



Collaborative on Health and the Environment

eNewsletter - May 2012

[Not yet a CHE Partner? Join CHE now](#)

[Invite a colleague to join CHE](#)

[Send us feedback](#)

Contents

[CHE Partnership Calls and Healthy Environments Across Generations Conference](#)

[Working and Regional Group Updates](#)

[Announcements and News Highlights](#)

[Reports, Resources and Other Updates](#)

In recognition of CHE's 10th anniversary, colleagues who have been particularly instrumental to shaping CHE this past decade will be invited to write an introduction. This month's introduction is by Sarah Howard, who serves as the national coordinator for CHE's Diabetes-Obesity Spectrum Working Group.

Critically High Blood Sugar, Critical Science

"It's critically high," the ER nurse informed me, describing my toddler's blood sugar level. She had just pricked his tiny finger, but it wasn't enough; she needed a blood draw to see how just how high it really was. Two nurses held down my son, while I tried to comfort him, while he screamed, while they prodded and poked, failing to hit a vein. The pediatric team was called in, and eventually he slept while I heard the result: 798, a number seared in my memory forever, a dangerously high blood sugar level. My 23 month old little boy had diabetes.

That was five years ago, almost 10,000 needles ago. After the shock of his diagnosis wore off, I started reading more about type 1 diabetes. I found out that type 1 incidence was increasing in children--in 58 different countries around the world. That the increasing type 1 incidence was due to some environmental factors, that genetics alone could not explain it. That the increase was most rapid in the youngest children, the children who, like my son, developed diabetes before their fifth birthday party. This much was clear. What was not clear was *why*.

I wondered, could toxic chemicals somehow be linked to type 1 diabetes? At first, the idea had not occurred to me; in my mind, like most people, diabetes was linked to things like diet and exercise, or viruses and cow's milk, not chemicals. But I reread *Our Stolen Future*, and noticed a sentence buried in the epilogue, "This recent work has emphasized the vulnerability of the brain and the immune system, which appear at least as sensitive as the reproductive system to prenatal disruption from contaminants, if not more so." The immune system? Type 1 diabetes is an autoimmune disease; were chemicals linked to autoimmunity? What exactly was "this recent work" about the effects of chemicals on the immune system? What did the science say?

It was then, four years ago, that someone told me about an organization called the "Collaborative on Health and the Environment," who were organizing a call entitled, "Self-Defense: Environmental Impacts on Autoimmune Diseases." What an amazing opportunity! Three leading experts on autoimmunity would be talking about the role of environmental chemicals in autoimmune diseases, plus an update by one of the authors of *Our Stolen Future*, Pete Myers, PhD. Not only that, but there was really a group called CHE that put together calls featuring scientists explaining their research to people like me? And I did not need a PhD to participate--in fact, as a patient and a mother I was quite welcome? I listened to the call, asked questions--too many--but the speakers were patient with me and answered my questions.

I wasted no time in joining CHE. I read the "[consensus statement](#)" and was thrilled that this organization emphasized prevention and precaution; that CHE called for collaboration among scientists, medical professionals, public health/environmental groups, and even patients and families; that CHE stated outright that "the public believes what scientists have long known that environmental factors are important contributors to disease and developmental disabilities."

I went to CHE's website and listened to other [calls that had been archived](#). I searched the [Toxicant and Disease Database](#) to see which chemicals were associated with diabetes, jump-starting my own research. I joined the CHE listserv on metabolic syndrome (now the [Diabetes-Obesity Spectrum Working Group](#)). Elise Miller, the Director of CHE, emailed me, and asked if I knew that the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) was reviewing the scientific evidence on chemicals and diabetes and obesity, and was organizing a conference on the topic? No, I hadn't known, but by getting involved in CHE, I was able to find out about events and opportunities like this, and now work closely with NIEHS. CHE was invaluable.

CHE is still invaluable. The science linking chemicals to many diseases and conditions is strong and becoming mainstream knowledge, thanks in part to 10 years of work by CHE. The science linking chemicals to diabetes and obesity is young and relatively unknown, but growing rapidly. CHE is helping to move environmental health science forward and bring it to the public and into the mainstream. While we now understand more about the role of chemicals in the development of many diseases, childhood diseases like asthma and diabetes are still on the increase. I hope that someday we will look back and see how science was critical to informing policy for preventing disease. That someday fewer and fewer children will experience a life-changing diagnosis, be it asthma, allergies, cancer, or diabetes.

