



Collaborative on Health and the Environment

eNewsletter - April 2010



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Diabetes, Obesity and Cumulative Stressors on Health

An article highlighting the soaring rates of type 1 diabetes, "Child's Plague," by Dan Hurley was just featured in the May 2010 issue of *Discover* magazine. Hurley, also author of the recent book *Diabetes Rising: How a Rare Disease Became a Modern Pandemic, And What To Do About It*, bases his statistics on the most recent Centers for Disease Control's report indicating 1.7 per 1000 children are diagnosed with type 1 in the US and the trend is steadily increasing. In Europe, they expect the rate to double between 2005 and 2020. Theories as to why this is happening are wide-ranging, and the researchers interviewed for the article suggest everything from immune-dysfunctions to unsuspected bacteria or viruses as possible culprits. In addition, some mention is made of environmental toxins as potential contributors, but it was clear in the article that this latter hypothesis is not yet a front burner research issue.

Given the dearth of publicly-available, science-based information on environmental contaminants and type 1 diabetes, CHE partner Sarah Howard, MS, took it on herself as a "hobby" to compile a database on all the scientific literature she could find on this topic. She welcomes input on this 'work in progress' at:
<http://sites.google.com/site/envirodiabetes/home>

A similar undertaking, though on a much larger scale, is underway at NIEHS regarding environmental toxins that may contribute to type 2 diabetes. Kristina Thayer, PhD, Acting Director of the National Toxicology Program's (NTP) Center for the Evaluation of Risks to Human Reproduction (CERHR), who heads this study, says they intend to have a draft literature review to circulate for public comment in November 2010 and will hold a workshop in early 2011.

Given the links between diabetes and obesity, several prominent researchers associated with CHE also recently sent an [open letter to First Lady Michelle Obama](#) regarding the range of contributing factors to the epidemic of obesity in the US. The letter also highlights one factor that has gotten very little attention to date-namely, endocrine disrupting chemicals known as "obesogens". These chemicals have been shown in animal studies to reprogram metabolism even before birth, triggering a predisposition to obesity-and associated diseases such as diabetes.

All of these nascent efforts to raise awareness about environmental contributors to diabetes and obesity point to the importance of better understanding common biological mechanisms underlying different diseases. In addition, this emerging research compels us to no longer

look at one factor at a time, but instead to develop models that accurately capture the array of interacting factors that impact people's health-what we might call "cumulative stressors". These can include social, psychosocial, economic, geographical, physical, chemical, and biological determinants. Because these cumulative stressors influence people in different ways, depending on where you grew up, where you currently live, where you work or study, your social environments, the food you eat, access to health care, and so forth, we must turn our collective attention in this field to designing better research methodologies that reflect this 'real life' complexity so that we can heighten our capacity to translate these findings into effective upstream public health interventions.

To learn more about how leaders in the field are addressing these critical issues, please join us on April 19 for our next CHE national partner call, "[Cumulative Stressors on Health](#)".

With gratitude for your collegueship,
Elise Miller, MEd
Director
Collaborative on Health and the Environment

***This essay is available on [CHE's blog](#) for comment and further discussion.

CHE Partnership Calls and Special Events

Special note:

To assist CHE in better evaluating and planning Partnership calls CHE will send out a short survey to all call participants after each call. If you participate in an upcoming CHE call, please look for the post-call survey.

Evaluating the Impact of Cumulative Stressors on Health Monday April 19, 2010 at 10 AM Pacific / 1 PM Eastern

Join CHE for a call exploring how cumulative impact science indicates that multiple factors, including social, psychosocial, economic, physical, chemical, and biological determinants, may contribute to disproportionate human health or environmental impacts. The risk of many diseases may be moderated by social and environmental factors, and some populations may systematically experience higher levels of these factors. This call on cumulative impact will present an overview of cumulative risk assessment and the need to incorporate key nonchemical stressors.

Featured speakers include:

Rachel Morello-Frosch, PhD, School of Public Health, University of California, Berkeley

Jon Levy, ScD, Harvard School of Public Health

Devon Payne-Sturges, DrPH, US EPA's Office of Children's Health Protection

[RSVP for this call](#)

The call will be moderated by Steve Heilig, CHE Director of Public Health and Education, and Director of Public Health and Education, San Francisco Medical Society.

The call will last one hour and will be recorded for archival purposes.

