

# HECANET November 2004

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\* To reflect activities in the next issue of HECANET send information to [heca@nyo.unep.org](mailto:heca@nyo.unep.org)

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### ARTICLES

As in previous months, children's environmental health issues received sustained attention in European and North American national and local media outlets, particularly as it related to studies of the affects of certain chemicals on fetal and child growth and development. It is noteworthy that there are an increasing number of articles specifically related to children's environmental health in developing country/countries in with economies in transition which were picked up by HECANET. These include stories on: lead poisoning in South Africa and Kenya, air pollution in Afghanistan and rural India, chemical contamination in Arctic Russians and Albania, pollution from mines in Indonesia, the continuing effects of the Bhopal India industrial accident, depleted uranium in Iraq, pesticide poisoning in India and Costa Rica, mercury levels in Bermuda, water quality in China, Peru and Nigeria, urban malaria in Ghana, the effects of oil production in Chechnya, as well as more general environmental risk factors regionally and globally. Summaries of articles grouped under the following themes appear below, with links to their full texts:

- (1) **AIR POLLUTION:** (a) **Indoor air pollution**, (b) **Outdoor air pollution**
- (2) **CHEMICALS:** (a) **General**, (b) **Lead**, (c) **Pesticides**, (d) **Mercury** (e) **Fire retardants**
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**Healthy Environments for Children Alliance (HECA)** is a world-wide alliance to reduce environmental risks to children's health that arise from the settings where they live, learn, play, and sometimes work, by providing knowledge, increasing political will, mobilizing resources, and catalysing intense and urgent action.

**HECANET** is an international mailing list dedicated to promoting healthy environments for children. The list provides updates on the activities of the Healthy Environments for Children Alliance (HECA) and its members, as well as an overview of media coverage of children's environmental health issues and relevant meetings, research findings and information and advocacy resources.

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### EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

- (1) **HECA Developments**

The Steering Group of the Healthy Environments for Children Alliance (HECA) held their annual face-to-face meeting from 10 to 12 November 2004 in Washington, D.C. at the offices of Earth Day Network and the Pan-American Sanitary Bureau/Regional Office of the Americas, World Health Organization. The purpose of the meeting was to take stock of progress to date, review HECA's "niche" as a global player, agree on key elements of an implementation plan, and discuss other matters central to the business of the Alliance. Members of the HECA Steering Group, the decision-making body of the Alliance, comprise representatives from national governments, bodies of the United Nations system, non-governmental organizations, foundations, academia and institutions from around the world.

The key outcome of the meeting was a draft implementation plan with specific actions and deliverables identified. Priority activities identified to form the basis of HECA's programme and activities for the next three years include the development of a clearinghouse of information on children's environmental health, capacity-building activities in countries including training and education, development of a communication and marketing kit for HECA, facilitating the development of national HEC movements in countries through conducting of baseline policy-oriented assessments, and supporting sub-regional activities and meetings of relevance to children's environmental health, including incorporating a children's environmental health focus into the 2005 Earth Day. Other issues discussed included resource mobilization and involvement of the private sector, membership criteria and creation of a HECA forum, and future models and options to support the HECA Secretariat.

The final report of the meeting, including the draft three-year implementation plan, as well as background documentation, will shortly be available on the [HECA website](#).

## **(2) Global Initiative on Children's Environmental Health Indicators**

The second issue of the "Global Initiative on Children's Environmental Health Indicators" newsletter (November) was distributed. The newsletter was set up to engage partners with the Global Initiative on Children's Environmental Health Indicators. It aims to provide up-to-date information on relevant global, regional and national indicator activities. The November issue contains information on new publications and progress with regard to the initiative's pilot projects. Regional pilots are underway in Africa, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Middle East, and North America. Two regional pilots will be highlighted in each newsletter (this issue covers PAHO and EURO). News on other pilots is available on the CEH web site in the indicators section (regional pilots). There is also information in the newsletter on the review of CEH information in international surveys, and the inclusion of solid fuel use in DHS & MICS surveys. To sign up or for further information, please contact [CEHI](#) or visit the [web-site](#).

## **(3) UNEP - Children's World Summit for the Environment**

UNEP and the Aichi Prefectural Government of Japan will host the first [Children's World Summit for the Environment](#) in Toyohashi and Toyota cities, Japan, from 26 to 29 July 2005. The Summit will bring together up to 1,000 children, aged 10 to 14 years, and adult chaperones to review the implications of environmental problems to their livelihood. The Summit will endeavour to increase children's understanding of environmental issues through the sharing of experiences and opinions and will provide an opportunity for them to collectively voice their concerns for the environment. It will also inspire them to initiate and implement community environmental projects and to remove ethnic barriers while creating new relationships that will last well beyond the Summit.

