

# ISDE Italia News

*edited by ISDE Italy*  
*(International Society of Doctors for the Environment, Italy)*

**Number 586 (20<sup>th</sup> October 2015)**

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## NEXT EVENTS

### **GENEVA PEACE WEEK 2015**

16 to 20 November 2015 will be held the 2<sup>nd</sup> Geneva Peace Week in Geneva (Switzerland). Participating in the event must be confirmed by 1 September 2015 and will be present ISDE under the name of ECOSOC.

Info: [www.gpplatform.ch/geneva-peace-week-16-20-november-2015](http://www.gpplatform.ch/geneva-peace-week-16-20-november-2015);  
[ungeneva.ngoliaison@unog.ch](mailto:ungeneva.ngoliaison@unog.ch)

### **50 DAYS TO COP21 - SUSTAINABLE CITIES FOR CLIMATE ACTION INFOGRAPHIC**

To celebrate 50 days to COP21, we would like to share with you the latest infographic from Climate Action that explores the role of cities in accelerating sustainable growth-including actions from utilizing renewable energy to driving urban mobility to embedding efficiency measures. As countries continue to submit INDCs ahead of COP21, the growing role of cities in driving post-2020 climate action cannot be ignored. Increasingly city leaders are engaging in positive actions around climate finance, renewable energy, mobility and efficiency, with C40 cities recording the conception of over 8000 measures, policies, and programmes since they started monitoring. Recent examples of positive action include Adelaide, Australia, announcing the aim to become the world's first carbon neutral city, and Oberlin, Ohio, moving towards a 89% renewable energy supply.

Info: [www.cop21paris.org](http://www.cop21paris.org)

### **6<sup>th</sup> INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND ISDE 25<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY**

On 23<sup>rd</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> November 2015 in Arezzo (Italy) there will be the 6<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Environmental Health, under the 3<sup>rd</sup> International Forum on Environmental Health (within the Forum Risk Management). This conference will be the occasion to celebrate ISDE 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. The event will be promoted by ISDE under the technical support of World Health Organization (WHO).

Info: [isde@ats.it](mailto:isde@ats.it)

### **THE DIALOGUE ON NONCOMMUNICABLE DISEASES (NCDs) AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION**

The Dialogue on Noncommunicable Diseases (NCDs) and International Cooperation the World Health Organization Global Coordination Mechanism on Noncommunicable Diseases (WHO GCM/NCD) will take place from Monday 30 November until Tuesday 1 December 2015 at the WHO Executive Board Room in Geneva (Switzerland).

Info: [www.who.int/nmh/registration-form-642](http://www.who.int/nmh/registration-form-642); [www.who.int/global-coordination-mechanism/dialogues/dialogue-international-partnership/en/](http://www.who.int/global-coordination-mechanism/dialogues/dialogue-international-partnership/en/); [gcmncd@who.int](mailto:gcmncd@who.int)

### **9<sup>TH</sup> WORLD ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CONGRESS**

The 9<sup>o</sup> World Environmental Education Congress (WEEC) will be held in Vancouver (Canada) on 9<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> September 2017. In consideration of themes and programming for the proposed 2017 congress the local organizing committee envisions a broad and inclusive view of topics on environmental and sustainability education that highlighted the impact of urban ecosystems and local, place based initiatives that can be translated into practices on a global scale. Of particular interest is the interplay among cultural and environmental factors.

Info: [www.environmental-education.org](http://www.environmental-education.org)

## NEWS "CLIMATE CHANGES AND HEALTH"

### **HEALTH SYSTEMS WORLDWIDE PLEDGE CLIMATE ACTION**

Reference: Health Care Without Harm, 16 April 2015.

Commit to Reducing Carbon Footprint Through 2020 Health Care Climate Challenge. Nine leading health care institutions from across the globe are pledging to take meaningful action on climate change, kicking off a worldwide campaign to mobilize hospitals and health systems to address one of humanity's most pressing problems. Their commitment signals the launch of the 2020 Health Care Climate Challenge, a global initiative from Health Care Without Harm's Global

Green and Healthy Hospitals Network. The 2020 Challenge invites health care systems and hospitals to reduce their carbon footprint and protect public health from climate change in the run-up to a worldwide meeting of heads of state at the United Nations Conference on Climate Change this December in Paris. The 2020 Challenge also marks the first international effort ever to track emissions and take measurable actions to reduce the sector's carbon footprint. Info: <https://noharm.org/>; [www.greenhospitals.net/](http://www.greenhospitals.net/); [bgrover@hcwh.org](mailto:bgrover@hcwh.org)

### **AIR POLLUTION, CLIMATE CHANGE, AND HEALTH**

Reference: The Lancet Oncology 2015, J. Gibson's article.