CHE Cafe call: Annie Leonard, director and author, *The Story of Stuff* Tuesday May 4, 2010, 11 AM Pacific / 2 PM Eastern

CHE is pleased to host Annie Leonard, author of [The Story of Stuff](#) (Free Press, March 2010) and Director of the Story of Stuff Project, which produced the award-winning webfilm, *The Story of Stuff*, in December 2007.

The Story of Stuff is a hit 20-minutes webfilm that takes viewers on a provocative and eye-opening tour of the often hidden costs of our consumer driven culture. The Story of Stuff has generated over 10 million views in more than 200 countries and territories since its launch, making it one of the most successful environmental-themed viral films of all time. The film has won numerous awards, including a South by Southwest Festival award, and in 2008 Annie was named one of *Time Magazine's* Heroes of the Environment.

CHE Director, Elise Miller, MEd, will moderate this call.

The call will last one hour and there will be an opportunity for participants to ask questions. It will be recorded for archival purposes.

[RSVP for this call](#)

The Information Age and EMF/RF Illness: The Potential for EMF and Radiofrequency/Microwave Radiation Illnesses and How Smart Choices in New Technologies Can Reduce Potential Risks
Tuesday May 11, 2010 at 9 AM Pacific / noon Eastern

CHE will host this international, in-depth discussion of current electromagnetic field research, science, health implications and policy initiatives. As wireless technologies expand exponentially the potential impact on health is of great concern. On this call we will explore what the consequences might be of global wireless technologies on various health endpoints, including cancer, Alzheimers and other neurodegenerative diseases and how new science can impact institutional shifts in policy and precautionary measures.

Featured speakers will include:

Cindy Sage, MA, Sage Associates Environmental Consultants, Co-Coordinator of CHE's Working Group on Electromagnetic Fields

Lennart Hardell, MD, PhD, Professor in oncology and cancer epidemiology at the University Hospital, Orebro, Sweden

Sam Milham, MD, Epidemiologist for Washington State Department of Health

Michael Segell, Senior Editor, Prevention Magazine

[RSVP for this Call](#)

The call will be moderated by Elise Miller, CHE Director and will be recorded for archival purposes.

Special Event Announcement
CHE Co-hosts Children First Symposium: Promoting Ecological Health for the Whole Child
October 1, 2010
Mission Bay Conference Center, University of California, San Francisco

Pediatric Integrative Medicine embraces a holistic, whole-child approach, specifically examining the context - the ecology - in which optimal health and wellness is promoted. This groundbreaking one-day symposium will highlight a range of interacting factors that influence child health and development, including nutrition, education, socio-economic status, exposures to toxic chemicals, and access to preventative health care. Hosted by CHE, The Whole Child Center and the UCSF Osher Center for Integrative Medicine.

Registration opens April 15, 2010, early-bird registration fee only \$35

[Read more](#), including a complete symposium description and list of speakers

Resources from recent CHE calls:

If you missed any of the following CHE calls, you may listen to MP3 recordings and find supporting materials at the following links:

- March 15, 2010 - [A Conversation with Dr. Linda Birnbaum, Director, NIEHS](#)
- January 28, 2010 - [Report from the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen: Implications for Human Health](#)
- January 21, 2010 - [Upstream: Complex Chemical Contributors to Thyroid Function and the Potential Impacts on Policy](#)
- January 19, 2010 - CHE Science Cafe call: [A Conversation with Elizabeth Grossman, author of Chasing Molecules](#)

And of course, you can always explore our [archived resources](#)

CHE Working and Regional Group Updates

New CHE Blog

CHE has launched a blog to promote dialogue on issues at the intersection of human health and environment. Main blog posts are invited essays from CHE partners. Comments and discussion are welcome from all.
<http://ourhealthandenvironment.wordpress.com/>

CHE on Facebook

In addition to a new blog, CHE has also created a Facebook page to be updated several times a week with CHE announcements, important new reports and news and other information that may be of interest to our Partners. We invite you to visit and join the [CHE Facebook page](#).

Working Group Highlights:

CHE is proud to highlight each month new and exciting working group efforts, which continue to draw the link between health and the environment.

This month:

~ CHE-Fertility, CHE-Alaska, CHE-Washington and the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD), a partner of CHE-LDDI, are all offering important calls/meetings in the upcoming weeks addressing topics such as flame retardants, electro-magnetic field research and science and the implications of coal on human health. Read more and RSVP below.