* * * * *

Sarah Howard mentions several CHE resources above. We want to make sure you know about all CHE has to offer as over the last 10 years CHE's website has grown and expanded. In addition to scientific consensus statements and summary papers on environmental contributors to health, we offer a wide array of other tools and resources:

- Our [Toxicant and Disease Database](#), updated last year, summarizes the state of the evidence on links between hundreds of toxicants and dozens of diseases and disorders.
- A [news feed](#), updated most days, posts articles from news media and scientific journals, announcements, job openings, calls for comments, calls for proposals and more.
- A [calendar](#) is searchable by geographic area, category, working group interest, and more.
- A [Portal to Science](#) allows partners to search a list of more than 500 books, videos, websites, databases, reports and other resources on various health and environmental factors.
- Dozens of [Practice Prevention columns and fact sheets](#) summarize the state of the science for parents, caregivers and other nonscientists. Some of these are available in Spanish.
- Archives of [partnership calls](#) and [working group calls](#) include recordings of past calls along with slide presentations and resources from those calls.
- Resource-rich sections provide tools specific to CHE's working groups, such as the [Fertility and Reproductive Health Working Group's abstract library and news feed](#), the [Healthy Aging and the Environment Initiative's teaching materials and resources](#) and the [Cumulative Impacts Working Group's document collection](#).
- [CHE's Blog](#) provides commentary and analysis and allows for comment. Our [Facebook page](#) allows partners to keep abreast of recent developments.

CHE Partnership Calls

CHE Partnership call: Advancing Risk Assessment: Progress and Ongoing Obstacles

Thursday May 24, 2012 at 10:00 am Pacific / 1:00 pm Eastern

[RSVP for this call](#)

Risk assessment has become a dominant public policy tool for evaluating risks associated with exposures to chemicals. A standardized framework for conducting risk assessments, recommended by the National Academy of Sciences in 1983, has been widely adopted and used. Recently, at the request of the US EPA, a committee of the NAS reviewed the process and its nearly 30-year history of implementation, in light of recent scientific advances and long delays in completing risk assessments. The committee concluded that the risk assessment process was "bogged down" and needed significant overhaul to make it more responsive and incorporate contemporary science.

In May 2011 CHE hosted a call "[Science and Decisions: How Can We Advance Risk Assessment?](#)" primarily focused that report. This call is intended as a follow up to that discussion. The three presenters on this call will highlight some of the recommendations as summarized in "Strengthening Toxic Chemical Risk Assessments to Protect Human Health" published in February 2012. They will also discuss the status of progress toward the implementation of the proposed recommendations, along with longer-term obstacles that remain in order to more accurately evaluate public health risk.

Featured speakers will include:

- [Ted Schettler, MD, MPH](#), CHE Science Director, and Science Director of the Science and Environmental Health Network (SEHN); Coordinator of CHE's Science Working Group

- [Gina Solomon, MD, MPH](#), Deputy Secretary for science and health at the California Environmental Protection Agency
- [Lauren Zeise, PhD](#), Chief, Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA), Reproductive and Cancer Hazard Assessment Branch

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

Special Events and Announcements

Register today - space limited: The *Healthy Environments Across Generations* conference, which will take place at the New York Academy of Medicine on June 7-8, 2012, will address the environmental health aspects of how we live, eat, work, play, and socialize throughout life, and how we can transform our environments to promote health and prevent disease. Register now for this innovative event bringing together experts from many disciplines to help plan our collective future. Join us and over 50 sponsors to participate in "Thinking Forward" sessions, "Making Connections" roundtables with experts in many fields, and a range of creative special activities including a "wellness" tour of the Central Park Conservatory Gardens. New co-sponsors include the Alliance for Aging Research and the Cornell Institute for Translational Research on Aging.

This participatory conference will bring together leaders and innovators from multiple sectors to:

- Catalyze innovative approaches towards a systems-based approach to health across the lifespan;
- Identify key intervention points and crosscutting environmental solutions to help reverse rising disease trajectories;
- Develop intergenerational programmatic and policy recommendations/models that reflect an integrated approach to wellness; and
- Create an ongoing network for collaboration to build healthier communities for all.