Expanding industries worldwide are increasing the emission of CO<sub>2</sub> and air pollutants to an alarming extent, with the resultant poor air quality having serious consequences on the environment, climate, and public health. In a new modelling study, investigators predict the health benefits of changes in carbon and co-pollutant emission standards for power plants in the USA.

Info: [www.thelancet.com/journals/lanonc/article/PIIS1470-2045%2815%2970238-X/abstract](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanonc/article/PIIS1470-2045%2815%2970238-X/abstract)

### **PARIS BANNED CARS ON 27 SEPTEMBER**

Reference: Climate Action News, 1<sup>st</sup> September 2015.

Paris was ban motorized vehicles from the roads for the 27 September as an experiment in its efforts to reduce carbon emissions. The city implemented the "Une Journée Sans Voiture" (A Day without a Car) to coincide with European Mobility Week and a United Nations climate change summit, both of which was also be in Paris.

Info: [www.climateactionprogramme.org/news/paris to ban cars on 27 september](http://www.climateactionprogramme.org/news/paris%20to%20ban%20cars%20on%2027%20september)

### **METEOROLOGICAL CONDITIONS, CLIMATE CHANGE, NEW EMERGING FACTORS, AND ASTHMA AND RELATED ALLERGIC DISORDERS. A STATEMENT OF THE WORLD ALLERGY ORGANIZATION**

Reference: World Allergy Organization Journal 2015, 8:25, article by G. D'Amato et al.

The prevalence of allergic airway diseases such as asthma and rhinitis has increased dramatically to epidemic proportions worldwide. Besides air pollution from industry derived emissions and motor vehicles, the rising trend can only be explained by gross changes in the environments where we live. The world economy has been transformed over the last 25 years with developing countries being at the core of these changes. Around the planet, in both developed and developing countries, environments are undergoing profound changes. Many of these changes are considered to have negative effects on respiratory health and to enhance the frequency and severity of respiratory diseases such as asthma in the general population.

Info: [www.waojournal.org/content/8/1/25](http://www.waojournal.org/content/8/1/25)

## **NEWS "CHEMICAL SAFETY"**

### **ISDE PROPOSAL ON EPPP ACCEPTED AT UN CHEMICAL SAFETY FORUM**

After 5 years of hard work, ISDE International Secretary is glad to announce you that from now on Environmental Persistent Pharmaceutical Pollutants (EPPP) is part of the International Agenda of Chemicals. After an intense week of discussion and deliberations, the International Conference on Chemical Management - ICCM4 - under the Strategic Approach for the International Management of Chemicals - SAICM declare by CONSENSUS that chemicals of pharmaceutical origin present and persistent in the environment are a a new and emerging issue of concern. ISDE presented this issue at the Open Ended Working Group of SAICM on 2011 and since then have been working to make this important issue visible and clear for countries and different stakeholders. EPPP is an emerging problem and consequences on health are not yet well defined. The current scenario of pollution, by example of surface water with this kind of chemicals from pharmaceutical, is not well known either but the scientific evidence is strong and increasing fast enough to call the attention of all sectors and invite them to work together. SAICM ICCM4 invited the different sectors to join effort to work and develop a Global Plan of Work to tackle this problem. From now on, medical doctors and health professionals in general have a new commitment and is expected to take active part and promote actions among colleagues, Public Health authorities as well as inform patients on the best practices.

