Wednesday, November 18, 2009

Children's toys carrying the Barbie and Disney logos have turned up with high levels of lead in them, according to a California-based advocacy group -- a finding that may give consumers pause as they shop for the holiday season. Associated Press.

[See related articles: [Lead, dangerous chemicals found in toys despite law](#); [Toy recall undermines company's 'green' image](#); [US lauds China for boosting toy safety standards](#); [Stores must remove lead-laced toys, says Attorney General Brown](#) and [State issues alert on seven children's products](#)]

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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