



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



E-Bulletin November 29, 2010

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:*

- Cara Dolan, Washington State
- Nicole Craven, MD, Florida
- Summer Beattie, ND, Alaska
- Kelly Haston, PhD, Massachusetts
- Nathan Strohm, DoC, Washington State
- Jennifer Edwards, RN, BSN, MPHc, New York
- Krista Christensen, MPH, PhD, Washington, DC
- Leslie Lewis, PhD, MPH, California

### Reproductive Environmental Health Science and Implications for the OB/GYN.

Patrice Sutton, Dr. Linda Giudice, and Dr. Tracey Woodruff present an overview of the scientific data supporting the field of reproductive environmental health, and describe current efforts underway at the University of California, San Francisco to provide clinicians with an evidence-based foundation for developing recommendations for prevention. [Current Opinion in Obstetrics & Gynecology](#). December 2010.

US doctors say chemicals can cause cancer. Dr. Linda Giudice has treated thousands of patients over the years with a range of troubling reproductive disorders, and this week, she joined health experts and a young mother in fingering chemicals as the probable cause. [Agence France-Presse](#). 20 November 2010.

### Teleconference: CHE Fertility Call: Environmental Exposures and Early Onset of Puberty.

Tuesday, November 16, 2010. Over the last several decades, the age of puberty in industrial countries has fallen, particularly in female children. CHE-Fertility hosted a call on November 16<sup>th</sup> with Dr. Mari Golub from the California EPA, Dr. Michele Marcus from Emory University, and Dr. Heather Patisaul from North Carolina State University to discuss their research on environmental exposures and the timing of puberty. To view the resources for the call or listen to the MP3 recording, [Visit the website.](#)

## New Science

*A sampling of new research articles that are available on-line are gleaned from*

[Environmental Health News](#), and presented here.

**New tool for studying radiation's effects.** Most research on the ecological and human health effects of ionizing radiation has focused on high doses over short periods of time. But chronic exposure to low doses may cause problems too. So researchers have presented a new tool to study the consequences of such exposures in living animals. [Chemical & Engineering News](#). 18 November 2010.

**Paraben preservative used widely in Cosmetics Linked to DNA Damage in Sperm.** DNA damage in sperm cells can have negative effects on men's reproductive potential. The findings indicate that the higher the BP levels, the more DNA damage the sperm had. The relationship was even stronger when BP and bisphenol-A (BPA) levels were considered together. [Environmental Health Perspectives](#). 4 November 2010.

**BPA Exposure Linked to Prostate Cancer.** Low levels of bisphenol A - similar to those found commonly in people - can cause prostate disease in rats exposed to the ubiquitous chemical as newborns. The prostate lesions, considered precursors to prostate cancers in humans, developed once the animals matured. The effects were the same regardless of whether the BPA was injected or delivered orally. [Reproductive Toxicology](#). 28 October 2010.

**Maternal Exposure to Air Pollutant Benzene Increases Risk of Neural Tube Defects.** Pregnant women living in Texas neighborhoods with higher air levels of benzene - a pollutant often released from oil refineries and traffic exhaust - are more likely to have babies with neural tube defects. Women living in the areas with the highest benzene levels had a two times greater risk for their children to be born with spina bifida. [Environmental Health Perspectives](#). 26 October 2010.

## 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](#).*

**New USGS study finds mercury widespread in Indiana.** One in eight fish taken from Indiana waterways and analyzed over a five-year period was tainted with the toxic mercury, according to federal scientists. Precipitation that falls near southeastern Indiana's coal-fired power plants harbors some of the nation's highest concentrations of atmospheric mercury, scientists said. [Associated Press](#). 21 November 2010.

**Schwarzenegger declares emergency over water contamination in Barstow.** Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger declared a state of emergency Saturday for San Bernardino County, where the water supply for the city of Barstow was found to be contaminated with perchlorate, a toxic chemical used to make explosives and rocket fuel. [Los Angeles Times](#). 21 November 2010. [Registration Required]

**Study of Columbia River pollution continues.** A massive study of industrial pollution in the upper Columbia River is wrapping up its second year of sampling. Researchers have tested 2,300 fish above Grand Coulee Dam for lead, mercury, arsenic, PCBs and other contaminants. [Spokane Spokesman-Review](#). 21 November 2010.