Info: [www.isde.org/activities.html](http://www.isde.org/activities.html)

## **ISDE PARTICIPATION IN UNEP WORKSHOP ON CHEMICALS IN PRODUCTS**

Dr. Mahmood A. Khwaja, Senior Adviser, Chemicals, Hazardous Wastes/Sites and Sustainable Industrial Development, SDPI, Islamabad represented the International Society of Doctors for the Environment (ISDE) in this event organized by United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) and Ministry of Environmental Protection of China (MEP-FECO) in Beijing (China) on 7-9 July 2015. Forty four (44) stakeholders, representing governments, industry, R&D institutions, environment and health NGOs, chemical agencies, UNEP and others, from Africa, Asia, Europe & USA/West Indies and Latin America, participated in the workshop. Presentations were made on two draft documents for CiP information exchange, and were followed by exhaustive discussion by the participants. Several interventions were made by ISDE representative, to emphasize related health issues, resulting from chemical exposure and the likely challenges for CiP program in developing countries. In the approved finalized documents, many of ISDE recommendations, including disclosure of information on CIP "Thresholds," and training of trainers (ToT) CiP workshops for capacity building, specially in the developing countries were accepted. The two agreed final draft documents would be submitted to ICCM 4, by UNEP for approval in the forthcoming international conference on chemicals management (ICCM 4) meeting in Geneva, September, 2015.

## **THE IMPACT OF TOXINS ON THE DEVELOPING BRAIN**

Reference: Annual Review of Public Health, Vol. 36: 211-230 (March 2015), B.P. Lanphear's article.

The impact of toxins on the developing brain is usually subtle for an individual child, but the damage can be substantial at the population level. Numerous challenges must be addressed to definitively test the impact of toxins on brain development in children: We must quantify exposure using a biologic marker or pollutant; account for an ever-expanding set of potential confounders; identify critical windows of vulnerability; and repeatedly examine the association of biologic markers of toxins with intellectual abilities, behaviors, and brain function in distinct cohorts. Despite these challenges, numerous toxins have been implicated in the development of intellectual deficits and mental disorders in children. Yet, too little has been done to protect children from these ubiquitous but insidious toxins. The objective of this review is to provide an overview on the population impact of toxins on the developing brain and describe implications for public health.

Info: [www.annualreviews.org/doi/abs/10.1146/annurev-publhealth-031912-114413](http://www.annualreviews.org/doi/abs/10.1146/annurev-publhealth-031912-114413)

## **EBPH PUBLISHED A REBUTTAL OF AN ILGREN'S AT AL. ARTICLE ON BALANGERO MINE (ITALY)**

The journal, Epidemiology Biostatistics and Public Health (EBPH), has published a rebuttal of an article by Ilgren et al., "Critical reappraisal of Balangero chrysotile and mesothelioma risk", which denied that chrysotile asbestos at the Balangero mine in northern Italy caused harm to workers and residents. The rebuttal points out numerous gross errors in the Ilgren article and concludes: "In summary, Ilgren et al paper is an example of a poor quality paper, with no scientific content, that a scientific journal should never publish". EBPH has also now published Errata for Ilgren et al, disclosing their Conflicting Interests with regard to asbestos.

Info: <http://ebph.it/article/view/11367>

## **SCIENTIFIC JOURNAL PUBLISHES ERRATA DISCLOSING ASBESTOS CONFLICT OF INTEREST OF AUTHORS**

In response to a complaint, the journal "Epidemiology, Biostatistics and Public Health" has published Errata disclosing asbestos conflict of interest of the authors of three articles published this year by the journal.

Info: [www.righoncanada.ca/?p=3143](http://www.righoncanada.ca/?p=3143)

## **IN OPPOSITIONS TO LIBERTY: WE NEED A "SOVEREIGN" TO GOVERN DRUG CLAIMS**

Reference: Annals of Internal Medicine, vol. 163 n. 3, 4<sup>th</sup> August 2015, article by J. Avorn. Hobbes had it right. The 17<sup>th</sup> century political philosopher explained that civilization requires individuals to willingly transfer some of their freedom to a Sovereign who can use that power to organize society through the consent of the governed (1). Without this basic tradeoff, Hobbes

argued, existence would be a struggle of "all against all", resulting in life that is "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short". Hobbes' work helped inspire the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. Now the latter document is being used to threaten a central aspect of medical practice that is rooted in this "consent-of-the-governed" concept.

Info: <http://annals.org/article.aspx?articleid=2375121>

### **CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY WITHDRAWS ASBESTOS REPORT WHILE IT CARRIES OUT INVESTIGATION**

Reference: Righton Canada, 9<sup>th</sup> August 2015, K. Ruff's article.