Visit the [conference webpage](#) for more information and a link to the registration page.

Also, join the [conference on Facebook](#) to stay up to date on speakers, cosponsors, conference events and new announcements.

Submit creative expressions to "Unpaving Our Way to the Future": Submit your creative expressions for viewing at the "Healthy Environments Across Generations" conference. What would it take to create communities that are no longer paved with concrete and asphalt, but instead are designed to nurture our health and well-being and that of our communities for generations to come? We welcome creative artists of all ages and levels of experience to imagine how parking lots and other paved areas that cover so much of our landscapes, urban and rural, could be transformed into healthy, sustainable environments. Artistic submissions can include photography, poetry, essay, dance, music, painting, drama, puppet show, etc. Deadline for submissions is May 15th.

Download the flyer for complete submission details from the [conference webpage](#).

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:

- April 26, 2012 - [Designing Healthy Communities: A conversation with Dr. Richard Jackson](#)
- April 17, 2012 - [Nanotechnology: A Science and Policy Update](#)
- March 12, 2012 - [Phthalates and Proposed REACH Regulations](#)
- February 14, 2012 - [Health Effects of Indoor Air Contaminants](#)

You can subscribe via podcast to receive notifications of new call recordings added to the CHE archives. [View past calls and subscribe to the podcast.](#)

CHE Working and Regional Group Updates

Updated guidelines for participation in CHE listservs

CHE is designed to be a safe and constructive space for all CHE Partners to work collectively to raise the level of public and professional dialogue about environmental health. Our primary mission is to share emerging science related to exposures to contaminants as well as other factors that can impact human and ecological health. To help meet this mission CHE has developed guidelines--CHETiquette--for participating and posting on CHE's listservs. We have recently updated the guidelines and invite all CHE Partners to review them.

[Review CHETiquette](#) (scroll to bottom of page)

Stay in touch with CHE through social media:

Visit [CHE's blog](#) to read a recent post by CHE Partner Alice Shabecoff, co-author of *Poisoned for Profit: How Toxins are Making Our Children Chronically Ill*, on increasing autism rates and a post by Ted Schettler, Science Director for the Science and Environmental Health Network and CHE, on premature aging and waste landfill sites. Comments are welcome.

Visit CHE's [Facebook page](#).

CHE Autism

~ coordinated by Michael Lerner, for more information contact info@healthandenvironment.org

Top 10 Chemicals Most Likely to Cause Autism and Learning Disabilities

In an editorial by Dr. Phil Landrigan, Dr. Linda Birnbaum, and Dr. Luca Lambertini, the authors outline 'A Research Strategy to Discover the Environmental Causes of Autism and Neurodevelopmental Disabilities.' Environmental Health Perspectives.

[Read more](#)

Potential Mechanisms Linking Pesticides and Autism

Because multiple developmental processes are implicated in ASDs during gestation and early life, biological plausibility is more likely if these agents can be shown to affect core pathophysiological features. Here we review shared mechanisms between autism pathophysiology and effects of pesticide exposures, focusing on neuroexcitability, oxidative stress, and immune functions. Environmental Health Perspectives.

[Read more](#)

Maternal Smoking During Pregnancy and the Prevalence of Autism Spectrum Disorders

Reported associations between gestational tobacco exposure and autism spectrum disorders (ASDs) have been inconsistent. This study estimates the association between maternal smoking during pregnancy and ASDs among children aged 8 years, using data from the Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring Network. Environmental Health Perspectives.

[Read more](#)

CHE Climate Change

~ coordinated by Genon Jensen, for more information contact info@healthandenvironment.org

~ **WHO webinar series:** Climate Change and Health: "The Role of Health in Sustainable Development: Focus on Rio+20"

May 10, 2012 at 6:00 pm Central European Summer Time, Geneva

A second WHO/IFMSA/Health Canada webinar is taking place and will outline how the thinking about health and development has evolved since the first Rio conference for greater awareness of the links between health and the environment. This includes the [health co-benefits](#) of certain climate change strategies, how health behavior can be influenced by the environment, as well as the importance of social determinants of health and access to health coverage, as the defining factors influencing the rates of non-communicable diseases and diseases of poverty. The webinar will last 90 minutes with opportunities to ask questions of the panel.