CHE-Fertility

~coordinated by Julia Varshavsky, CHE Program Associate,
julia@healthandenvironment.org

~ CHE-Fertility co-hosts teleconference, Flame Retardants: Emerging Science and Policy Considerations. Join the CHE-Fertility Working Group and the Women's Health and Environment Initiative (WHEI), a program of Women's Voices for the Earth, for this joint call on Thursday, April 15, at 12 PM Pacific / 3 PM Eastern to explore these questions. On this call, we will discuss the latest science linking flame retardants to reproductive health and development, and opportunities for reducing exposure.

To RSVP and receive dial-in information for this call, please email Julia Varshavsky, CHE-Fertility Coordinator, at julia@healthandenvironment.org or Cassidy Randall, Program and Outreach Associate for Women's Voices for the Earth, at cassidy@womenandenvironment.org.

~ **Program on Reproductive Health and the Environment Reach the Decision Makers Training Program**, a project of the UCSF Program on Reproductive Health and the Environment, is an innovative science and policy training program that works to increase the number of scientists, community-based leaders, public health professionals and health care providers who are actively involved in informing the US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) of current and relevant scientific findings impacting their

decisions in setting policy.

The program, beginning in June 2010, is structured around a two day meeting in Washington DC, eight monthly 2-3 hour webinar trainings, and a final all day training in Oakland, CA in May 2011. Exact dates are included in the application. The trainings will address issues related to environmental reproductive health science and public policy, including how to work with the USEPA, understanding science and the role of science in public health decision-making, team building and leadership, and how communities can use science to improve community health and well-being.

If you are interested in applying for the inaugural class of 2010, please complete the application available at <http://prhe.ucsf.edu/prhe/reachdecisionmakers.html> and submit it to reach@obgyn.ucsf.edu. If you have any questions about the program or eligibility requirements, please contact PRHE at (510) 986-8990 or email reach@obgyn.ucsf.edu. Applications are due May 7th, 2010.

~ **From Environmental Health News: Infertility linked to prostate cancer**. Infertile men may have an increased risk of developing aggressive prostate cancer, researchers reported on Monday in what could be an important move toward identifying those who will benefit from screening for the disease. Reuters Health <http://www.reutershealth.com>. 23 March 2010.

In the first study to examine the relationship between dioxin and likelihood of conception, researchers report that higher dioxin levels are associated with difficulty in conceiving and higher rates of infertility. Having high levels of TCDD doubled a woman's chances of taking more than 12 months to conceive. The results come from long-term research on the effects of dioxin exposure caused by an explosion of a chemical plant in Seveso, Italy, in 1976. 9 April 2010.

[Read more](#)

~ **New article on BPA and Reproductive Health from the Guttmacher Institute**, titled "[BPA-Free and Beyond: Protecting Reproductive Health from Environmental Toxins](#)," written by Sneha Barot. Published in the Guttmacher Policy Review (Winter 2010, Volume 13, Number 1).

CHE-LDDI

~coordinated by Laura Abulafia, laura@healthandenvironment.org and Elise Miller, CHE Director, elise@healthandenvironment.org

~ **The LDDI Biomonitoring Project**, entitled Mind, Disrupted, can be found at www.minddisrupted.org. This project has been a major accomplishment of the LDDI working group and it's partnering organizations, and we encourage you to visit our website and collaborate with us on continued outreach with this important tool.

~ **The American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD)** is hosting it's monthly Research and Science Teleconference Series on **Tuesday April 13th from 2-3pm Eastern** on "Adaptive Behavior and the School Environment" with Brent Ibata. For more information, or to register, please visit www.aaidd.org/ehi and follow the "Teleconferences" under Projects and Activities. Or you can email Laura Abulafia, Director of Education and Outreach for the Environmental Health Initiative (EHI) at laura@aaidd.org.

~ **AAIDD's EHI is also hosting a Health Policy webinar on Wednesday April 21st from 2-3pm Eastern**. Speaking is Charlotte Brody from Blue Green Alliance, and she will be discussing the Safer Chemicals Healthy Families (SCHF) Health Report. For more information or to register, contact Joyce Martin, Director of Health Policy for the EHI, at jmartin@aaidd.org.

~ **The Mental Health working group** has published two new timely resources on Environmental Exposures and Mental Health. The two resources concerning pesticide exposure and mental health are available on the [Mental Health Working Group website](#). For more information, or to get involved in the Mental Health Working Group, contact Ed Seliger at eselig@thenadd.org.

~ **The Autism Society (ASA)** is planning a meeting in Dallas Texas on Thursday July 8th,

and will include a panel presentation on Environmental Health, Developmental Disability, Biomonitoring, and Public Health Policy. Contact Donna Ferullo from ASA for more information at dferullo@autism-society.org.