Concordia University has withdrawn an asbestos report after receiving a complaint from a number of health scientists and a human rights advocate that the report was replete with inaccuracy and bias, was dangerously irresponsible and did not meet even minimal academic and ethical standards. Concordia, located in Montreal, is one of the largest universities in Canada. The report, which promotes use of chrysotile asbestos, was commissioned, funded, published and promoted by Concordia University's John Molson School of Business. The report was written by a consultant for the asbestos industry. This was not disclosed in the report. The president of Concordia, Alan Shepard, has stated: "The University cares deeply about the integrity of its research and teaching, and we take seriously all such challenges to that integrity". The report has been removed while an investigation is carried out.

Info: [www.rightoncanada.ca/?p=3105](http://www.rightoncanada.ca/?p=3105)

### **SCIENTISTS SPEAKING UP ON ASBESTOS, CONFLICT OF INTEREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE**

Reference: Epimonitor, Featured Epidemiology Articles.

Three interesting articles about scientists speaking up on asbestos, conflict of interest and climate change: "Epidemiology's Policy Voice Gaining New Members", "Scientists Call For Moratorium On Oil Sands Development" and "Epidemiology's Policy Voice Gaining New Members".

Info: <http://epimonitor.net/Epidemiology-Policy-Voice.htm>; <http://epimonitor.net/Oil-Sands-Moratorium.htm>; <http://epimonitor.net/Epidemiology-Policy-Voice.htm>

### **THE COLLEGIUM RAMAZZINI RELEASES OFFICIAL POSITION ON THE GLOBAL HEALTH DIMENSIONS OF ASBESTOS AND ASBESTOS-RELATED DISEASES**

The Collegium Ramazzini, an international academy of 180 scientists from 35 countries, experts in environmental and occupational health, has released an official statement on the global health dimensions of asbestos and asbestos-related diseases. Asbestos is a proven cause of human cancer, and all forms of asbestos have been listed as definite human carcinogens by the International Agency for Research on Cancer, the cancer agency of the World Health Organization. Since 1993, the Collegium Ramazzini has repeatedly called for a global ban on all mining, manufacture and use of asbestos. The Collegium has taken this position based on well-validated scientific evidence showing that all types of asbestos, including chrysotile, the most widely used form, cause cancers such as mesothelioma and lung cancer, and showing additionally that there is no safe level of exposure. The Collegium reaffirms its long-standing position that responsible public health action is to ban all extraction and use of asbestos, including chrysotile. This current statement updates earlier statements by the CR with a focus on global health dimensions of asbestos and asbestos-related diseases (ARDs).

Info: [www.collegiumramazzini.org/download/18\\_EighteenthCRStatement%282015%29.pdf](http://www.collegiumramazzini.org/download/18_EighteenthCRStatement%282015%29.pdf)

### **CARCINOGENICITY OF LINDANE, DDT, AND 2,4 - DICHLOROPHENOXYACETIC ACID**

Reference: The Lancet, 23 June 2015.

In June, 2015, 26 experts from 13 countries met at the International Agency for Research in Cancer (IARC; Lyon, France) to assess the carcinogenicity of the insecticides lindane and 1,1,1-trichloro - 2,2 - bis (4-chlorophenyl) ethane (DDT), and the herbicide 2,4-dichlorophenoxyacetic acid (2,4-D). These assessments will be published as Volume 113 of the IARC Monographs. The insecticide lindane was classified as "carcinogenic to humans" (Group 1). Lindane, the  $\gamma$ -isomer of hexachlorocyclohexane, has been used extensively for insect control in agriculture and for treatment of human ectoparasites.

Info: [www.thelancet.com/journals/lanonc/article/PIIS1470-2045%2815%2900081-9/fulltext?rss=yes](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanonc/article/PIIS1470-2045%2815%2900081-9/fulltext?rss=yes)

## **PHARMACEUTICAL POLLUTION LEVELS IN EUROPEAN RIVERS ASSESSED**

Reference: Science for Environment Policy, issue 414, 21 May 2015.