**New EPA regulations take aim at lead paint.** To prevent the spread of dangerous lead-paint dust during renovation projects, the EPA is requiring contractors to be certified and trained to adopt best practices, like using plastic sheeting, before working on houses built before 1978. This will mean higher costs for home-owners. [Davenport Quad-City Times](#). 21 November 2010.

**Full-body scanners: we reveal all.** The recent release of pictures taken by full-body scanners has outraged the traveling public and focused attention on the risks the devices may carry. [New Scientist](#). 21 November 2010.

**Lead in bags, other products result of global economy.** Besides causing learning disabilities in children, the toxic chemical lead is especially good at making green inks look greener and yellow inks yellower. That's the most likely reason why recent tests commissioned by The Tampa Tribune found elevated lead levels in elaborately decorated grocery bags. [Tampa Tribune](#), Florida. 20 November 2010.

**Lead surprisingly still in brass plumbing.** In response to taste complaints, officials at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill tested water in the college's brand new buildings. To their surprise they found lead in the water. So a civil engineering professor was called in to find out the source. [Living On Earth](#). 20 November 2010.

**Smoking during pregnancy 'increases risk of children turning to crime.'** Smoking in pregnancy can cause harm to the child's developing brain that puts them at greater risk of having a long-term criminal record, claim researchers. Scientists claim that mothers who puff away while expecting can cause harm to a baby's developing brain. [London Daily Mail](#), United Kingdom. 20 November 2010.

**BPAs in canned food.** Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., is urging consumers to stop buying products that contain Bisphenol A. 7 On Your Side has been investigating the chemical, commonly known as BPA, and has information on exclusive lab tests. [San Francisco KGO TV](#), California. 20 November 2010.

**Experts disagree whether Gulf of Mexico seafood is safe to eat.** The government says Gulf seafood is safe to eat. However, Ed Cake, president of Gulf Environmental Associates in Ocean Springs, Miss., told the International Conference on Shellfish Restoration, "We have a lot of concern about what is going on down there." [Associated Press](#). 20 November 2010.

**Are airport scanners safe?** Some airport body scanning machines use X-rays to generate images. How much radiation is a traveler exposed to? Should frequent fliers opt for a pat down instead? Radiation expert David Brenner explains the possible public health concerns of scanning millions of passengers. [Talk of the Nation](#), NPR. 20 November 2010.

**EPA to clean up around schools in 'Old Lead Belt'.** The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency said Friday it will remove and replace lead-contaminated soil around 11 schools and 16 child care and Head Start centers in St. Francois County. [St. Louis Post-Dispatch](#), Missouri. 20 November 2010.

**DOE shakes up radioactive material cleanup team after leaks at Knolls labs site.** Stung by a recent series of mishaps at the cleanup of the Knolls Atomic Power Labs, the U.S. Department of Energy launched a safety investigation, replaced its project manager and warned the private cleanup company that it could be fired. [Albany Times Union](#), New York. 20 November 2010.

**Researchers trace toxins' links to reproductive health.** Researchers say consumers are swimming in a sea of chemicals, and get exposed through "air, water, food, drink, cosmetics, pesticides, herbicides and other household items." There are some 80,000 chemicals on the market and only a couple hundred have been tested for safety. [New America Media](#). 19 November 2010.

**Concerns over nanosilver run-off.** The use of nanosilver in consumer goods is under intense scrutiny from occupational scientists and regulators, as they try to determine exactly how toxic the substance is. Silver is regarded as harmless to humans unless present in high concentrations, but it is toxic to microorganisms like bacteria and viruses. [Australia ABC News](#), Australia. 19 November 2010.

**Michigan to ban BPA?** Based on new studies, the FDA now says it has some concern about the potential effects of BPA on the brain, behavior, and prostate gland in fetuses, infants, and young children. Nine states have passed laws to ban certain uses of BPA in children's products...and Michigan could be next. [Environment Report](#). 19 November

2010.