[Register](#)

~ **Expert Dialogue on Diabetes and Climate Change**

May 23, 2012 during the Sixty-fifth World Health Assembly, Geneva

Against the backdrop of the World Health Assembly and looking ahead to the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), a Diabetes and Climate Change Expert Dialogue has been established to discuss the interconnections between these two global risks. The Dialogue will convene experts from the diabetes, health and environmental communities to explore shared opportunities to mitigate climate change, prevent diabetes, and drive an integrated approach to health and the environment. For more information, contact the International Diabetes Federation: info@idf.org

Cumulative Impacts Working Group hosted by CHE and SEHN

~ coordinated by Elise Miller and Carolyn Raffensperger, for more information visit the [Cumulative Impacts website](#)

~ **Join us!: Strategic meeting working group call:**

Tuesday May 22, 2012 at 11:00 am Pacific / 2 pm Eastern

The Cumulative Impacts Project is well into its second year and it's time to take stock. Mark your calendars for a teleconference meeting of the Cumulative Impacts Working Group on Tuesday May 22, 2012 at 11:00 am Pacific / 2:00 pm Eastern. Note: this call is scheduled for 1.5 hours.

Dial-in: 1-605-475-6350, Access code: 198686#

The Cumulative Impacts Working Group (CIWG), co-coordinated by the Science and Environmental Health Network (SEHN) and the Collaborative on Health and the Environment (CHE), held its first organizing call on February 1, 2011 and has since grown to nearly 100 participants. Over the last year, we have held monthly calls with leading researchers, thought leaders and advocates in this budding field. Find links to these information-packed calls, including MP3 audio recordings, by entering, "cumulative impacts working group" in the search slot on the [project website's search page](#).

[The website](#) is a gateway to hundreds of documents and links on cumulative impacts at all levels--ecological, community, and individual health. Its unique search system links both problems and solutions at all levels. For example, in the [Topical Search box](#) click on "community/environmental justice" and "best practices" and scan more than 90 entries that link the health of individuals, communities, and the natural world.

CIWG now offers a weekly summary of recent research and other postings that we don't want you to miss. Listserv members will receive these automatically.

What's next?

This 90-minute call will be a wide-open conversation around 4 questions:

- What have we each learned in our work on cumulative impacts?
- What barriers remain to understanding and addressing cumulative impacts?
- What are the best of the best practices and solutions?
- Where do we go from here?

CHE Diabetes-Obesity Spectrum

~ coordinated by Sarah Howard, for more information contact info@healthandenvironment.org

~ Join CHE at the [American Diabetes Association's 72nd Scientific Sessions in Philadelphia](#) for the following events:

Saturday June 9, 11:30am, "Environmental Risk Factors for Diabetes," Audio Poster Tour.

Monday June 11, 12:30pm, "Environmental Chemicals and Diabetes Risk: Epidemiology, Pathophysiology, and Exposure Assessment," Epidemiology and Statistics Interest Group Discussion.

~ **New articles and research published in academic and scientific journals:**

Taxvig C, Dreisig K, Boberg J, et al. 2012. Differential effects of environmental chemicals and food contaminants on adipogenesis, biomarker release and PPAR γ activation. Mol.Cell Endocrinol.

[Read more](#)

Ruzzin J. 2012. Public health concern behind the exposure to persistent organic pollutants and the risk of metabolic diseases. BMC.Public Health 12(1):298.

[Read more](#)

Rundle A, Hoepner L, Hassoun A, et al. 2012. Association of Childhood Obesity with Maternal Exposure to Ambient Air Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons During Pregnancy. *Am.J.Epidemiol.*

[Read more](#)

Kim KS, Hong NS, Jacobs DR, Jr., Lee DH. 2012. Interaction Between Persistent Organic Pollutants and C-reactive Protein in Estimating Insulin Resistance Among Non-diabetic Adults. *J.Prev.Med.Public Health* 45(2):62-69.

[Read more](#)

Lind PM, Zethelius B, Lind L. 2012. Circulating Levels of Phthalate Metabolites Are Associated With Prevalent Diabetes in the Elderly. *Diabetes Care*.