Concentrations of three pharmaceuticals (ethinylestradiol, oestradiol and diclofenac), have been mapped in a recent study of European rivers. The researchers predict that levels of ethinylestradiol, a contraceptive and hormone replacement drug, could exceed the WFD's suggested environmental quality standards in 12% of the total length of Europe's rivers.

Info:

[http://ec.europa.eu/environment/integration/research/newsalert/pdf/pharmaceutical\\_pollution\\_levels\\_in\\_European\\_rivers\\_assessed\\_414na4\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/integration/research/newsalert/pdf/pharmaceutical_pollution_levels_in_European_rivers_assessed_414na4_en.pdf)

## **ENDOCRINE DISRUPTORS AND FEMALE CANCER: INFORMING THE PATIENTS (REVIEW)**

Reference: Oncology Reports 2015, article by Del Pup et al.

Pollutants altering the endocrine system, known as endocrine disruptors (ED), may modify the risk of female cancers. The carcinogenic effect of ED on humans has been confirmed by experimental studies for various substances including pesticides, DDT, dioxins, phthalates, bisphenol A, diethylstilbestrol, as well as heavy metals, but it is difficult to quantify precisely for several reasons hereby reviewed. Carcinogenesis is a complex and multifactorial mechanism that manifests itself over a long period of time, making difficult the detection of the specific contribution of the pollutants, whose absorbed dose is often unknown. The combined effect of various substances leads to complex interactions whose outcome is difficult to predict. These substances may accumulate and carry out their harmful effect on critical periods of life, probably also at doses considered harmless to an adult. ED can also have epigenetic adverse effects on the health of future generations. In conclusion, the carcinogenic effects of endocrine disruptors on female cancer types is plausible although additional studies are needed to clarify their mechanisms and entities. In the last part of the review we suggest ways to reduce ED exposure as it is mandatory to implement necessary measures to limit exposure, particularly during those periods of life most vulnerable to the impact of oncogenic environmental causes, such as the embryonic period and puberty.

Info: [www.spandidos-publications.com/or/34/1/3](http://www.spandidos-publications.com/or/34/1/3)

## **DRUGGING THE ENVIRONMENT**

Reference: The Scientist, 1<sup>st</sup> August 2015, by M. Scudellari's article.

In the fall of 2012, PhD student Hendrik Wolschke leaned over the side of a boat on the Elbe River in Northern Germany and lifted a stainless steel bucket from the water's depths. Pulling it aboard, he set the sloshing bucket next to a pile of empty plastic bottles. Once he'd filled them with the river water, Wolschke packed the bottles into coolers for transport southeast to the chemistry laboratory of his doctoral advisor, Klaus Kümmerer, at Leuphana University of Lüneburg. There, the bottles joined water samples collected from all around Germany: the North Sea, drainage streams from wastewater treatment plants, even drinking water straight from municipal taps. Each sample was tested for the most widely prescribed antidiabetic drug in the world—metformin, which treats high blood sugar by suppressing glucose production in the liver. Humans do not metabolize the drug, so within 24 hours of being swallowed, metformin is excreted from the body essentially unchanged.

Info: [www.the-scientist.com/?articles.view/articleNo/43615/title/Drugging-the-Environment/](http://www.the-scientist.com/?articles.view/articleNo/43615/title/Drugging-the-Environment/)

## **NEWS "PUBLIC HEALTH"**

### **PROGRAM OF ACTION ON SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS**

Cathey Falvo, ISDE USA, spoke at a side event about on the need to integrate public health into the entire process of planning programs to reduce human and environmental damage from the use of small arms and light weapons-annual conference of parties to this Program.

Info: [cathey.falvo@gmail.com](mailto:cathey.falvo@gmail.com)

### **COMBINED CIRCULATING EPIGENETIC MARKERS TO IMPROVE MESOTHELIN PERFORMANCE IN THE DIAGNOSIS OF MALIGNANT MESOTHELIOMA**

Reference: Lung Cancer, 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2015.