## **(4) UNEP - International Children's Painting Competition on the Environment**

The majesty and misery of the world's cities will be at the heart of this year's [International Children's Painting Competition on the Environment](#), sponsored by UNEP, the Japan-based Foundation for Global Peace and Environment and Bayer AG. The 2004-2005 competition will focus on the theme "Green Cities". It will, for the first time, have a global competition as well as regional competitions and will be organized in cooperation with partners in the regions. The competition is open to children between the age of 6 and 14 years around the world and all entries should reach the relevant UNEP regional offices before 31 January 2005. Paintings may be submitted as hard copies or through the [Tunza web-site](#)

## **(5) International Conference on Childhood Exposures to Environmental Chemicals**

The Health Protection Agency UK will be hosting the [7<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Chemical Hazards](#) from 7-8 December at the Hilton Cardiff in Wales, UK. The central theme of this year's conference is 'Childhood Exposures to Environmental Chemicals: Implications for Public Health'. The focus will be on: the broad principles of paediatric toxicology, the precautionary principle, indoor and outdoor air pollution, hazardous environments, water pollution and contaminated land, waste disposal, childhood poisoning, emergency planning and preparedness, and policy development and implementation. Details of the programme will be posted in due course. For further information, please contact the [Conference Administrator](#).

#### **(6) European Public Health Alliance Environment Network - video**

For immediate viewing on the [website of the European Public Health Alliance Environment Network](#) (EEN) is a video that brings to you and other policy makers the views of young people on environmental health. Entitled ['It's our world, our future too: Young people's voices on Environment and Health priorities'](#), the video gives school-age children and students an opportunity to say that what they see as the major environmental problems for their health and to propose some solutions. Environment Commissioner Margot Wallström is featured saying why she believes children's needs in relation to our environment must always be a number one priority. Copies of the full DVD version of the video are available free of charge by contacting Monica Guarinoni, European Public Health Alliance Environment Network (EEN). E-mail: [monica@env-health.org](mailto:monica@env-health.org) or tel: +32 2 233 3875 A booklet to accompany the video is currently being produced to help promote video use with children in schools and other community settings (available early 2005). The project was made possible with the support of the European Commission and the UK Health Protection Agency.

#### **(7) International Society of Doctors for the Environment Latin America/Argentinean Society of Doctors for the Environment**

17 to 20 November, 2004: AAMMA-ISDE.LA, from 17-20 November 2004 in City of Buenos Aires, co-organized and presented with the Argentinean Society of Pediatrics a panel on "Environment and Child Health: Problems and interventions in the community" at the 3rd Argentinean Congress of General Pediatrics and 1st Working Day of Pediatric Nursery. AAMMA-ISDE.LA educational team lectured on "Chemical Safety: Toxic chemicals on neurodevelopment", "Environmental threats: where children play, learn and work" and "Special vulnerability of children to environmental risk".

AAMMA-ISDE.LA, on November 25th, 2004 was invited to a Workshop on "Environment, Safety and Occupational Health in Health Care Institutions" organized by University Hospital CEMIC (Center of Medical Studies and Clinic Research) and Forum 14.000, in Buenos Aires. AAMMA-ISDE.LA organized a panel on "Health Effects of the Health Care System". The topics presented were "Health impacts caused by the medical industry" and "Toxic exposure on hospitalized children" and "Sustainable hospitals: Clean alternatives".

## **ARTICLES**

### **(1) AIR POLLUTION: (a) General**

[ADB gives grant for Afghanistan to tackle air pollution](#) Deteriorating air quality in Kabul, caused most likely by vehicle emissions and smoke fires, is taking a toll on public health and welfare and poses a significant burden in the form of resultant economic and social costs, the ADB said, adding that the poor especially elderly and infants, are most at risk. AP. [Terra Daily](#). 3 November 2004.

[Asthma's wheezy feeling](#) Asthma can be brought on by allergies, respiratory infections and exposure to irritants, such as air pollution. The disease is more prevalent in Western, urbanized countries, possibly, at least in the US, from a decrease in air quality, spending more time indoors where dust and other allergens are located. Shelley Widhalm. [Washington Times](#). 16 November 2004.

[Kids assist in Bronx asthma study](#) Using fifth graders with backpacks to measure the air pollution they encounter in their everyday lives. The project is part of a larger study NYU began in 1998, the South Bronx Environmental Health and Policy Study, which looks at how the area's air quality is related to environmental factors. Amy Odell. [NYU Washington Square Times](#), New York. 15 November 2004.

## **(b) Indoor air pollution**

[Grant to tackle air pollution](#) The US announced two grants totaling \$230,000 for community-based programmes to reduce indoor air pollution. Indoor smoke from home cooking kills an estimated 1.6 million people globally annually with women and children the most affected. In India, acute respiratory infections are one of the main causes of mortality in children under five. [The Statesman](#). 8 November 2004.