[Read more](#)

CHE Fertility

~ coordinated by Karin Russ, karin@healthandenvironment.org

~ CHE Teleconference: Electromagnetic Frequency (EMF) Waves and Reproductive Health Risks

Monday May 21st, 10 a.m. Pacific / 1 pm Eastern

EMF waves from cell phones, computers and other wireless electronic devices are ubiquitous in our environment. The research base linking EMF exposure to negative reproductive health effects continues to grow. This teleconference will examine recent research on EMF exposure, infertility, and negative pregnancy outcomes. Join us to hear from top international experts in the field: Drs. Ashok Agarwal, De-Kun Li, and Carlo V. Bellieni.

[More information and to RSVP](#)

~ DES Action launches international Health History Survey

DES Action USA is taking steps to learn whether certain health conditions, beyond those already known, appear more frequently in DES-exposed individuals than among unexposed populations. The survey is intended as an informal assessment, not a scientific study. DES action is looking for trends to share with researchers who can follow-up with further study. The survey deadline is June 15, 2012.

[Read more](#)

~ New articles and research published in academic and scientific journals:

Reproductive technologies and the risk of birth defects

Data from more than 300,000 births in South Australia from 1986 to 2002 showed that 8.3% of children conceived through some form of assisted reproductive technology developed a birth defect compared to 5.8% of children conceived naturally. The use of intracytoplasmic sperm injection was tied to a 57% increased risk of a birth defect, while in vitro fertilization showed no statistically significant increased risk, researchers wrote in the *New England Journal of Medicine*.

[Read more](#)

Environmentally induced epigenetic transgenerational inheritance of ovarian disease The actions of environmental toxicants and relevant mixtures in promoting the epigenetic transgenerational inheritance of ovarian disease were investigated with the use of a fungicide, a pesticide mixture, a plastic mixture, dioxin and a hydrocarbon mixture. *PLoS One*.

[Read more](#)

Exposures to pesticide in utero linked to brain abnormalities

Babies exposed in the womb to a commonly used insecticide have brain abnormalities after birth, according to a study that looked at children born before the U.S. limited the chemical's use. Bloomberg News.

[Read more](#)

Prenatal BPA exposure and child behavior in an inner city cohort

Researchers examined the association between prenatal BPA exposure and child behavior, adjusting for postnatal BPA exposure, and hypothesizing sex-specific effects. Results suggest that prenatal exposure to BPA may affect child behavior, and differently among boys and girls. Environmental Health Perspectives.

[Read more](#)

Birth defects more common in IVF babies

Babies conceived through certain fertility treatment techniques are about one-third more likely to have a birth defect than babies conceived without any extra help from technology, according to a review of several dozen studies. Reuters.

[Read more](#)

Fetal exposure to PFOA and adult body weight

Pre-birth exposures to low doses of a compound--PFOA--that has been widely found in fast food packaging and household products, may increase body weight in women but not men, a new study finds. This is the first time that this chemical, which has been used in the manufacturing of water and stain resistant compounds, has been linked to obesity in humans, although this study was initiated because of research with mice showing that low dose exposures to PFOA in the womb cause post-pubertal weight gain. Environmental Health Perspectives.

[Read more](#)

Urinary bisphenol-A concentrations and implantation failure among women undergoing in vitro fertilization

Researchers evaluated the association of urinary BPA concentrations with implantation failure among women undergoing in vitro fertilization (IVF). There was a positive linear dose-response association between BPA urinary concentrations and implantation failure. Environmental Health Perspectives.

[Read more](#)

SES factors and phthalates among US women of reproductive age

Researchers pooled data from the 2001-2008 NHANE Survey to examine the associations between phthalate metabolite concentrations with socioeconomic indicators among women 20 to 39 years age. The lowest quartile of overall socioeconomic status was associated with 1.83 times the concentrations of MBzP, and 0.72 times the concentrations of DEHP metabolites compared with the highest quartile. Biomarkers of phthalate exposure vary with socioeconomic factors in women of reproductive age in the United States. Environmental Research.

[Read more](#)

~ **New resources:**

Danish EPA booklet: Expecting a baby

The Danish EPA has published a booklet for expectant mothers entitled: Expecting a Baby?

Chemicals and Pregnancy- Advice about Chemicals and Pregnancy. The booklet lists strategies for risk reduction.

[Download the booklet](#) (PDF)

Video: Prenatal exposure to atrazine, other pesticides

Like many expectant moms, filmmaker Penelope Jagessar Chaffer was curious about how the chemicals in her environment would affect her growing baby. In this TEDWomen talk, she asks an expert on the effects of pesticides on amphibians to explain how a certain pesticides, could affect her baby. Mother Nature Network.