~Maureen Swanson from the **Learning Disabilities Association of America (LDA) Healthy Children Project** has been leading the efforts on health care reform legislation in Pennsylvania, and has also taken a leadership in federal chemical policy reform. For more information on LDA's or LDDI's work on health policy, especially in PA, please contact Maureen at mawanson@ldaamerica.org.

~The April issue of **Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD)**, a peer reviewed journal out of AAIDD, will publish an article in the Perspectives section written by leaders of the EHI and colleagues from Healthy Schools groups. Authors are Kristie Trousdale, Joyce Martin, Laura Abulafia, Claire Barnett, and Carol Westinghouse, and the paper is an adaptation from the AAIDD EHI teleconference hosted in 2009 on Green Schools by Carol Westinghouse.

~The June issue of the **Journal of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (JIDD)**, a peer reviewed journal out of AAIDD, will publish a paper on the LDDI Scientific Consensus Statement, entitled "Identific and policy statements on environmental agents associated with neurodevelopmental disorders," written by Steven Gilbert, Elise Miller, Joyce Martin, and Laura Abulafia. This will be published in JIDD Volume 35 Number 2, and can be found online at www.aaidd.org, or you can contact Steve Gilbert for more information at sgilbert@innd.org.

CHE Regional Working Groups Updates

CHE Alaska

~ coordinated by Pam Miller, pkmiller@akaction.net

~ **Join CHE-AK on Wednesday, May 12, 9:00 am Alaska time (1:00 pm EST) for their next teleconference: Coal Development in Alaska: Threats to Human Health**

Coal exploration and proposed development throughout Alaska threaten human health with potential hazardous emissions. At every stage - from mining, transportation, washing, combustion, and disposal of post-combustion wastes - coal development is a threat to human and environmental health. Pollutants from coal adversely affect all major organ systems in the human body and contribute to four of the top five causes of death in the United States: heart disease, cancer, stroke, and chronic lower respiratory diseases. Join us for a discussion of the dangerous chemicals associated with coal development, how these chemicals may affect our health, the status of coal-related projects in Alaska, and potential impacts to communities statewide. Find out about community-based advocacy efforts to address coal development in Alaska and how you can help protect the health of Alaskans from coal.

Featured speakers include:

Kristen Welker-Hood, ScD, MSN, RN, is the Director of Environment and Health Program at Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR) in Washington DC.

Tim Leach has served as the Coordinator of the Alaska Coal Working Group since September 2008.

Angela Wade, Environmental Stewardship Program Director, Chickaloon Village (invited speaker)

For more information or to join this free call and receive dial-up instructions, please RSVP to Alaska Community Action on Toxics at 907-222-7714 or diana@akaction.org

CHE HEAL

~coordinated by Lisette van an Vliet, lisette@env-health.org

~ **European health and environment ministers set priorities and targets:**The Fifth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health, which took place in Parma, Italy, 10-12 March 2010 created a major opportunity for policy makers from the 52 Member States

12 March 2010 created a major opportunity for policy makers from the 55 member states of the WHO European Region to discuss how environmental factors are affecting health. The Pan European process on Environment and Health began in 1989, and is credited with putting environment and health on the national agendas of many WHO European Region member states as well as spearheading international discussions in other regions and agreements, such as the WHO Children's Environment and Health Action Plan CEHAPE. The Fifth Ministerial meeting agreed a new institutional framework, as well as targets and timelines for the process which could bring more political weight to pressing environment and health issues. In addition, health impact of climate change and environmental inequalities are also now firmly on the agenda.

But non-governmental organisations, such as the Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL) felt there was little sense of urgency about deteriorating public health in Europe as a result of environmental conditions. Children's health is under serious threat, yet few ministers spoke with real recognition that we are facing a crisis in public health. [Read HEAL's full response to the talks](#)

During the three-day conference, HEAL together with Women in Europe for a Common Future (WECF), Ecoforum and International Society of Doctors for the Environment Austria presented CEHAPE Good Practice Awards selected from entries to a competition organised by the non-governmental organisations. The Awards highlighted inspiring examples of solutions to children's environmental health threats throughout the European Region. [Read more about the awards](#)

~ **Pesticide "victims" launch network in France:** Paul Francois is front page news in La Vie, a leading magazine in France. He is one of 40 farmers and "bystanders" affected by pesticide exposure who have formed a network to share experiences and bring attention to their plight. At their first meeting in Ruffec, near Poitiers in January 2010, recurrent themes included: a desire to support each other with legal cases; to "break the silence" about the effects of pesticides on health; and, to work for better protection against harmful pesticides in France. Mr. Francois and several other farmers have won compensation for conditions caused by exposure to pesticides, including cancer and Parkinson's Disease.

