

Treat and help protect.

What can health professionals do?

- ☒ Learn about diseases caused by chemical exposure and how chemical exposure takes place.
- ☒ Look for chemical exposure as a potential cause of illness in high-risk populations (eg, people living in polluted areas, close to chemical factories, waste incinerators or farmers exposed to pesticides).
- ☒ Prevention is always better than cure, and when it comes to environmental causes, strict regulations and information about toxic substances in the community is the answer.



It is not possible to separate environment and health. A polluted environment breeds sick people.

Patients have the right to know

Patients have the right to be treated appropriately and to know the cause of their illness. The incidence of disease caused by chemical exposure can be reduced if there is a greater awareness of the link between many forms of poor health and exposure to pesticides and other forms of pollutants. Health professionals can raise community awareness and thereby help reduce the level of pollutants in the environment and the human body. Patients have the right to know that their illness may be related to chemical exposure in their environment.

FACTSHEET No. 3 Health Professionals can help!

Contact: Community Monitoring
Working Group:
Secretary, National Toxics Network
47 Eugenia St, Rivett ACT 2611
biomap@oztoxics.org
www.oztoxics.org/cmwg/



International POPs
Elimination Network
(www.ipen.org)



International Society
of Doctors for the
Environment
(www.isde.org)



Health Professionals can help!



Community Monitoring
Working Group

International POPs
Elimination Network

www.ipen.org

Health Professionals help is NEEDED !

CMWG in Brief

The Community Monitoring Working Group (CMWG) aims to implement the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) and raise awareness about chemical trespass, POPs and other persistent toxic substances.

The CMWG promotes community monitoring of chemicals, informing the public of their body's chemical burden and ensuring ongoing NGO involvement in the Global Monitoring Program for POPs. This will support the effective phase out and elimination of the dirty dozen POPs chemicals, help identify new POP candidates and aid in the struggle for a cleaner, healthier and more sustainable environment.



Child who had cleft lip in a village in the Philippines due to use of Pesticides.

What are POPs?

POPs are known to be persistent in the environment, bioaccumulate in humans and are considered as toxic to humans and animals alike. The fact that they are able to travel through air and water makes no country or human immune against their effects.

The **POPs** identified in the Stockholm Convention include: **PESTICIDES** such as: Aldrin, Endrin, Dieldrin, Chlordane, DDT, Heptachlor, Hexachlorobenzene, Mirex, Toxaphene; **INDUSTRIAL CHEMICALS**: PCBs and **BY-PRODUCTS**: Dioxins and Furans

Overview of POPs Health Effects:

- **Reproductive and Developmental Effects:** *Endocrine disruption*
- **Dermatologic Effects:** *Chloracne*
- **Carcinogenic Effects:** *Soft tissue cancers*
- **Neurologic Effects:** *Neurobehavioral disorders*
- **Hepatic Effects:** *Increase in serum liver enzymes*
- **Immunotoxic Effects :** *Immunosuppression*

Many chemicals like POPs have been introduced with little health assessment. Their serious impacts only become evident after many years of use. Research into chemicals is urgently needed to understand their effects on humans, wildlife and the environment. Until then a more precautionary approach is warranted.

The need for Medical Assistance.

Studies show that there is a link between pollution in the environment and threats to human health.

POPs are not the only chemicals that have serious health impacts on us; hundreds of other chemicals are linked to allergy, brochial asthma and cancer. Credible scientific information demonstrates levels of these chemicals not only in the environment but also in the human body (blood, urine, fat and breast milk).

All health professionals must be aware of the link between disease and exposure to chemicals. There is a need to consider the effect of chemical exposure on patients. Information can be found in the websites listed below.

Information is available:

- ☒ Chemical Contaminants and Human Disease: A Summary of Evidence, <http://www.protectingourhealth.org/corethemes/links/2004-0203spreadsheet.htm>
- ☒ Environmental Health Perspectives, open access journal, <http://ehp.niehs.nih.gov/>
- ☒ US EPA Book on recognition and management of pesticides poisoning, <http://www.epa.gov/oppfead1/safety/healthcare/handbook/handbook-ldh.pdf>
- ☒ Body Burden handbook of Community Monitoring Group, IPEN, <http://www.oztoxics.org/cmwg/index.html>
- ☒ US CDC NHEXAS report, <http://www.cdc.gov/nceh>
- ☒ Ontario College of Family Physicians, Pesticides paper, <http://www.ocfp.on.ca/>
- ☒ 24th report on safeguarding the environment and human health, <http://www.rcep.org.uk/reports2.htm#24>