[View the video](#)

CHE Regional Working Groups Updates

CHE Alaska

~ coordinated by Pam Miller, pkmiller@akaction.net

~ **Working group call:** Little Changes: A Discussion with Author Kristi Marsh on How to Avoid Chemicals in Your Daily Life

Wednesday May 30, 2012 at 9:00 am Alaska / 10:00 am Pacific / 1:00 pm Eastern

RSVP: To join this free call and receive the dial-up instructions, please RSVP to Alaska Community Action on Toxics at diana@akaction.org or (907) 222-7714.

Kristi Marsh beat cancer and now inspires others to live cleaner, greener lives. Diagnosed with an aggressive breast cancer at age thirty-six, and with three young children at home, Kristi started on a quest to eliminate harmful chemicals from her life and environment. The more she learned and made changes the more she wanted to share that knowledge. She describes her journey and her philosophy in her first book Little Changes: Tales from a Reluctant Home Eco-Momics Pioneer. She says "by learning about the products we smother on our skin, foods we devour, and surroundings in which we immerse ourselves, we can find peace, joy, and pride in a healthier home." Kristi is founder of Choose Wiser, an organization dedicated to educating people about the interaction between environmental toxins and their health, and empowering and encouraging them to raise the bar on the products they purchase and bring into their homes by becoming, savvy, aware consumers. Whether you are new to this journey or well on your way to avoiding contaminants, Kristi's suggestions will inspire you to make little changes that can make a big difference.

CHE HEAL

~ coordinated by Lisette Van Vliet, lissette@env-health.org

~ **European public interest groups tell European Parliament to say 'no' to shale gas:**

European and other NGOs issued a joint statement as the European Parliament prepares a report on hydrological fracturing of Shale for natural gas. They call it a dangerous experiment for the environment and human health. There are grave concerns about environmental pollution and contributions to climate change from the technique, called fracking, which industries have started exploring in Europe.

In a joint position statement a coalition of environment and health NGOs, including Friends of the Earth Europe (FOEE), Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL), and Food and Water Europe, called on EU member states to suspend existing 'fracking' projects and ban new ones. The warning comes following a draft report on shale gas published on the 11th of April by Member of European Parliament (MEP) Boguslaw Sonik for the parliamentary committee

working on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety.

Groups call on the European Parliament to take a strong stand, and not to feed into the fossil fuel addiction.

[Read the full position statement](#)

~ **US expert warns European Parliamentarians on feminisation of boys:** Professor Shanna Swan, a leading US scientist and expert on phthalates, was at EU Parliament on 12 April 2012 to present EU decision makers with her latest research findings on the health impacts of endocrine disrupting chemicals (EDCs).

Professor Swan highlighted her work linking exposure to phthalates and a feminisation of boys exposed in utero. Author of more than 160 scientific papers, along with her colleagues, Professor and Vice-Chair Shanna Swan at the Department of Preventive Medicine in Mount Sinai School of Medicine in New York (USA) published groundbreaking research in 2005 linking mothers' phthalate levels with altered genital development in their baby sons. The research findings soon influenced US policy debate and legislation in major ways, resulting in the ban of phthalates from children articles in 2008. Phthalates are chemicals widely found in cosmetics, pesticides, PVC plastics--including some tubing used in intravenous drips, pharmaceuticals, and indoor air.

Cristel Schaldemose, Member of the European Parliament, hosted the well attended breakfast briefing organized by the Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL) and Réseau Environnement Sante (RES). Prof. Swan's concerns were supported by talks from André Cicoella, a toxicologist and scientific adviser to the French National Institute of Environment and Risks (INERIS) and chair of RES, who emphasised recent bans on EDCs in France. Lisette van Vliet, Senior Policy Adviser for Chemicals and Chronic Disease Prevention at HEAL, laid out the potential opportunities for EU policy action on EDCs for better public health protection.

Prof. Swan's visit comes at an important moment as the EU Parliament has recently announced an own-initiative report on EDCs, a clear sign of concern on public health regarding EDCs, the existing levels of the population's exposure and the need for appropriate legislation.