[U.S. Announces Grants to Help India Reduce Indoor Air Pollution](#) Projects under the Partnership for Clean Indoor Air aim to address increased environmental hazards faced by rural Indians from bio-mass fuels. Indoor smoke results in the premature deaths of about 1.6 million people globally every year, with women and children being significantly affected. Press Release. [US/AID](#). 5 November 2004.

[Home's air can be more dangerous than outside pollution](#) Whether you have four cozy walls or an expansive estate, your home is host to stealthy, health-stealing indoor pollutants. Breathing carbon monoxide will kill you in a hurry, while exposure to radon, asbestos dust, lead paint or toxic mold will do it more slowly. Stacy Smith Segovia. [The Leaf-Chronicle](#), Tennessee. 18 November 2004.

[Energy efficiency, cleaners can create indoor air pollution](#) Indoor-air pollution, in the form of ozone, strong cleaning chemicals or cigarette smoke, poses a risk with babies and small children. Their lungs are still forming, and their bodies respire at a much faster rate per pound of body weight than the average adult. Roger Witherspoon. [Purchase required]. [The Journal News](#), New York. 22 November 2004.

## **(c) Outdoor air pollution**

[Premature deaths tied to moderate smog](#) EPA-funded study: Cutting ozone by third would save 4,000 lives. Increases in air pollution caused by cars, power plants and industry can be directly linked to higher death rates. New studies are raising the possibility that ozone may cause asthma to develop in children. Reuters/[MSNBC](#), US. 16 November 2004.

[Air Pollution Not Linked to Asthma Flares in Kids](#) Ambient levels of air pollution during the winter months are not associated with asthma flare-ups in urban minority children with moderate-to-severe disease, according to a report in [Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology](#). Anthony J. Brown, MD. [Reuters](#). 18 November 2004.

[Study: Smog, asthma not tied](#) Murky brown air might make eyes water and hearts sink - but a new study finds that it doesn't make children's asthma worse. Upper-respiratory infections - not air pollution - had the most severe impact on kids with asthma, doubling the chance of a severe asthma episode, a three-year study of nearly 150 Denver kids showed. Karen Augé. [Denver Post](#). 9 November 2004.

[Metro Latinos, Arabs join forces to fight dirty air](#) Health worries push southwest Detroit and Dearborn activists to band together to clean up the atmosphere. "Both of my sons are developing asthma, right now. I have some friends who have sick children, and that's why we have to find out exactly what we are breathing." Gregg Krupa. [The Detroit News](#). 22 November 2004.

[Sounding the smog horn](#) Despite a year-old effort to get rid of its exhaust-belching buses, Los Angeles Unified still has 1,200 old buses on the road that emit more diesel soot and put children's health at risk, officials said. Kerry Cavanaugh. [Los Angeles Daily News](#). 8 November 2004.

[City school buses to belch less](#) More than 40% of Chicago school buses will be fitted with devices to reduce emissions by the end of 2005. Tiny particles and other components of vehicle exhaust are an irritant for asthma and other ailments. School-age children are considered particularly vulnerable to exhaust pollution because their lungs are still developing. Bob Tita. Chicago Business. 18 November 2004.

[Diesel cited as major source of city's toxic air problems](#) Students from New Haven schools and environmental experts made the results possible by setting up monitoring equipment at seven sites. 18 percent of the city's school-age children suffer from asthma, and New Haven has the highest asthma hospitalization rate in the state. Randall Beach. New Haven Register, Connecticut. 8 November 2004

[Towards a pollution-free Diwali](#): 95% of the crackers available violate noise and air pollution norms. The real impact in this field was created by the public awareness campaigns carried out by various NGOs and children. The efforts of the school children led to a sizeable decrease in the sale of crackers. Centre for Science and Environment Smog Digest. Hindustan Times, New Delhi. 6 November 2004.

## **(2) CHEMICALS: (a) General**

[High Contamination Reported in Arctic Russians](#) Arctic Russians carry growing levels of industrial chemicals and pesticides. The health threat is mostly to infants and children, since chemicals are passed on to fetuses and taint breast milk. In studies of Canadian Inuit, PCBs have been linked to immune suppression and slight neurological damage in infants. Marla Cone. Los Angeles Times. 18 November 2004.

[Jakarta report raises tension over mine](#) A government panel report shows that sediment in the bay where the world's biggest gold producer deposited mine waste is polluted with arsenic and mercury, but the water quality met Indonesian standards. Fish were laced with enough arsenic to make them dangerous for consumption, particularly for children. Jane Perlez. New York Times. 10 November 2004.

[China begins to phase out toxic chemicals](#) China will begin to implement the 2001 Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs). POPs are highly toxic, causing an array of adverse effects, notably death, disease, and birth defects. People's Daily, China. 11 November 2004.

[Death stalks Bhopal 20 years later](#) In 1984, people died when they breathed the air. Today they are falling ill after drinking the water — death by a thousand drops. The poison is also accessible above ground: Children fly their kites in unsecured areas of the old Union Carbide property. Teenagers go fishing in the old waste pond. Martin Regg Cohn. Toronto Star. 27 November 2004.