[Listen to Paul Francois's testimony \(English sub-titles\)](#)

The "victimes de pesticides" network is supported by MDRGF, Movement for the right and respect of future generations, which is HEAL's partner in France on the Sick of Pesticides campaign. This HEAL initiative in working with groups at national level is currently being expanded from France and the UK to Belgium, the Netherlands and Hungary. European countries are currently developing their national action plans on pesticides following the adoption of the European Union's so-called "EU pesticides package". This offers an important opportunity to bring health concerns related to pesticides to front stage, including the call for pesticide-free areas such as schools or kindergartens.

More information about this campaign from Anne Stauffer, Policy Manager, HEAL, anne@env-health.org

CHE Washington

~coordinated by Steve Gilbert, sgilbert@innnd.org or contact info@healthandenvironment.org

~ **The Washington State Chapter of the national Collaborative on Health and the Environment's (CHE-WA) next public meeting is Wednesday, May 26th from 2-4pm at Antioch University in Seattle.**

Meeting Topic: Cell Phones, Electromagnetic Fields and Human Health: The Latest Research

Entrance is free and open to the public. Those who cannot attend in person, and/or who want to reduce their carbon footprint, may contact us for a telephone number to call-in to the meeting by phone. We hope to see/hear you there!

For this May meeting we are proud to host Cindy Sage coordinator of the national Collaborative on Health and the Environment working group on electromagnetic fields. Joining Cindy will be Samuel Milham, MD, who was epidemiologist for the State of Washington for more than twenty years. Cindy gave a fascinating presentation on issues

related to children's exposure to cell phone radiation at our Northwest Children's Environmental Health Forum in October 2009. The May 26th meeting will update this information and build upon it to share more critical health research in this field. Dr. Milham will also contribute perspectives from his own research on occupational health hazards related to electromagnetic exposures

For more information contact: CHE-WA Coordinator Aimee Boulanger, aboulanger@whidbey.com, or CHE-WA host Steve Gilbert, sgilbert@innnd.org.

Announcements and News Highlights

Addition of National Toxicology Program carcinogens: The US Environmental Protection Agency is proposing to add 16 chemicals to the TRI list of reportable chemicals. Comments are due by June 6, 2010.
[More information](#)

April 2010 issue of Environmental Health Perspectives available online
[Read more](#)

April 2010 issue of Environmental Factor available online
[Read more](#)

Reports, Resources and Other Updates

EPA Launches *Science Matters*, a newsletter devoted to sharing the innovative environmental and human health science being conducted at the US Environmental Protection Agency.
[Read the inaugural issue](#)

EPA Makes Chemical Information More Accessible to the Public
For the first time, EPA is providing web access, free of charge, to the Toxic Substances Control Act Chemical Substance Inventory, which contains a consolidated list of thousands of industrial chemicals maintained by the agency.
[Access the TSCA Inventory](#)

The Committee on Breast Cancer and the Environment is holding its first meeting on April 14-15, 2010 at the National Academy of Sciences Keck Building. Part of the first day, April 14, will be open to the public to observe committee proceedings. The committee will hear from the study sponsor, Susan G. Komen for the Cure as well as other invited breast cancer research and advocacy organizations.
[Read more](#)

New study: State of the Art Report on Mixture Toxicity published by the EUs Directorate-General for the Environment
At the request of the EU, researchers at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden, have looked at the risk of "chemical cocktails" and have proposed a number of measures that need to be implemented in the current practice of chemical risk assessment. Any organisations or individuals with interest and relevant experience who would like to comment or ask questions on the report, are welcome to write to ENV-Chemical-Mixtures@ec.europa.eu by 30 April 2010 at the latest.
[Download the report](#)

CHE lists hundred of reports, books, videos, databases and other resources in a searchable [Portal to Science](#) on CHE's website.

Thank you for taking the time to read the latest about CHE. As always, we welcome your questions and suggestions. Please direct comments to Elise Miller, Director of CHE, at elise@healthandenvironment.org.

Best wishes,

Elise Miller, MEd, Director
Steve Heilig, Director of Public Health and Education at San Francisco Medical Society and CHE
Erika Sanders, Administrative Coordinator
Julia Varshavsky, Program Associate

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