**FDA opens investigation into reusable grocery bags.** The U.S. FDA has opened an official probe into reusable grocery bags, following a Tampa Tribune report that found some highly decorated bags contained elevated levels of lead. [Mobile WKRG](#), Alabama. 19 November 2010.

**Senate advances bill to overhaul food safety.** The Senate moved forward Wednesday on long-awaited legislation that would overhaul the nation's food safety system, grant new powers to the Food and Drug Administration and make farmers and processors responsible for preventing food-borne illness. [Washington Post](#). 18 November 2010. [Registration Required]

**Industry opposition scuttles bipartisan Senate bid for BPA curbs.** A bipartisan Senate deal to limit the use of controversial chemical bisphenol A (BPA) was scuttled Wednesday amid opposition from the American Chemistry Council, the industry's main trade group, Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) said Wednesday. [Greenwire](#). 18 November 2010.

**Return to the fields of Chernobyl.** Anyone for some delicious Chernobyl mushrooms? It might sound like a tasteless joke, but if the Ukrainian authorities have their way, the fields surrounding the infamous nuclear reactor could soon be used for growing fruit and vegetables again. [London Independent](#), United Kingdom. 18 November 2010.

**The toxic side of India's battery industry.** The car you drive to work, the ATMs you use to withdraw cash, the inverters that act as backups in areas with intermittent power supply - they're all powered by squat boxes of energy known as lead-acid batteries. [Live Mint](#), India. 18 November 2010.

**Mercury Plagues Indiana.** Indiana has over 30 coal-burning power plants. The smoke rises and disperses in the air, but its chemical contents do not vanish. They linger in the atmosphere and they return to the earth, and to the waterways of Indiana, with the rain. And that poses a danger to Indianans, and Indiana wildlife, and other Americans, too. [International Business Times](#). 18 November 2010.

**Feinstein pushes BPA restrictions in food safety bill.** Deliberations on the food safety bill the Senate is expected to take up Wednesday may include a vote on an amendment by Sen. Dianne Feinstein that would limit the use of bisphenol A, or BPA, the widely used but controversial plastics additive. [Los Angeles Times](#), California. 18 November 2010. [Registration Required]

**L.A., Cleveland, Muncie, 13 other US areas violate new lead standard, EPA says.** Sixteen areas, including Los Angeles, Tampa and Cleveland, have unhealthy amounts of lead in the air that violate national standards, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced Tuesday. [Environmental Health News](#). 17 November 2010.

**Doctors see rise in second-birth infertility.** The number of women diagnosed with secondary infertility has risen by 15-20 per cent due to factors including urban lifestyles and pollution affecting male sperm. [Vietnam News](#), Vietnam. 17 November 2010.

**BPA induces sterility in roundworms.** Bisphenol A does a real number on the genes responsible for successful reproduction in a 1-millimeter-long soil-dwelling roundworm. And that suggests that this chemical - a building block of certain plastics and of coatings on thermal receipt papers - might pose a similar reproductive risk to people. [Science News](#). 16 November 2010.

**Prenatal exposures prompt EPA to re-examine chemical regulations.** U.S. EPA regulators convened with scientists last month to discuss how to design regulations for chemicals based on emerging science that connects exposures during pregnancy with disease much later in life. [Greenwire](#). 16 November 2010.

**Store receipts may contain BPA.** Cashiers and others who handle receipts on thermal

paper daily have much more Bisphenol-A in their blood than other people, a study showed. [Seattle King 5 TV](#), Washington. 13 November 2010

**Smoking in pregnancy could increase baby's sudden death risk.** Researchers, reporting in the journal *Pediatric Allergy, Immunology, and Pulmonology*, found nicotine could be affecting the development of brain centres that regulate breathing. [London Daily Mail](#), United Kingdom. 13 November 2010.