[Factory in TN courts Bhopal-type disaster](#) “Bhopal happened in one night, killing thousands of people. For us in Sipcot, everyday is a Bhopal. Entire villages are covered with toxic smoke throughout the day and our children are dying a slow death,” says Mr J Parasuraman, Sipcot area community environmental monitoring, from Semmankuppam village. Navhind Times, India. 30 November 2004.

[Albania's environmental nightmare](#) Porto Romano, in 2000, UNEP identified it as "an environment disaster area" and called for urgent action and said people in the area should be resettled. When the wind blows from the wrong direction, one can smell Lindane, widely banned in Europe because it is believed to be carcinogenic. Children play on the site. Hélène Michaud. Radio Nederland. 22 November 2004.

[Weapons Dust Worries Iraqis](#) Provisional Government Seeks Cleanup; U.S. Downplays Risks. Some scientists studying the effects of inhaling DU believe even a speck of the dust in the lungs or bloodstream can eventually cause cancer or kidney disease in adults or cancers or deformities in babies if even one parent has been exposed. Thomas Williams. Hartford

Courant, Connecticut. 1 November 2004.

[The real dirt on chemicals](#) Dust samples from homes to be analyzed for high-risk chemicals. Manufacturers are allowed to sell chemicals known or likely to cause cancers, birth defects, behavioral and reproductive disorders to the makers of common household goods. Many chemicals accumulate in the bodies of children, adults and wildlife. Cindy Luppi. Newton Tab, Massachusetts. 3 November 3, 2004

[Chemical chaos](#) The 'food' part of what we eat can be totally dominated by the additives, preservatives and unintentional toxins it contains. Pauline Comeau isn't a gambler, particularly when the health of her daughters are the potential wagers. Her job as a mom is to create the safest environment she can. [Purchase required]. New London Free Press, Canada. 3 November 2004.

[US study links more than 200 diseases to pollution](#) Pollution has been linked to about 200 different diseases, as well as more than 37 kinds of cancer, startling US research shows. The study will focus attention on the need for information on the tens of thousands of chemicals routinely released into the environment. [Subscription required]. Geoffrey Lean. Independent, London. 14 November 2004.

[Seeking toxic causes of breast cancer](#) There are a host of chemicals common in the environment that are suspected of causing breast cancer. One exposure might occur prenatally, another during childhood and a third during adolescence. Each of these exposures increases the risk of breast cancer in later life, according to an unpublished report. Jane Kay. San Francisco Chronicle. 8 November 2004.

[Tests on milk, lettuce find perchlorate is widespread](#) Federal investigators have found traces of a rocket fuel component in milk and lettuce from Salinas to Cedarville, N.J., according to government data. At high doses, perchlorate can disrupt thyroid function, especially risky for nursing infants and for children because it can retard development. Mike Lee. Sacramento Bee, California. 30 November 2004.

[Scientists warn of undetected, unmeasured toxins in world's fish](#) The trawlers come back with giant bass, mackerel and squirming eels, at the end of a food chain that links family dinner tables to poisons in the sea. Besides mercury which can damage the brains of fetuses and young children, there are PCBs, dioxins and flame retardants with unknown long-term effects. ENN/Associated Press. 16 November 2004.

[Is salmon good or bad?](#) Until the FDA and EPA complete their review, consumers are left to decide for themselves whether the benefits of salmon's omega-3 fatty acids outweigh any risk from toxins. For children or younger women still anticipating having children, it's probably a good idea to restrict fish. Fred Tasker. [Free registration]. Miami Herald. 4 November 2004.

[Community demands better protection for children in case of toxic emergencies](#) Survey shows need for more public awareness, education and training. We want to ensure that the health of children, as well as that of childcare providers and school staff, are adequately protected in case of another toxic fire or any other environmental emergency. Sherlina Nageer. San Francisco Bay News. 5 November 2004.

[Cancer group turns adviser](#) Seven years ago, people began to notice a disturbing number of lymphoma cases among recent graduates of East Hampton High School. The resulting parent group, whose members believe that pollution adds to the threat of cancer, also works to reduce environmental pollution. Mitchell Freedman. Newsday, New York. 19 November 2004.

[Childproof/EPA eases up on rat poison](#) A Harlem group is suing EPA to abandon the reversal of its child-proofing requirement for rat poisons manufactured in candy-like pastel pellets. So is NRDC, a watchdog on the question of children's exposure to environmental toxins like airborne mercury emissions from power plants. [Free registration]. Editorial. Star Tribune, Minneapolis. 22 November 2004.

[Think before you dye your hair](#) Delhi has the dubious distinction of having the country's first parlour especially for children under 12. At the National Symposium on 'Safety Assessment of Cosmetics' organised by Industrial Toxicology Research Centre (ITRC) it was pointed out that consumers are increasingly vulnerable to allergies and skin diseases. [Times of India](#). 19 November 2004.

