Publications and Resources

WHO updating global estimates of disease attributable to environment

WHO is currently synthesizing the impacts of all environmental and occupational risks on health, focusing on the potential for prevention. Data for more than 60 diseases and disease groups are being collated and examined. In addition, the latest assessments of health impacts of environmental risks as well as systematic reviews of the epidemiological evidence on environmental risks are under review. This meta-synthesis will result in estimates of overall impacts of the environment on health.

The evidence regarding interventions and their economic analysis will also be addressed. Results and new data are expected to be available before the end of 2015 and will be published by WHO as the second edition of Preventing disease through healthy environments. For more information click here.

Climate change agreement critical to public health

A new universal climate change agreement should also comprise an effective public health agreement. Health ministers and practitioners need to assert this point as countries shape the final outcome of the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP21) to be held in Paris in December 2015. This was the central message of a panel convened in the margins of the UN climate change negotiations held on 2nd June in Bonn, Germany. The panel gave an update on WHO joint efforts with the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to create country profiles for health and climate change. Each country profile outlines the health risks associated with climate change and potential opportunities to address climate change. They aim to empower health actors to engage more actively in the climate negotiations.

Nature in urban environments reduces stress

Contact with nature in urban areas can have numerous health benefits, a new study finds. The researchers found people whose home had views of different kinds of vegetation had significantly
lower levels of stress hormones, indicating that green spaces play an important role in healthy cities. For more information click here.

**Rooftop farming: The next steps for development**

Urban agriculture is becoming increasingly popular. A recent assessment of rooftop farming in Barcelona shows differing attitudes towards the practice, and provides important recommendations for the development of agricultural policy for the 21st century, such as including food production as a potential use of rooftops in planning legislation. For more information click here.

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**Literature**

In this section we will provide a collection of recent housing and health publications from a variety of backgrounds. Literature published in German or French, respectively, is indicated with the German flag 🇩🇪 or the French flag 🇫🇷.

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**Allergies and Respiratory Diseases**

*Measurement of aeroallergens from furnace filters.*

*Early-life origins of chronic respiratory diseases: understanding and promoting healthy ageing.*
Association of fine particles with respiratory disease mortality: a meta-analysis.

A systematic review of associations between environmental exposures and development of asthma in children aged up to 9 years.

Inner city asthma.
Gergen PJ, Togias A.

Dusty Air Pollution is Associated with an Increased Risk of Allergic Diseases in Southwestern Part of Iran.

Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons and childhood asthma.
Karimi P, Peters KO, Bidke K, Strickland PT.

Effects of early-life exposure to allergens and bacteria on recurrent wheeze and atopy in urban children.

Respiratory effects in children from passive smoking of cigarettes and narghile: ISAAC Phase Three in Syria.
Mohammad Y, Shaaban R, Hassan M, Yassine F, Mohammad S, Tessier JF, Ellwood P.

Asthma, allergy and eczema among adults in multifamily houses in Stockholm (3-HE study)--associations with building characteristics, home environment and energy use for heating.
Norbäck D, Lamp L, Engvall K.

Asthma and the hygiene hypothesis. Does cleanliness matter?

The role of the early-life environment in the development of allergic disease.
Wegienka G, Zoratti E, Johnson CC.

Indoor Air

Phthalate exposure through different pathways and allergic sensitization in preschool children with asthma, allergic rhinoconjunctivitis and atopic dermatitis.
Flame retardant exposures in California early childhood education environments.  

Relationship between daily exposure to biomass fuel smoke and blood pressure in high-altitude Peru.  
Hypertension. 2015 May;65(5):1134-40.

Distribution patterns of brominated, chlorinated, and phosphorus flame retardants with particle size in indoor and outdoor dust and implications for human exposure.  

Comparing human exposure to emerging and legacy flame retardants from the indoor environment and diet with concentrations measured in serum.  
Cequier E, Marcé RM, Becher G, Thomsen C.  
Environ Int. 2015 Jan;74:54-9.

Household cooking with solid fuels contributes to ambient PM2.5 air pollution and the burden of disease.  