Additional information:

Dr. Swan's article from 2005, "Decrease in Anogenital Distance among Male Infants with Prenatal Phthalate Exposure" *Environ Health Perspect* 113(8):1056-1061 (2005); doi:10.1289/ehp.8100

[Read the article](#)

Endocrine Disruptors Website, Directorate General of Environment, European Commission

[View the website](#)

~ **French conference puts spotlight on health impacts of pesticides**

The French public interest organisation, Générations Futures, held a well attended congress on pesticides and health in the French Senate at the Palais du Luxembourg, Paris on 23 March 2012. The Congress, *Pesticides and Health: Which avenues for improvement are possible?* marks a new milestone in the national debate about the environmental and health consequences arising from France's status as the world's fourth largest user of pesticides. Yet the conference also had wider European and international implications, as it brought together a network of French farmers whose health has been affected by pesticide use, and who've gained legal recognition of their illness.

The meeting provided a valuable opportunity for exchange of information and views because

the French Senate has recently announced that it will set up a Commission on pesticides and health, which will report later this year. As a result, 12 senators and numerous assistants took an active part in the multi-disciplinary conference. The format of the meeting was exciting, with a series of scientific presentations followed by lively round-tables with doctors, lawyers, journalists and farmers on legal recognition of health effects and on "an alternative development model".

Several speakers commented on the legal victory of Paul Francois, President of the 'Pesticide Sufferers' ("Phyto-victimes") network, against the pesticide giant, Monsanto ([read more](#)). His response was modest, Paul being more eager to share a welcome prediction that Parkinson's disease would soon be added to the currently far-too-short list of diseases caused by pesticide exposure in France.

Another important development was the representation of "bystanders" at the conference-- that is, people exposed to pesticides as result of living or otherwise being in proximity to agricultural spraying or other pesticide use. Lawyer Stephane Cottineau said that the existing legislation intended to protect bystanders was so complicated as to render it virtually useless for the general public. He planned to help define rights to "buffer zones" on behalf of bystanders.

A compelling presentation was given by prize-winning endocrine paediatric doctor Charles Sultan. He said the scientific evidence of the harm to health of endocrine-disrupting pesticides was now available from five different scientific disciplines. He described "a new concept in medicine": exposure in the foetal phase which produced health consequences later in life. Dr. Sultan's clinical work involves treating increasing numbers of cases of very premature puberty in young girls but he also highlighted another speaker's evidence of a growing number of cases of "micro penis" in baby boys. He said it was time for EDCs to be subjected to the same assessment process as pharmaceuticals and that politicians and doctors should call for the banning all endocrine disrupting pesticides in France.

The congress produced 12 key demands on "Pesticides and health: Which avenues for improvement are possible?" (in French)

[Read more](#)

The meeting also launched a survey to elicit information from French politicians on their positions on pesticides.

[Read more](#)

After the first day of the congress, a preview of the powerful and moving documentary film "La mort est dans le pre" was shown in the Paris Town Hall (Hotel de Ville) followed by a discussion with members of the Pesticides Sufferers / Phytovictimes network and the director of the film.

[View the trailer of the documentary](#)

~ Regulating chemicals with endocrine disrupting properties: new CHEM Trust and HEAL briefing: The EU is developing an agreed way to identify chemicals with endocrine disrupting properties, for future regulatory action. To ensure these criteria catch harmful EDCs and enable swift reduction of exposures to protect public health, HEAL and CHEM Trust advocate that important scientific studies be used and that chemicals are not excused on the basis of a misleading indicator of risk.

Chemicals should be defined as endocrine disruptors (EDs) on the basis of whether or not

they have the ability to disrupt the functioning of the endocrine system in laboratory studies. The evidence should be drawn not only from all internationally agreed tests but also from other studies, including reviews of published scientific literature.

Some argue that the level of potency of the endocrine disrupting properties should be used as a first filter to decide which EDCs should be addressed, with low potency ones being excluded from further consideration. This is not acceptable for several reasons. First, the EU political agreement mandated the identification of EDCs per se, without consideration of potency. Second, the potency filter presumes a 'safe threshold' which is unlikely. Even small amounts of a weakly potent EDC may cause adverse effects because it may add to existing exposures of synthetic hormones or act together with natural hormones. Third, a semi-potent endocrine disrupting chemical (EDC) may be produced in large amounts leading to high and widespread exposure. Fourth, the exposure may occur at a time of special human vulnerability: in utero or during puberty, for example. A further feature is that some EDCs are known to have stronger adverse effects at lower doses than at higher ones.