## **(b) Lead**

[SA kids face lead exposure](#) Children in schools across South Africa have levels of lead in their blood associated with reduced IQ, hyperactivity, hearing loss and delayed puberty, the Medical Research Council found. Blood lead levels are expected to decline somewhat closer to 2006, when the use of leaded petrol will be phased out. Ilse Arendse. [News24](#), South Africa. 22 November 2004.

[Lead Poison Scare for City Kids](#) Cape Town children, especially those in poorer areas, show alarmingly high levels of lead in their blood that could lead to a reduced IQ, hyperactivity, hearing loss and delayed puberty. That's the finding of a Medical Research Council research group. Currently, 70% of petrol sold in South Africa is leaded petrol. Di Caelers. [AllAfrica.com](#). 22 November 2004.

[Authority Wants Leaded Oils Phased Out](#) The National Environmental Management Authority will launch a campaign to encourage consumption of unleaded petrol. Lead particles are easily inhaled and are associated with loss of brainpower, poor concentration and respiratory tract infections among children. Air pollution in Kenya is serious. Kennedy Senelwa. [East African Standard](#). 29 November 2004.

[EPA is forced to take another look at its 26-year-old lead pollution standard](#) Studies have shown that lead is dangerous at a third of the level considered safe in the '70s. "There have been an enormous number of studies, certifying that smaller levels of lead than anticipated are associated with brain changes in children," said Needleman. Sara Shipley. [St Louis Post-Dispatch](#). 16 November 2004.

[Protecting children from lead poisoning](#) Lead poisoning is harmful and can be particularly hazardous to children and pregnant women. Despite our efforts to fight this largely preventable health problem, lead poisoning remains one of the most significant and prevalent environmental health problems facing children today. Senator Susan Collins. [Village Soup.com](#), Maine. 4 November 2004.

[Time to get the lead out](#) A report released last year by Environmental Defence Canada uncovered chronic overexposure to lead and cadmium in the daily diets of Canadians in all age groups. There is no safe level of lead in our bodies, particularly in children. It's a nerve toxin that negatively affects IQ and behaviour. [Purchase required]. Holly Lake. [Sun Media](#), Canada. 1 November 2004.

[Lead Poisoning Leads to Landmark Lawsuit](#) Even though lead paint was banned by the U.S. Government in 1978, it continues to poison children who live in older homes. Here in Allen County, 90 kids are currently being treated for lead poisoning--twice as many as last year. [Wane.com](#), Indiana. 18 November 2004.

[Report targets childhood lead poisoning](#) Michigan should create a registry of rental properties built before 1978 to increase awareness of lead poisoning among children, a state task force recommended. The Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Task Force recommended ways to wipe out childhood lead poisoning by 2010. Associated Press. [Lansing State Journal](#), Michigan. 17 November 2004.

[Getting the lead out.](#) Seattle Public Schools ought to take encouragement from an expert's advice on removing lead from drinking water. Relatively moderate expenditures could bring good results. recent studies have heightened concern about lead's effects on children's mental development. Editorial Board. [Seattle Post-Intelligencer](#) 2 November 2004.

[Schools can cut lead for less, expert says](#) Seattle has among the most lead-contaminated water in schools nationwide but could address the problems economically through new technology, a national expert said at a weekend forum. Deborah Bach. Seattle Post-Intelligencer. 1 November 2004.

[New York schools report lead in water, some schools resist state](#) 1 in 7 schools reported unsafe levels of lead in drinking water. Lead has been blamed on learning disabilities, hearing loss, attention deficit disorders and irreversible neurological damage. AP/Newsday, New York. 4 November 2004

[Lead plant pollutes grain crops](#) Lead pollution from the Zinifex smelter remains a major problem for the industrial city of Port Pirie in the state's mid-north, which has Australia's highest rates of childhood lead poisoning. Almost 60 per cent of children aged under five have levels of lead in their blood above internationally accepted health standards. Michelle Wiese Bockmann. The Australian. November 15, 2004

[Poisonous Pottery](#) The paint and glaze giving pottery its color and shine may also contain lead. Lead can affect the brain's functions, most noticeably in children's developing brains. There does definitely seem to be an effect on intelligence, an effect on school performance, an effect on the ability to learn. Marianne Martinez KOLD News, Arizona. 17 November 2004.

[Illinois officials embargo spice laden with lead](#) Health officials across Illinois are scouring grocery shelves for a powdered spice that was imported by a candy company and is so sweet, some children eat it like candy. The product has been found to contain dangerously high levels of lead. Michael D. Sorkin. St. Louis Post-Dispatch. 16 November 2004.