Levels and sources of volatile organic compounds in homes of children with asthma.  
Chin JY, Godwin C, Parker E, Robins T, Lewis T, Harbin P, Battersman S.  

Urinary biomonitoring of phosphate flame retardants: levels in California adults and recommendations for future studies.  
Dodson RE, Van den Eede N, Covaci A, Perovich LJ, Brody JG, Rudel RA.  
Environ Sci Technol. 2014 Dec 2;48(23):13625-33. [Free Article]

Assessment of indoor environmental quality in existing multi-family buildings in North-East Europe.  
Environ Int. 2015 Jun;79:74-84.

Prenatal exposure to polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons and cognitive dysfunction in children.  

Particle transport characteristics in indoor environment with an air cleaner.  
Jin X, Yang L, Du X, Yang Y.  
Indoor and Built Environment, Jun 2015; vol. 0: 1420326X15592253. [Epub ahead of print]

Cancer risk assessment of human exposure to polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) via indoor and outdoor dust based on probit model.  

The public health benefits of reducing fine particulate matter through conversion to cleaner heating fuels in New York City.  
Kheirbek I, Haney J, Douglas S, Ito K, Caputo S Jr, Matte T.  
Polybrominated diphenyl ethers in the air and comparison of the daily intake and uptake through inhalation by Shanghai residents with those through other matrices and routes.
Li C, Zhao Z, Lei B, An J, Zhang X, Yu Y.

Correlation of in vivo relative bioavailability to in vitro bioaccessibility for arsenic in household dust from China and its implication for human exposure assessment.
Li HB, Li J, Juhasz AL, Ma LQ.

Impact of ferromanganese alloy plants on household dust manganese levels: implications for childhood exposure.
Environ Res. 2015 Apr;138:279-90.

Quantifying the contribution of ambient and indoor-generated fine particles to indoor air in residential environments.

A review of soil and dust ingestion studies for children.
Moya J, Phillips L.

Macrocyclic-, polycyclic-, and nitro musks in cosmetics, household commodities and indoor dusts collected from Japan: implications for their human exposure.
Nakata H, Hinosaka M, Yanagimoto H.

Indoor particulate matter in rural, wood stove heated homes.
Semmens EO, Noonan CW, Allen RW, Weiler EC, Ward TJ.
Environ Res. 2015 Apr;138:93-100.

The domestic environment and respiratory health of school children in Zongshan, China.
Spickett J, Rumchev K, Jing H.

Flame retardant associations between children's handwipes and house dust.
Stapleton HM, Misenheimer J, Hoffman K, Webster TF.
Chemosphere. 2014 Dec;116:54-60.

Analysis on combinations of indoor thermal microclimate parameters in radiant cooled residential buildings and drawing of new thermal comfort charts.
Sui X, Xu Zhang X.

Infiltration of Black Carbon Particles from Residential Woodsmoke into Nearby Homes.
Thatcher, T., Kirchstetter, T., Malejan, C. and Ward, C.

Levels of polybrominated diphenyl ethers in settled house dust from urban dwellings with resident preschool-aged children in Nanjing, China.
Wang BL, Pang ST, Zhang XL, Li XL, Sun YG, Lu XM, Zhang Q.

Residential levels of polybrominated diphenyl ethers and risk of childhood acute lymphoblastic leukemia in California.
Organophosphorus flame retardants and plasticizers: sources, occurrence, toxicity and human exposure.
Wei GL, Li DQ, Zhuo MN, Liao YS, Xie ZY, Guo TL, Li JJ, Zhang SY, Liang ZQ. 
Environ Pollut. 2015 Jan;196:29-46.

An investigation into porch dust lead levels.
Environ Res. 2015 Feb;137:129-35.

Indoor air quality in green buildings: A case-study in a residential high-rise building in the northeastern United States.
Xiong Y, Krogmann U, Mainelis G, Rodenburg LA, Andrews CJ. 

Source identification and health risk assessment of metals in indoor dust in the vicinity of phosphorus mining, Guizhou Province, China.
Yang Q, Chen H, Li B. 

Polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs) in the indoor dust in China: levels, spatial distribution and human exposure.
Zhu NZ, Liu LY, Ma WL, Li WL, Song WW, Qi H, Li YF. 

Mould and Dampness

Thirdhand cigarette smoke: factors affecting exposure and remediation.
Bahl V, Jacob P 3rd, Havel C, Schick SF, Talbot P. 

Fungal exposure, atopy, and asthma exacerbations in Puerto Rican children.

Residential culturable fungi, (1-3, 1-6)-β-d-glucan, and ergosterol concentrations in dust are not associated with asthma, rhinitis, or eczema diagnoses in children.
Choi H, Byrne S, Larsen LS, Sigsgaard T, Thorne PS, Larsson L, Sebastian A, Bornehag CG. 
Indoor Air. 2014 Apr;24(2):158-70. Free Article

Applicability of the environmental relative moldiness index for quantification of residential mold contamination in an air pollution health effects study.

Microbiological characterization of 3193 French dwellings of Elfe cohort children.
Sci Total Environ. 2015 Feb 1;505:1026-35.

Environmental relative moldiness index and associations with home characteristics and infant wheeze.
Rosenbaum PF, Crawford JA, Hunt A, Vesper SJ, Abraham JL. 

Remediating buildings damaged by dampness and mould for preventing or reducing respiratory tract symptoms, infections and asthma.
Exposure to visible mould or dampness at home and sleep problems in children: Results from the LISAplus study.
Tiesler CM, Thiering E, Tischer C, Lehmann I, Schaaf B, von Berg A, Heinrich J.
Environ Res. 2015 Feb;137:357-63.

Light and Radiation

A geospatial approach to the prediction of indoor radon vulnerability in British Columbia, Canada.
Branion-Calles MC, Nelson TA, Henderson SB.

Hierarchical modeling of indoor radon concentration: how much do geology and building factors matter?
Borgoni R, De Francesco D, De Bartolo D, Tzavidis N.

Radon mitigation in cold climates at Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg.
Brossard M, Ottawa CB, Falcomer R, Whyte J.

Procedure for the characterization of radon potential in existing dwellings and to assess the annual average indoor radon concentration.
Collignan B, Powaga E.

Naturally occurring radioactive materials (NORMs) generated from lignite-fired power plants in Kosovo.
Hasani F, Shala F, Xhixa G, Xhixa MK, Hodolli G, Kadiri S, Bylyku E, Cfarku F.

Distribution of 222Rn concentration in an inhabited area adjacent to the Aja granitic heights of Hail Province, Saudi Arabia.
Kinsara AA, Shabana el-SI, Abulfaraj WH, Qutub MM.

[Risks associated to ionizing radiation from natural sources].
Laurier D, Gay D.

Luminous environment in healthcare buildings for user satisfaction and comfort: an objective and subjective field study.
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The Spanish indoor radon mapping strategy.

A comparison of radon and its decay products' behaviour in indoor air.
Trevisi R, Cardellini F, Leonardi F, Vargas Trassierra C, Franci D.

Winnipeg radon testing: comparison of test durations, effects of house characteristics, and efficacy of floor-drain seals.
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High variability of indoor radon concentrations in uraniferous bedrock areas in the Balkan region.
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Smoking / Environmental Tobacco Smoke

Electronic cigarette use and exposure in the pediatric population.
Collaco JM, Drummond MB, McGrath-Morrow SA.
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Electronic nicotine delivery systems: executive summary of a policy position paper from the American College of Physicians.
Crowley RA; Health Public Policy Committee of the American College of Physicians.

Medical symptoms among pilots associated with work and home environments: a 3-year cohort study.
Fu X, Lindgren T, Norbäck D.

Electronic cigarettes are a source of thirdhand exposure to nicotine.
Goniewicz ML, Lee L.
Nicotine Tob Res. 2015 Feb;17(2):256-8.

Newsprint coverage of smoking in cars carrying children: a case study of public and scientific opinion driving the policy debate.
Hilton S, Wood K, Bain J, Patterson C, Duffy S, Semple S.