HEAL and CHEM Trust have produced the following briefing that explains these issues in further detail. These important ED properties should be taken into account to ensure that EDCs are correctly identified for further regulatory action.

The briefing is available in English and French and translations into German, Spanish and Swedish are anticipated

[Read more](#)

CHE Washington

~ coordinated by Steve Gilbert, sgilbert@innd.org and Aimee Boulanger, aboulanger@whidbey.com

~ Meeting: CHE-WA Children's Environmental Health Working Group

Thursday May 10 , 2012 from 9:30 to 11:30 am Pacific

RSVP: Gail Gensler, gail.gensler@kingcounty.gov

Location: Health Resources and Services Administration Information Center, 2201 Sixth Ave, Seattle, WA 98121. Meeting will be on the 3rd floor, in the ACF suite, in the Rainier Room.

Parking: Public parking is available on the street, in the lot next door, and in the building. The location is also close to many bus lines that run along 3rd Ave or even from Westlake Center (about 4 blocks away).

Speaker: Steve Gilbert, PhD, DABT INND ([Institute of Neurotoxicology & Neurological Disorders](#)) will discuss environmental health findings from his recent trip to Gaza.

Participate by phone: 1-866-756-1071, access code: 9016859

For last minute help on the day of the event: Contact Diana de Forest, HRSA ORO, at 206-615-2518.

Announcements and News Highlights

How Chemicals Change Us

Scientists warn that chemicals we're exposed to everyday can cause genital deformities and even breast cancer. Is our government paying attention? New York Times.

[Read more](#)

Call for proposals: NIMHD Community-Based Participatory Research

The National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities invites applications to plan the development of effective interventions using community-based participatory research (CBPR) approaches. The closing date is June 27th.

[Read more](#)

Call for proposals: Assessing and Addressing Community Exposures to Environmental Contaminants

This FOA encourages community-engagement projects designed to investigate the potential health risks of environmental exposures of concern to a community and to implement an environmental public health action plan based on research findings. The closing date is September 7, 2015.

[Read more](#)

Call for proposals: Children's Environmental Health and Disease Prevention Research Centers

This Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) issued by NIEHS and EPA encourages grant applications to support a transdisciplinary program of basic and applied research to examine the effects of environmental factors on children's health and well-being. Research conducted through the Centers should include substantive areas of science in children's health while incorporating innovative technologies and approaches and links to the environment. Letters of intent are due June 17th.

[Read more](#)

Environmental Health News: email, Facebook, Twitter and a website archive

EHN and its sister site, The Daily Climate, offer a wealth of valuable information each day at no cost to subscribers. The daily email subscriptions and the 350,000-item news archive have recently been supplemented by a Facebook page and Twitter feed.

[Visit the website](#)

[Visit the EHN archives page](#)

Friend EHN on Facebook by searching for Environmental Health News

May 2012 issue of *Environmental Health Perspectives* available online

[Read more](#)

May 2012 issue of *Environmental Factor* available online

[Read more](#)

CHE maintains a [news feed](#) of environmental health related news announcements and events collected from a multitude of sources on CHE's website.

Reports, Resources and Other Updates

New study from CCCEH finds exposure to bisphenol-A in the womb is linked to behavioral problems in young children

Over the past few years two new phrases have been introduced to our everyday language-- bisphenol-A (BPA) and endocrine disrupting chemicals. According to a new study by researchers at Columbia Center for Children's Environmental Health at the Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health, exposure to BPA in the womb may be linked to behavioral problems in young children.

[Read online edition of study in Environmental Health Perspectives](#)

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

You are receiving this message because you are subscribed to the CHE National listserv. This message comes to you from the Collaborative on Health and the Environment, online at: <http://www.healthandenvironment.org/>.

We encourage sharing of resources and welcome recipients of this email to forward it to others. However we do ask that you forward this message in its entirety, complete with its attribution and footer.

[Forward email](#)



Try it FREE today.

This email was sent to erika@healthandenvironment.org by erika@healthandenvironment.org | [Update Profile/Email Address](#) | Instant removal with [SafeUnsubscribe™](#) | [Privacy Policy](#).

Collaborative on Health and the Environment | P.O. Box 316 | Bolinas | CA | 94924