[Landlord agrees to clean up lead hazards in units nationwide](#) Nationwide, nearly 450,000 children under age 6 show dangerously high levels of lead, much of it by ingesting dust from flaking or chipping paint tainted with lead, which can cause lower IQ's, learning disabilities and physical impairments and is a bigger problem in lower-income neighborhoods. AP. Times Leader, Pennsylvania. 22 November 2004.

## **(c) Pesticides**

[Pesticides hit kids' health in Bathinda cotton belt](#) Children as young as five in the cotton growing areas of Bathinda are showing signs of severe short and long-term mental damage due to exposure to pesticides. Greenpeace and a local NGO studied children from Bathinda and said they tended to suffer more from arrested mental development. Shiv Kumar. Tribune, New Delhi. 3 November 2004.

[Workers Left Sterile by Pesticide Seek Justice](#) A lawsuit filed by thousands of Costa Rican banana workers against U.S. companies is the latest in a so-far unsuccessful series of claims against the use of Nemagon, a pesticide widely believed to cause sterility, testicular atrophy, miscarriages, birth defects, liver damage and cancer. Stephen Leahy. Inter-Press Service. 12 November 2004

[Pesticide study using children as test subjects postponed](#) Ethical concerns have prompted the government to postpone a study of how children's bodies absorb pesticides and other chemicals. The study would look at how chemicals can be ingested, inhaled or absorbed from food, soil, crop residue and household dust. Associated Press. Kron 4, San Francisco. 22 November 2004.

[EPA Suspends Study on Kids And Pesticides](#) EPA has suspended a controversial study aimed at exploring how infants and toddlers absorb pesticides and other household chemicals. Several rank-and-file EPA scientists had questioned the ethics of the two-year experiment. Juliet Eilperin. Washington Post. 10 November 2004

[Poison, Protection, and Children](#) The "Children's Environmental Exposure Research Study" is a cooperative agreement

between EPA and the American Chemical Council. The government is protecting an unethical study that actually exposes children, including babies, to some of the chemical industry's most noxious poisons. Robina Suwol & Ashley Posner. [California Safe Schools, ENN](#). 22 November 2004.

[Flawed Pesticide Studies Using Human Subjects Could Result In Higher Allowable Exposures For Both Children And Adults](#) Studies using humans to determine a "no observable effect level" of pesticides do not meet widely accepted scientific and ethical standards for research and should not be used to set new standards, according to an analysis. University at Buffalo, NY. [Science Daily](#). 29 November 2004.

[Experimenting on children](#) The Children's Environmental Exposure Research Study - EPA says the information will help the government protect children from harmful chemicals in the future. While that goal is noble, the methods being considered are indefensible. Editorial. [St. Petersburg Times](#), Florida. 2 November 2004.

[Environmental Group Calls Local Pesticide Study 'Racist'](#) The Duval County Health Department and the federal government are spending millions of dollars in Jacksonville to see just how pesticides and other chemicals affect local children. "It's a great opportunity for Jacksonville to find what level of pesticide children have been exposed to in our community". [News4Jax.com](#). 8 November 2004.

[New rules limit pesticide use in schools](#) School districts in the state must now minimize the use of pesticides and notify parents or guardians prior to using pesticide. The rules require districts to implement "integrated pest management practices" to reduce children's exposure to pesticides. Shawn Menzies. [Gloucester County Times](#), New Jersey. 16 November 2004.

[Ban isn't end for pesticide diazinon](#) One of the most popular and potent pesticides will vanish from shelves, prompting last-minute Internet sales and pockets of hoarding. In a voluntary agreement between the EPA and the makers of diazinon, the residential pesticide no longer will be sold after Dec. 31 because of concerns about health hazards to children. Kim McGuire. [Denver Post](#). 8 November 2004.

## **(d) Mercury**

[Study: High mercury levels in babies](#) Dangerous levels of an element proven to give babies brain damage were found in 50 Bermudian mothers. Mercury levels were 60 percent higher than US Environmental Protection Agency guidelines and "more than double" those of WHO. Ninety percent of the mercury came from fish that the mothers had eaten. Stuart Roberts. [Royal Gazette Bermuda](#). 17 November 2004.

[CDC finds lower mercury risk in moms, fetuses](#) CDC has studied mercury blood levels in childbearing-age women and children since 1999. Mercury can cause neurological and developmental problems in fetuses or young children. Pregnant women, nursing mothers and young children are advised not to eat certain fish. [Registration required]. David Wahlberg. [Atlanta Journal-Constitution](#). 4 November 2004

[Reducing mercury in the environment seen as complex, global challenge](#) Despite evidence about the toxicity of mercury it is still used in many products. The largest single source today is coal-burning in power plants and that problem is growing. The US favors public education to make consumers aware of the risks in foods, especially those most vulnerable. Dennis Bueckert. [Canadian Press](#). 20 November 2004.