Smoking restrictions in homes after implementation of a smoking ban in public places.
Kairouz S, Lasnier B, Mihaylova T, Montreuil A, Cohen JE.

The economic burden of exposure to secondhand smoke for child and adult never smokers residing in U.S. public housing.
Mason J, Wheeler W, Brown MJ.

Full and home smoking ban adoption after a randomized controlled trial targeting secondhand smoke exposure reduction.
Nicholson JS, McDermott MJ, Huang Q, Zhang H, Tyc VL.
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Environmental tobacco smoke exposure and children's intelligence at 8-11 years of age.
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Children's perspectives on how parents protect them from secondhand smoke in their homes and cars in socioeconomically contrasting communities: a qualitative study.
Rowa-Dewar N, Amos A, Cunningham-Burley S.

How long does secondhand smoke remain in household air: analysis of PM2.5 data from smokers' homes.
Semple S, Latif N.
Prenatal and postnatal exposure to parental smoking increases odds of allergic diseases during childhood and adolescence.
von Kobyletzki L, Svensson Å.
Evid Based Med. 2015 Jun;20(3):118.

Relationship between caregivers' smoking at home and urinary levels of cotinine in children.

Exposure to parental smoking in childhood is associated with increased risk of carotid atherosclerotic plaque in adulthood: the Cardiovascular Risk in Young Finns Study.
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Smoking in cars carrying children will be illegal in England from October.
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Relationships between perceived aspects of home and symptoms in a cohort aged 67-70.
Haak M, Kylén M, Ekström H, Schmidt SM, Horstmann V, Elmståhl S, Iwarsson S.
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An intervention designed to improve sensory impairments in the elderly and indoor lighting in their homes: an exploratory randomized controlled trial.
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Risk factors of indoor fall injuries in community-dwelling older women: a prospective cohort study.
Hu J, Xia Q, Jiang Y, Zhou P, Li Y.
Arch Gerontol Geriatr. 2015 Mar-Apr;60(2):259-64.

Aging in Place vs. Relocation for Older Adults with Neurocognitive Disorder: Applications of Wiseman's Behavioral Model.
Kaplan DB, Andersen TC, Lehning AJ, Perry TE.

Who prefers to age in place? Cross-sectional survey of middle-aged people in Japan.
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Comparing the Age-Friendliness of Different Neighbourhoods Using District Surveys: An Example from Hong Kong.
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Evaluation of children presenting to the emergency room after electrical injury.

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Borys D, Stanton M, Gummin D, Drott T.
A review of community management of paediatric burns.
Cox SG, Martinez R, Glick A, Numanoglu A, Rode H.
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de Sousa E.

Spatiotemporal data visualisation for homecare monitoring of elderly people.
Juarez JM, Ochotorena JM, Campos M, Combi C.

Risk and protective factors for falls from furniture in young children: multicenter case-control study.

Optimizing medication safety in the home.
LeBlanc RG, Choi J.

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L'Her E.

Risk for household safety hazards: Socioeconomic and sociodemographic factors.
Mayes S, Roberts MC, Stough CO.

Validation of the Safe at Home Screening with Adults Who Have Acquired Brain Injury.
Robnett RH, Bliss S, Buck K, Dempsey J, Gilpatric H, Michaud K.
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Environmental determinants of different blood lead levels in children: a quantile analysis from a nationwide survey.

Ambient and household air pollution: complex triggers of disease.
Farmer SA, Nelin TD, Falvo MJ, Wold LE.

An exploratory analysis to determine priority areas for lead poisoning prevention education programs in Missouri.
McManus K, Cummings M, Visker J, Cox C.
Rhinitis, asthma and respiratory infections among adults in relation to the home environment in multi-family buildings in Sweden.
Wang J, Engvall K, Smedje G, Norbäck D.

Environmental chemicals mediated the effect of old housing on adult health problems: US NHANES, 2009-2010.
Shiue I, Bramley G.

Housing Insecurity and the Association With Health Outcomes and Unhealthy Behaviors, Washington State, 2011.
Stahre M, VanEenwyk J, Siegel P, Njai R.

