Targeting Environmental Neuro-Developmental Risks

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Mission of Project TENDR

To reduce the exposure levels of environmental chemicals or pollutants that contribute to risks for neurodevelopmental disorders...

*as a means to achieve the public health goal of lowering incidence of these conditions.*
Neuro-Developmental Disorders

- Intellectual Disability
- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Attention Deficits
- Hyperactivity
- Learning Disabilities
- Other Neuro-developmental conditions
Project TENDR

How can we achieve the goal of exposure reduction?

How can we protect our most vulnerable?
Project TENDR:  
Getting organized – fall 2014

1 **Bring together scientists, health professionals, and child advocacy organizations (aimed for ~40 total)**

2 **Set targeted goals to reach consensus:**
   - Short list of chemicals that highlight the larger problem of toxicants in the environment
   - Address the systemic problem in chemical regulatory policies and implementation
   - Produce and publish a consensus statement
Project TENDR: The consensus-building process

1. Assembled list of about a dozen chemicals
2. Created a ‘Science Team’ to conduct reviews of each, using a standardized protocol
3. Presented summaries to full group
4. Conducted “Expert elicitation”: to air the full range of views from a diverse group, in advance of a meeting
Project TENDR: Expert elicitation

1. Initial survey of entire group
2. Discussed pros and cons for the different chemical classes and opportunities for regulatory action
3. Incorporated suggestions to expand the list of chemicals
4. Held second survey of entire group

Results showed strong consensus!!
Confirmed consensus on the short list:

- Lead
- Organophosphate pesticides
- Polybrominated diphenyl ethers (flame retardants)
- Air pollution

Initiated discussion of broader consensus statement
Began drafting recommendations on exposure reduction
Project TENDR:
First workshop - June 2015

Formation of workgroups:

- Each of four consensus-chemical groups
- Additional workgroup on phthalates
- Consensus statement writing
- Endorsements
- Media & Dissemination
- Scientific Publications
Project TENDR:
Second workshop - February 2016

Reviewed full drafts of recommendations

Discussed major themes of consensus statement:

- Magnitude of problem of neurotoxic chemicals
- Need for action to achieve exposure reduction
- Targeted chemicals: examples of regulatory failures
- Overhaul systems for chemical regulation: how scientific evidence is evaluated, need to act before children are harmed, ending the cycle of replacing one toxic chemical with another.
- Immediate recommendations for action on lead
Project TENDR:
Second workshop - February 2016

Brainstormed the dissemination messages for publicizing the consensus statement

Identified target audiences for recommendations:

- Policy makers
- Regulatory agencies
- Manufacturers, distributors, retailers
- Health professionals
- Consumers, the broad public
Project TENDR: Going public!

Launched our website: projectTENDR.com

Published our Consensus Statement: July 1, 2016 in Environmental Health Perspectives

Major media presence:
- New York Times feature story
- CNN online story
- Over 20 radio interviews with TENDR spokespeople
- 266 outlets reported on press release all across the U.S. (& beyond)
- 3 local NPR stations have hosted us, more are scheduled.
Project TENDR: Coming up...

Unveiling our chemical-specific recommendations (beyond lead ones)

Publication of our chemical reviews

Seeking further endorsements from professional organizations

Strengthening partnerships

Facilitating implementation
Project TENDR: Funding

- John Merck Fund
- Passport Foundation
- Ceres Trust
- NIEHS