[Methylmercury and Children's Heart Function](#) Pregnant women who consume significant amounts of seafood may have a new reason to take precautions against methylmercury: a recent study suggests that when women consume fish containing high levels of the toxicant, their children's future cardiovascular health may be jeopardized. John Tibbetts. [Environmental Health Perspectives](#). 30 November 2004.

[Environment ministers commit to cutting mercury emissions from power plants](#) Human exposure to mercury - primarily by

eating contaminated fish - may cause neurological and developmental damage, particularly in fetal and adult nervous systems," says Environment Canada. Dennis Bueckert. [Canadian Press](#). 2 November 2004.

[Health Canada reviewing fish guidelines](#) Mounting evidence that mercury contamination can damage fetal brain development has pushed Health Canada to review its guidelines on fish consumption by women of childbearing age. Studies suggest that even low levels of mercury in a mother's blood or breast milk can affect the developing brain of her child. Dennis Bueckert. [Canadian Press](#). 17 November 2004.

[Does your car contain mercury?](#) Most people are unaware that many cars, trucks and SUVs contain enough mercury to pollute a 20-acre lake and affect the food chain by contaminating fish. Exposure to mercury, a liquid metal, causes serious brain and nervous system damage in humans, a developing fetus and wildlife. John Roman. [Delco Times](#), Philadelphia. 15 November 2004.

[Officials: Turn in your mercury thermometers](#) People can be exposed to mercury by breathing fumes, eating contaminated fish or touching spilled mercury. According to the Merck Manual, a medical reference guide, mercury, along with lead poisoning, is a postnatal factor in mental retardation in children. Douglas Hadden. [Pawtucket Times](#), Rhode Island. 30 November 2004.

### **(e) Fire retardants**

[Safety of new flame retardant questioned](#) EPA may be sacrificing public health by moving too quickly to approve a new fire retardant to replace chemicals being taken off the market, following studies that showed the chemicals are accumulating in the breast milk of American women at 10 to 100 times the levels measured in European women. Joan Lowy. [Scripps Howard News Service](#). 10 November 2004.

### **(3) WATER AND SANITATION**

[Impact of Safe Water, Sanitation on World's Poor](#) 1.1 billion people get water from rivers, ponds, springs or wells open to the air and subject to contamination. 2.5 billion people use public latrines or the outdoors. Clean water by itself has relatively little effect on rates of other water-borne infections such as childhood diarrhea. [Registration required]. David Brown. [Washington Post](#). 22 November 2004.

[China plans safe drinking water for all rural residents by 2020](#) China has set the lofty goal of providing safe drinking water to every rural family by 2020, but has yet to work out how it will do so, state media reported. Officials were ready to launch a long-term project to deal with the lack of clean water, which is threatening the health of millions in the Chinese countryside. AFP. [TerraDaily](#). 29 November 2004.

[Peru mine threat to water supply](#) In this town there is no drinking water, no toilets and no sewers. Most of the children under five suffer from lung infections and diarrhoea. You don't have to look far to work out the reasons: the altitude, the climate and the polluted environment these children live in are the causes. Mercury from mining is ingested directly by the miners and their families. [BBC](#). 22 November 2004.

[At the Old Swimming Hole, a Vicious Cycle Thrives](#) A third of its children have blood in their urine because of schistosomiasis, a parasitic disease transmitted by water snails. Children with heavy infestations of the worms, known as schistosomes, are stunted and do poorly in school. [Purchase required]. Donald G. Mcneil Jr. [New York Times](#). 2 November 2004.

[Health Ministry: Water from closed Ramat Hasharon well is drinkable](#). At high doses, perchlorate can disrupt the functioning of the thyroid gland, which in children plays a major role in development and metabolism. Impairment of thyroid in expectant mothers may affect the fetus and newborn, and may delay development and decrease learning

capability. Amiram Cohen. [Haaretz](#), Israel. 8 November 2004.

[Global health suffering because of toilet taboo: Experts](#) Long-held silence over the taboo subject of toilets is taking its toll on global health and holding back developing countries, hygiene experts warned at a world toilet summit. In the absence of clean toilets in rural areas of developing countries, children easily get ill, their education suffers and poverty is exacerbated. [Agence France-Presse](#). 17 November 2004.

[Let's talk about toilets](#) The World Toilet Summit focuses on improving global lavatories. According to UNEP, about 2.4 billion people globally do not have access to any latrines. "Unsanitary conditions and practices at the household level create a dangerous environment with health risks to children," UNEP said. In the absence of clean toilets children easily get ill. [Television New Zealand](#). 18 November 2004.

#### **(4) MISCELLANEOUS**

[Environmental Risks Kill 2.5 Million a Year in Asia-Pacific](#) More than 2.5 million people in the region die each year due to environmental risks, it was reported at a WHO/UNEP/ADB meeting. Rural women and children are subjected to unsafe levels of smoke in their homes and pesticide poisoning disproportionately affects infants and children in the region. [Subscription required]. [ENS](#). 24 November 2004.