Housing and Mental Health

Neighborhood support network, perceived proximity to community facilities and depressive symptoms among low socioeconomic status Chinese elders.
Chen YY, Wong GH, Lum TY, Lou VW, Ho AH, Luo H, Tong TL.

Effect of social mobility in family financial situation and housing tenure on mental health conditions among South Australian adults: results from a population health surveillance system, 2009 to 2011.
Dal Grande E, Chittleborough CR, Wu J, Shi Z, Goldney RD, Taylor AW.

Depression in older cat and dog owners: the Nord-Trøndelag Health Study (HUNT)-3.
Enmarker I, Hellzén O, Ekker K, Berg AG.

Thermal Comfort / Energy

Improving energy efficiency in private rented housing: Why don't landlords act?
Ambrose AR.
Indoor and Built Environment, Aug 2015; vol. 0: 1420326X15598821. [Epub ahead of print]

Window retrofit strategy for energy saving in existing residences with different thermal characteristics and window sizes.
Building Services Engineering Research and Technology. 2015 Jul 19:0143624415595904. [Epub ahead of print]

Urban heat island analysis of Greater Manchester, UK using sky view factor analysis.
Cheung HKW, Coles D, Levermore GJ.
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Effects of solar radiation asymmetry on buildings' cooling energy needs.
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The efficiency of a typical meteorological year and actual climatic data in the analysis of energy demand in buildings.
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Application of a Whole-Building Hygrothermal model in energy, durability, and indoor humidity retrofit design.
Tariku F, Kumaran K, Fazio P.

Health effects of home energy efficiency interventions in England: a modelling study.
Hamilton I, Milner J, Chalabi Z, Das P, Jones B, Shrubsole C, Davies M, Wilkinson P.

Generating near-extreme Summer Reference Years for building performance simulation.
Jentsch MF, Eames ME, Levermore GJ.
Building Services Engineering Research and Technology. 2015 May 29:0143624415587476. [Epub ahead of print]

A review of PAH exposure from the combustion of biomass fuel and their less surveyed effect on the blood parameters.
Kamal A, Cincinelli A, Martellini T, Malik RN.

Improving the installation of renewable heating technology in UK social housing properties through user centred design.
Moore N, Haines V, Lilley D.
Indoor and Built Environment, Aug 2015; vol. 0: 1420326X15598819. [Epub ahead of print]

Embedding smart energy technology in built environments: A comparative study of four smart grid demonstration projects.
Skjøsvold TM, Ryghaug M.
Indoor and Built Environment, Jul 2015; vol. 0: 1420326X15596210. [Epub ahead of print]

An experimental study on indoor thermal comfort of the coupled radiation panels with household replacement fresh air system.
Qu M, Chen J, Guo L, Pan J.

Household air pollution causes dose-dependent inflammation and altered phagocytosis in human macrophages.
Am J Respir Cell Mol Biol. 2015 May;52(5):584-93.

Health risk assessment of inhalable particulate matter in Beijing based on the thermal environment.
Xu LY, Yin H, Xie XD.

Urban Planning / Built Environment

The influence of environmental aesthetics on economic value of housing: an empirical research on virtual environments.
Cetintahra GE, Cubukcu E.

Associations Between Residential Proximity to Power Plants and Adverse Birth Outcomes.
Ha S, Hu H, Roth J, Kan H, Xu X.

Reduced street lighting at night and health: A rapid appraisal of public views in England and Wales.
Green J, Perkins C, Steinbach R, Edwards P.
Health Place. 2015 Jul;34:171-80. Free Article

Biomarkers of manganese exposure in pregnant women and children living in an agricultural community in California.
Gunier RB, Mora AM, Smith D, Arora M, Austin C, Eskenazi B, Bradman A.

Ecological and human health hazards of heavy metals and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) in road dust of Isfahan metropolis, Iran.
Soltani N, Keshavarzi B, Moore F, Tavakol T, Lahijanzadeh AR, Jaafarzadeh N, Kermani M.
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Can washing-pretreatment eliminate the health risk of municipal solid waste incineration fly ash reuse?
Wang Y, Pan Y, Zhang L, Yue Y, Zhou J, Xu Y, Qian G.
Ecotoxicol Environ Saf. 2015 Jan;111:177-84.