**Jury still out on BPA, World Health Organization says.** An expert panel convened last week by the World Health Organization recommended that public health officials hold off on regulations limiting or banning the use of bisphenol A. [Los Angeles Times](#), California. 13 November 2010. [Registration Required]

**Unions urge pilots to avoid body scanners at airports.** The unions that represent pilots for American Airlines and US Airways have urged their members to avoid the full-body scanners at airport security checkpoints, stating that they worry about the health effects of being exposed to the scanner's radiation. [Los Angeles Times](#), California. 12 November 2010. [Registration Required]

**Laptop use may lower sperm count, study says.** A man using a laptop computer as its name implies - balanced on his lap - is likely heating up his scrotum and endangering sperm production, even with a pad under the machine, according to a new study in the journal *Fertility and Sterility*. [Toronto Star](#), Ontario. 11 November 2010.

**Painkillers in pregnancy can affect fetal testicles.** Women who take mild painkillers such as aspirin and paracetamol during pregnancy are slightly more likely to have boys with undescended testicles, a study from Denmark has reported. [New Scientist](#). 11 November 2010.

**Bacteria capable of cleaning rivers of metals found.** While science is trying to develop a technology that would effectively rid the country's river system of hazardous metals, nature already has a solution as found by a research group from the University of the Philippines-Manila. [Manila Bulletin](#), Philippines. 11 November 2010.

**Papermaker Appleton unveils 'BPA-free' line.** This week Appelton introduced a line of BPA-free thermal receipt paper in the U.S. [Green Bay Press-Gazette](#), Wisconsin. 11 November 2010.

**Ministry not certain dioxin caused birth defects.** The Ministry of Health says a higher than usual number of birth defects in New Plymouth 40 years ago might have been caused by dioxin, but it can't be certain. [Radio New Zealand](#), New Zealand. 10 November 2010.

**EPA chemical health hazards program has 55-year backlog of work, report says.** Eighteen months after the Environmental Protection Agency announced reforms to its controversial process for evaluating health hazards posed by dangerous chemicals, significant problems continue to hamper the program, according to a new report by a nonprofit research group. [Center for Public Integrity](#). 10 November 2010.

**Fumes, stress can cause heart disease, infertility.** Many environmental health experts, as well as public health specialists, have expressed concern over the level of air pollution in many urban cities and called the attention of government and members of the public to its attendant effects on human health. [Nigerian Tribune](#), Niger. 5 November 2010.

**Major producers to ditch BPA from packaging.** Some of the world's biggest food companies are removing the chemical Bisphenol A from packaging, amid growing concern it is causing a wide range of human illnesses including heart disease and breast cancer. [London Independent](#), United Kingdom. 1 November 2010.

## Announcements

A daily news feed with these announcements is now available on CHE's website:

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

### **UC Berkeley gets \$16.5 million for three children's environmental health centers.**

Researchers at the University of California, Berkeley's School of Public Health are getting \$16.5 million to support three research centers as part of a federal initiative to examine the environmental factors influencing children's health. UC Berkeley News.

**EPA to expand chemicals testing for endocrine disruption.** The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has identified a list of 134 chemicals that will be screened for their potential to disrupt the endocrine system. 17 November, 2010.

## Calendar of Events & Submission Deadlines

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

### **1) Conference/Seminar: Linking Early Exposures to Late Effects: New Science, Tools and Modes of Action**

**Sunday through Tuesday December 5 - 7, 2010**

**Montreal, Quebec Canada**

**at Delta Centre-Ville, 777 University**

Sponsor: Society of Toxicology of Canada

On the first day, "Toxicology and the Developmental Origins of Adult Health and Disease" will examine evidence that toxicant exposure during fetal development can contribute to the development of diseases that are generally seen in adulthood including obesity, hypertension, Type 2 diabetes and effects on immune function. On day 2 in "The role of MicroRNA in Toxicity", we will examine the growing evidence that noncoding RNA may play a very significant role in mediating toxic responses in a wide variety of tissues. Our final session, "Novel Screening Methods in Reproductive and Developmental Toxicology", will critically examine the value of emerging tools for rapid screening for reproductive and developmental toxicology for predicting chemical hazards.