Malignant mesothelioma (MM) is a highly aggressive tumor with poor prognosis. A major challenge is the development and application of early and highly reliable diagnostic marker. Serum biomarkers, such as soluble mesothelin-related proteins, is the most studied and frequently used in MM. However, the low sensitivity of SMRPs for early MM limits its value: therefore, additional biomarkers are required. In this study, two epigenetically regulated markers in MM (microRNA-126, miR-126, and methylated thrombospondin promoter, Met-TM) were combined with SMRPs and evaluated as a potential strategy to detect MM at an early stage. A total of 188 subjects, including 45 MM patients, 99 asbestos-exposed subjects, and 44 healthy controls were prospectively enrolled, serum samples collected, and serum levels of MRPs, miR-126 and Met-TM evaluated. Logistic regression analysis was performed to evaluate the diagnostic value of the three biomarkers. Using this approach, the performance of the '3-biomarker classifier' was tested by calculating the overall probability score of the MM and control samples, respectively, and the ROC curve was generated. The combination of the three biomarkers was the best predictor to differentiate MM patients from asbestos-exposed subjects and healthy controls. The accuracy and cancer specificity was confirmed in a second validation cohort and lung cancer population. We propose that the combination of the two epigenetic biomarkers with SMRPs as a diagnosis for early MM overcomes the limitations of using SMRPs alone.

Info: [www.lungcancerjournal.info/article/S0169-5002%2815%2930065-9/abstract?cc=y](http://www.lungcancerjournal.info/article/S0169-5002%2815%2930065-9/abstract?cc=y)

### **SAFEGUARDING HUMAN HEALTH IN THE ANTHROPOCENE EPOCH: REPORT OF THE ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION-LANCET COMMISSION ON PLANETARY HEALTH**

Reference: The Lancet Commissions, 16<sup>th</sup> July 2015.

By almost any measure, human health is better now than at any time in history. Life expectancy has soared from 47 years in 1950–1955, to 69 years in 2005–2010, and death rates in children younger than 5 years of age have decreased substantially, from 214 per thousand live births in 1950–1955, to 59 in 2005–2010. But these gains in human health have come at a high price: the degradation of nature's ecological systems on a scale never seen in human history. A growing body of evidence shows that the health of humanity is intrinsically linked to the health of the environment, but by its actions humanity now threatens to destabilize the Earth's key life-support systems. As a Commission, they conclude that the continuing degradation of natural systems threatens to reverse the health gains seen over the last century. In short, they have mortgaged the health of future generations to realise economic and development gains in the present.

Info: [www.thelancet.com/commissions/planetary-health](http://www.thelancet.com/commissions/planetary-health)

### **SCIENTIFIC JOURNALS AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURE: WHAT PROGRESS BEEN MADE?**

Reference: Environmental Health Journal 2015, 14:45, Kathleen Ruff's article.

The article addresses the failure of the scientific community to create an effective mechanism to protect the integrity of scientific literature from improper influence by vested interests. Organizations such as the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors, the World Association of Medical Editors and the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) have launched initiatives to establish international standards for Conflict of Interest (COI) disclosure. COPE requires its 7,000 member journals to comply with its Code of Conduct for Journal Editors. While these initiatives are encouraging, they are internal educational endeavours only. Five examples are given showing failure of COPE member journals to comply with COPE's Code of Conduct.

Info: [www.ehjournal.net/content/14/1/45/abstract](http://www.ehjournal.net/content/14/1/45/abstract)

### **MEETING CONSIDERS EXPOSURE TO RADIATION THROUGH MEDICAL IMAGING**

Reference: WONCA, Global Family Doctor.

In March 2015 it was organized a meeting on the impact to the radioactive exposure. WONCA is concerned about the impact of exposure to radiation through medical imaging, and the risks of unnecessary exposure due to inappropriate or excessive investigations. WONCA has been working with the World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to look at ways to improve the appropriateness of imaging, and to measure each person's cumulative exposure to radiation from imaging. In recent years WHO and International

Atomic Energy Agency have been making a significant effort to promote the correct use of radiological examinations. In particular, the principles of justification and optimization have been stated, to increase the appropriateness of imaging and to reduce the level of delivered radiation dose.