Investigation of the differences between factors affecting vandalism in urban green areas.
Yilmaz T, Olgun R.
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Social Inequality

[The impact of migration background on children's secondhand smoke exposure. A cross-sectional study within the health monitoring units (GME) in Bavaria, Germany].
Klingshirn H, Hendrowarsito L, Fromme H, Bolte G; GME-Studiengruppe.

Social resources and disordered living conditions: evidence from a national sample of community-residing older adults.
York Cornwell E.

Noise

ICBEN review of research on the biological effects of noise 2011-2014.
Noise Health. 2015 Mar-Apr;17(75):57-82.

Development of a quantitative methodology to assess the impacts of urban transport interventions and related noise on well-being.

Health complaints and wind turbines: The efficacy of explaining the nocebo response to reduce symptom reporting.
Crichton F, Petrie KJ.

The impact of paintings hung on lecture room walls on the speech intelligibility and perception of background noise.
Čudina M, Prezelj J, Pušlar-Čudina M.
Indoor and Built Environment, Mar 2015; vol. 0: 1420326X15572640. [Epub ahead of print]
Noise pollution and annoyance: an urban soundscapes study.
de Paiva Vianna KM, Alves Cardoso MR, Rodrigues RM.
Noise Health. 2015 May-Jun;17(76):125-33. [Free Article]

Road traffic noise is associated with increased cardiovascular morbidity and mortality and all-cause mortality in London.
Halonen JI, Hansell AL, Gulliver J, Morley D, Blangiardo M, Fecht D, Toledano MB, Beevers SD, Anderson HR, Kelly FJ, Tonne C.

Exposure to Road Traffic Noise and Behavioral Problems in 7-Year-Old Children: A Cohort Study.
Hjortebjerg D, Andersen AM, Christensen JS, Ketzel M, Raaschou-Nielsen O, Sunyer J, Julvez J, Forns J, Sørensen M.
Environ Health Perspect. 2015 Jun 30. [Epub ahead of print]

The development of an analytical method for constructing noise contours.
Lu S-Y, Lin K-Y.
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Road-traffic noise: annoyance, risk perception, and noise sensitivity in the Finnish adult population.
Okokon EO, Turunen AW, Ung-Lanki S, Vartiainen AK, Tiittanen P, Lanki T.

The effect of wind turbine noise on sleep and quality of life: A systematic review and meta-analysis of observational studies.
Onakpoya IJ, O'Sullivan J, Thompson MJ, Heneghan CJ.
Environ Int. 2015 Sep;82:1-9.

Health impact assessment of traffic noise in Madrid (Spain).
Tobías A, Recio A, Díaz J, Linares C.

Residential exposure to traffic noise and risk for non-hodgkin lymphoma among adults.
Environ Res. 2015 Jun 22;142:61-65. [Epub ahead of print]

Valuing Quiet: An Economic Assessment of U.S. Environmental Noise as a Cardiovascular Health Hazard.
Swinburn TK, Hammer MS, Neitzel RL.

Years of life lost and morbidity cases attributable to transportation noise and air pollution: A comparative health risk assessment for Switzerland in 2010.
Vienneau D, Perez L, Schindler C, Lieb C, Sommer H, Probst-Hensch N, Künzli N, Röösli M.

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Miscellaneous

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Bennett O, Kandala NB, Ji C, Linnane J, Clarke A.
BMJ Open. 2014 Dec 2;4(12):e006028. [Free Article]


Event Announcements

2015

27th Conference of the International Society for Environmental Epidemiology „Addressing Environmental Health Inequalities” August 30 – September 3, 2015 São Paulo, Brazil Further Information: 27th Conference of the International Society for Environmental Epidemiology

13th Word Allergy Congress 2015 October 14–17, 2015 Seoul, Korea Further Information: World Allergy Congress
8th International Conference on Children's Environmental Health and Safety  
October 15–17, 2015  
Stresa, Italy  
Further Information: INCHES 2015