Price: see the [Registration form](#)

[Visit the website](#)

Contact: [stcsecretariat@mcgill.ca](mailto:stcsecretariat@mcgill.ca)

### **2) Call for Abstracts: Call for Papers: Theme issue: Health and the Environment Deadline: Wednesday December 15, 2010**

Sponsor: *Health Affairs*

*Health Affairs* will publish a theme issue on Health and the Environment in May 2011. We invite submissions of papers that inform policymakers about environmental dimensions of health and their impact on individual and population health, health disparities, and health care costs. We particularly seek submissions that illuminate problems AND recommend thoughtful and effective policy responses for federal, state and local policymakers.

Price: free

[Visit the website](#)

### **3) Save the Dates: 14th World Congress on Controversies in Obstetrics, Gynecology & Infertility (COGI)**

**November 17-20, 2011 in 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.

[Visit the website](#)

**4) Call for Abstracts: 6th International Conference on the Impact of Environmental Factors on Health**

**Deadline: December 31, 2010 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 aim of society is to establish measures that can eliminate or considerably reduce hazardous factors from the human environment to minimize the associated health risks. The ability to achieve these objectives is in great part dependent on the development of suitable experimental, modeling and interpretive techniques, which allow a balanced assessment of the risk involved as well as suggesting ways in which the situation can be improved. 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. The language of the conference will be English. The conference is scheduled for Monday through Wednesday, July 25 - 27, 2011.

[Visit the website](#)

Contact: Irene Moreno Millan, 44 (0) 238 029 3223 or [imoreno@wessex.ac.uk](mailto:imoreno@wessex.ac.uk)

**5) Conference/Seminar: Health and Wellness Conference 2011**

**Thursday through Saturday, January 20 - 22, 2011**

**Berkeley, California at the Clark Kerr Conference Center and Great Hall, University of California Berkeley**

Sponsor: The International Journal of Health, Wellness and Society

The 2011 Health, Wellness and Society Conference will address a range of critically important issues and themes relating to Health, Wellness and Society. Plenary speakers include some of the leading thinkers in these areas, as well as numerous paper, colloquium and workshop presentations.

Price: see the [Registration page](#)

[Visit the website](#)

**6) Conference/Seminar: Environmental Health 2011**

**Sunday through Wednesday, February 6 - 9, 2011**

Salvador, Brazil

Sponsor: Elsevier Science & Technology and the journal Environmental Research

[Visit the website](#)

Contact: see the [Contact page](#)

**7) Conference/Seminar: 75th Annual Educational Conference & Exhibition**

**Wednesday through Saturday, June 15 - 18, 2011**

Columbus, Ohio

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. A list of the educational tracks is on the website.

[Visit the website](#)

Contact: Denise Devotta, 303-756-9090, ext. 313 or [ddevotta@neha.org](mailto:ddevotta@neha.org)

**8) Conference/Seminar: 2011 National Healthy Homes Conference  
Sunday through Wednesday, June 20 - 23, 2011**

Denver, Colorado at the Colorado Convention Center

Sponsor: US Department of Housing and Urban Development, Healthy Homes, US Department of Health and Human Services, US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, US Environmental Protection Agency, US Department of Energy, US Department of Agriculture

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.

Price: unknown

[Visit the website](#)

Contact: 888-644-2586 or [info@healthyhomesconference.org](mailto:info@healthyhomesconference.org)

**9) Conference/Seminar: 6th International Conference on the Impact of  
Environmental Factors on Health  
Monday through Wednesday, July 25 - 27, 2011**

Riga, Latvia at the Reval Hotel Latvija

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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 aim of society is to establish measures that can eliminate or considerably reduce hazardous factors from the human environment to minimize the associated health risks. The ability to achieve these objectives is in great part dependent on the development of suitable experimental, modeling and interpretive techniques, which allow a balanced assessment of the risk involved as well as suggesting ways in which the situation can be improved. 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. The language of the conference will be English.

Price: unknown

[Visit the website](#)

Contact: Irene Moreno Millan, 44 (0) 238 029 3223 or [imoreno@wessex.ac.uk](mailto:imoreno@wessex.ac.uk)

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 [julia@healthandenvironment.org](mailto:julia@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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