Info: [www.globalfamilydoctor.com/News/Meetingconsidersexposuretoradiationthroughmedicalimaging.aspx](http://www.globalfamilydoctor.com/News/Meetingconsidersexposuretoradiationthroughmedicalimaging.aspx)

### **CONCEPTUALIZING THE USE OF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN HEALTH POLICY DECISION-MAKING**

Reference: Elsevier; Social Science & Medicine 138-2015, article by K.K. Li et al.  
The concept of public involvement use is not well-defined in the literature. Previous research studies have provided brief accounts of how public involvement may influence health policy, but have not detailed the internal dynamics and process through which it is actually used in the policy process. The study objective is to examine and clarify the concept and process of public involvement use in health policy decision-making.

Info: [www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0277953615003056](http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0277953615003056)

### **PUBLIC HEALTH, ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH (PHE) EVENTS DURING THE 68<sup>th</sup> WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY**

Reference: World Health Organization.

The 68<sup>th</sup> World Health Assembly was held from 18-26<sup>th</sup> May 2015 in Geneva (Switzerland). Among the key Public Health, Environmental and Social Determinants of health topics discussed and events held at this year's World Health Assembly include: A technical briefing "Climate and Health: opportunities for a positive agenda at COP21"; addressing the health impact of air pollution – A68/18; Progress report "Social Determinants of Health" – A68/38; all relevant WHA documentation.

Info: [www.who.int/phe/events/wha-68/en/](http://www.who.int/phe/events/wha-68/en/)

### **SDPI'S 17<sup>th</sup> SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE 2014**

The overarching theme of the SDC was "Pathways to Sustainable Development" [Islamabad (Pakistan, 9-11 December 2014)]. Each SDC is designed to be a forum for sharing and exchanging dialogues on sustainable development issues with academia, civil society, legislators and policy makers. This year's SDC looked at the leadership change in China, Pakistan, Iran, Bangladesh, India, and Afghanistan that could hold the key in shaping the pathways to sustainable development in this region. The region needs political and executive leadership that has a commitment to strategize for peace and human security and raise tangible safeguards for the political economy of the region while engaging with the primary stakeholders, i.e. the people. In this backdrop, issues of climate change, migration, sustainable and inclusive economic growth; sharing of energy resources across the region; environmental challenges; food security; human rights; women in the peace process; regional connectivity; and, many others were deliberated on. The Conference aimed to identify the role of different stakeholders, especially the governments, civil society and private sector that may engage differently to define new pathways to sustainable development.

Info: <http://sdpi.org/publications/files/Vol%2021%20No.%204%20%28October%20-%20December%202014%29.pdf>

### **3<sup>rd</sup> ITALIAN CONSENSUS CONFERENCE ON MALIGNANT MESOTHELIOMA OF THE PLEURA. EPIDEMIOLOGY, PUBLIC HEALTH AND OCCUPATIONAL MEDICINE RELATED ISSUES**

Reference: Med. Lav. 2015; 106, 5, by C. Magnani et al.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Italian Consensus Conference on Pleural Mesothelioma (MM) convened on January 29<sup>th</sup> 2015. This report presents the conclusions of the "Epidemiology, Public Health and Occupational Medicine" section. MM incidence in 2011 in Italy was 3.64 per 100,000 person/years in men and 1.32 in women. Incidence trends are starting to level off. 10% of cases are due to non-occupational exposure. Incidence among women is very high in Italy, because of both non-occupational and occupational exposure. The removal of asbestos in place is proceeding slowly, with remaining exposure. Recent literature confirms the causal role of chrysotile. Fibrous fluoro-



edenite was classified as carcinogenic by IARC (Group 1) on the basis of MM data. A specific type (MWCNT-7) of Carbon Nanotubes was classified 2B. For pleural MM, after about 45 years since first exposure, the incidence trend slowed down; with more studies needed. Cumulative exposure is a proxy of the relevant exposure, but does not allow to distinguish if duration or intensity may possibly play a prominent role, neither to evaluate the temporal sequence of exposures. Studies showed that duration and intensity are independent determinants of MM. Blood related MM are less than 2.5%. The role of BAP1 germline mutations is limited to the BAP1 cancer syndrome, but negligible for sporadic cases. Correct MM diagnosis is baseline; guidelines agree on the importance of the tumor gross appearance and of the hematoxylin-eosin-based histology.