[Countries Failing to Meet Targets](#) A World Bank report 'Rising to the Challenges: The Millennium Development Goals For Health' says more than 11 million children died in 2002 before reaching their fifth birthday from preventable illness. Illnesses such as diarrhoea, pneumonia and malaria account for 52 percent of child deaths worldwide. Stefania Bianchi. [Inter Press Service](#). 11 November 2004.

[Poor Nations Missing Health Goals, Warns Bank](#) The World Bank warned that millions of children are still dying every year worldwide despite a high-profile global pact that promised to sharply cut those deaths by the year 2015. Diarrhoea, pneumonia and malaria account for 52 percent of child deaths worldwide. Emad Mekay. [Inter Press Service](#). 11 November 2004.

[The deadly rise of urban malaria](#) Urban malaria is emerging as a potential but avertable crisis in Africa. 1800 children under 5 were surveyed in two Ghanaian cities for malaria prevalence. Mapping distances between communities and urban agriculture sites showed in some cases that the closer you were to agricultural sites, the higher the risk of malaria. Shaoni Bhattacharya. [New Scientist](#). 30 November 2004.

[Global warming severest in Arctic: Four-year, eight-country scientific study](#) Increased ultraviolet radiation will affect people, animals and plants, with the current Arctic generation expected to receive about 30% more UV than their parents. Climate change is occurring in a context of increasing chemical pollution, land overuse and population increases. Bob Weber. [Canadian Press](#). 8 November 2004.

[Illegal oil production in Chechnya increases child mortality](#) The environmental situation in Chechnya is having an extremely negative effect on the birth rate. According to the Chechen Health Ministry, out of the 3,200 children born this year, 2,229 have pathological conditions and the child mortality rate is one of the highest when compared with other Russian regions. [ITAR-TASS](#), Moscow. 5 November 2004.

[Pollution kills, aggressive campaign tells Amdavadis](#) According to WHO, 1,979 people die prematurely each year in Ahmedabad, because of high air pollution. The National Institute of Occupational Health carried out a study on the effects of lead on the health of children. It revealed that the lead levels were very high. [Registration required]. [CSE-India News Clippings](#). [Times of India](#). 6 November 2004.

[Nation's Largest Study Tracks Kids' Health](#) The National Children's Study will track children from the womb until they

become adults at age 21. Conclusions about the children's health and environment will drive prevention strategies, health and safety guidelines, educational approaches and, perhaps, treatments to safeguard American children's well-being. Associated Press. 16 November 2004.

[Local children to be included in health study](#) The National Children's Study will track 100,000 children from before birth to the age of 21. Data will be collected to determine how factors such as immunizations, the environment, prenatal nutrition and infections, family genetics and the environment affect a child's health and development. Paul Paterra. Tribune-Review, Pittsburgh. 17 November 2004.

[Living near pylons 'doubles' cancer risk for Children](#) Children living near high-voltage pylons may face double the risk of developing cancer, according to new research. Results showed that children born or living near the power lines were 1.7 times more likely to contract leukaemia. Medical News Today. 1 November 2004.

[Environmental report details city school ills](#) Ninety percent of Boston's public schools have at least one environmental problem that can trigger asthma attacks or allergies, such as a leaky roof, excessive dust, poor ventilation, mice, or cockroaches, according to a systemwide inspection done during the last school year. Tracy Jan. Boston Globe. 19 November 2004.

[Experts: Health data should motivate](#) Just doing the science and trying to cram it down the public's throat is not going to work. There is a movement to track environmental public health, identifying exposure to hazards and potential health effects then use that information to address public health problems such as chronic disease and birth defects. Becky Shay. Billings Gazette, Montana. 17 November 2004.

[Sick of trash](#) When a trash-processing facility near an elementary school is making people feel sick, and sometimes forcing students to play indoors during recess, shouldn't the public discussion involve ways to mitigate and reduce the neighborhood impacts? Opinion. Press Telegram, California. 15 November 2004.

[Environmental awareness starts young](#) With his drawing of "a crying mermaid" in hand, 12-year-old Zhang Wenpeng said people must wake up to the fact that damaging the environment was destroying everything progress had worked for. "To save water is to save our lives," he said. Zhu Baoxia. China Daily. 17 November 2004.

[An Ounce of Prevention-A Precautionary Principle Primer](#) Failure to account for risks that are hard to see, or not proximate in time to their cause, has led to a rise in conditions with environmental links. Evidence links environment to malignancies, birth defects, reproductive problems, impaired behavior and immune function. Brian McKenna/Ted Sylvester. Ecology Center. October/November 2004.

[Tally on the Environment](#) With George W. Bush elected to a second term, we thought we'd look at how the outcome of the election might affect the nation's environmental agenda. Barak Obama draws links between urban air pollution and childhood asthma. His six-year-old daughter suffers asthma. Steve Curwood. Living on Earth. 5 November 2004.

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