Info: [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/26384258](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/26384258)

## **NEWS "AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND SAFETY"**

### **AN ILLUSORY CONSENSUS BEHIND GMO**

Reference: Science, Technology, & Human Values I-32, article by Heldon Krinsky. Prominent scientists and policymakers assert with confidence that there is no scientific controversy over the health effects of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) that genetically modified crops currently in commercial use and those yet to be commercialized are inherently safe for human consumption and do not have to be tested. Those who disagree are cast as "GMO deniers".

Info:

[www.scienceforthepublic.org/assets/154/STHV%20GMO%20ILLUSORY%20CONSENSUS.pdf](http://www.scienceforthepublic.org/assets/154/STHV%20GMO%20ILLUSORY%20CONSENSUS.pdf)

### **RESIDENTIAL EXPOSURE TO PESTICIDE DURING CHILDHOOD AND CHILDHOOD CANCERS: A META-ANALYSIS**

Reference: Pediatrics, Volume 136, n. 4, October 2015.

We found that childhood exposure to indoor but not outdoor residential insecticides was associated with a significant increase in risk of childhood leukemia (odds ratio [OR] = 1.47; 95% CI, 1.26–1.72; I2 = 30%) and childhood lymphomas (OR = 1.43; 95% CI, 1.15–1.78; I2 = 0%). A significant increase in risk of leukemia was also associated with herbicide exposure (OR = 1.26; 95% CI, 1.10–1.44; I2 = 0%). Also observed was a positive but not statistically significant association between childhood home pesticide or herbicide exposure and childhood brain tumors. The small number of studies included in the analysis represents a major limitation of the current analysis. Results from this meta-analysis indicated that children exposed to indoor insecticides would have a higher risk of childhood hematopoietic cancers. Additional research is needed to confirm the association between residential indoor pesticide exposures and childhood cancers. Meanwhile, preventive measures should be considered to reduce children's exposure to pesticides at home.

Info: <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/early/2015/09/08/peds.2015-0006.abstract>

### **GROWING DOUBT: A SCIENTIST'S EXPERIENCE OF GMOs**

Reference: Independent Science News, 31<sup>st</sup> August 2015, article by Jonathan Latham. Letter written by Jonathan Latham, a biologist who made use of OGM plants. "I am a scientist who once made and used GMO crops for research. Twenty years of experience has taught me important lessons about them. One concerns the lack of scientific integrity of GMO risk assessments. Careful study of the documents shows that applicants (mostly companies) are gaming the system in numerous ways; at the same time, government regulators are allowing them to do so. None of this would matter if GMOs were inherently safe, but they are not. They even have dangers that are rarely discussed, even by their critics, but which should be more widely known. These two understandings have led me to conclude that no GMO currently on the market would pass an honest risk assessment, even by the rather low standards that most national regulations and laws require.

Info: [www.independentsciencenews.org/health/growing-doubt-a-scientists-experience-of-gmos/](http://www.independentsciencenews.org/health/growing-doubt-a-scientists-experience-of-gmos/)

## **GMOs, HERBICIDES, AND PUBLIC HEALTH**

Reference: The New England Journal of Medicine, 20 August 2015; 373:693-695, P.J. Landrigan's article.

Genetically modified organism (GMOs) are not high on most physicians' worry lists. If we think at all about biotechnology, most of us probably focus on direct threats to human health, such as prospects for converting pathogens to biologic weapons or the implications of new technologies for editing the human germline. But while those debates simmer, the application of biotechnology to agriculture has been rapid and aggressive. The vast majority of the corn and soybeans grown in the United State are now genetically engineered. Foods produced from GM crops have become ubiquitous. And unlike regulatory bodies in 64 other countries, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) does not require labeling of GM foods. (.....) Finally, we believe the time has come to revisit the United States' reluctance to label GM foods. Labeling will deliver multiple benefits. It is essential for tracking emergence of novel food allergies and assessing effects of chemical herbicides applied to GM crops. It would respect the wishes of a growing number of consumers who insist they have a right to know what foods they are buying and how they were produced. And the argument that there is nothing new about genetic rearrangement misses the point that GM crops are now the agricultural products most heavily treated with herbicides and that two of these herbicides may pose risks of cancer. We hope, in light of this new information, that the FDA will reconsider labeling of GM foods and couple it with adequately funded, long-term postmarketing surveillance.

Info: [www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMp1505660](http://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMp1505660)

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