9th National Housing Conference  
October 28–30, 2015  
Perth, Australia  
Further Information: NHC - National Housing Conference

4. Schulkongress “Zukunftsräum Schule”  
4th Congress on School Settings  
November 17–18, 2015  
Stuttgart, Germany  
Further Information: Zukunftsräum Schule :: Information

2015 Greenbuild International Conference and Expo  
November 18–22, 2015  
Washington D.C., USA  
Further Information: 2015 Greenbuild International Conference and Expo

Nanotechnology based sensors and detection methods - workshop  
December 1–2, 2015  
Ispra, Italy  
Further Information: Nanotechnology based sensors and detection methods - workshop - JRC Science Hub - European Commission

2016

14th International Conference on Indoor Air Quality and Climate  
July 3–8, 2016  
Ghent, Belgium  
Further Information: Indoor air 2016

17th IUAPPA World Clean Air Congress - Mega-City Perspectives  
August 28 – September 2  
Busan, South Korea  
Further Information: IUAPPA 2016

41st IAHS World Congress on Housing  
September 13–16, 2016  
Algarve, Portugal  
Further Information: IAHS2016
Message Board

In this section we will inform you about activities and projects related to housing and health that are being carried out by WHO or the WHO CC. This may relate to ongoing activities and projects, as well as invitations to participate in data collections or case study projects.

WHO work on indoor, built and urban environments

European Environment and Health Process Mid-term Review (EHP-MTR)

On 28–30 April 2015 in Haifa, Israel, countries of the WHO European Region evaluated the status of the environment and health in Europe and central Asia at the European Environment and Health Process Mid-term Review (EHP-MTR).

High-level country representatives and international, intergovernmental, and nongovernmental organizations reviewed progress and gaps on the environment and health goals set five years ago at the Fifth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health in Parma, Italy.

With the 2010 Parma Declaration, all countries committed to the first-ever time-bound goals on the environment and health. They include providing safe water and sanitation, healthy and safe settings for physical activity and environments free of tobacco smoke and toxic chemicals, and the elimination of asbestos-related diseases.

All thematic reports and publications associated with the Mid-term Review can be accessed here; the overview report “Improving environment and health in Europe: how far have we gotten?” can be downloaded here (Russian version available here).

Heatwaves and health: guidance on warning-system development

Heat or hot weather that lasts for several days, often referred to as “a heatwave” can have a significant impact on society, including a rise in mortality and morbidity. Heatwaves also place an increased strain on infrastructure (power, water and transport). This guidance has been developed jointly by the World Meteorological Organization and the World Health Organization to outline the issues surrounding the general heat–health problem and present how an understanding of the biometeorology, epidemiology, public-health and risk-communication aspects of heat as a hazard can be used to inform the development of warning systems.

The report can be accessed here. Further practical guidance and advice on preventing health effects of heat are available here.

Air quality and health resolution adopted at the sixty-eighth World Health Assembly

A landmark resolution on air quality and health has been adopted at the sixty-eighth World Health Assembly to address the health impacts of air pollution – the world’s largest single environmental health risk. Every year 4.3 million deaths occur from exposure to indoor air pollution and 3.7 million deaths are attributable to outdoor air pollution. This was the first time the Health Assembly had debated the topic.

The resolution highlights the key role national health authorities need to play in raising awareness about the potential to save lives and reduce health costs, if air pollution is addressed effectively. It also stresses the need for strong cooperation between different sectors and integration of health concerns into all national, regional and local air pollution-related policies. It urges Member States to develop air quality monitoring systems and health registries to improve surveillance for all illnesses related to air pollution; promote clean cooking, heating and lighting technologies and fuels; and strengthen international transfer of expertise, technologies and scientific data in the field of air pollution.

The resolution asks the WHO Secretariat to strengthen its technical capacities to support Member States in taking action on air pollution. This includes further building capacity to: implement the “WHO...
"air quality guidelines" and "WHO indoor air quality guidelines; conduct cost-benefit assessment of mitigation measures; and advance research into air pollution’s health effects and effectiveness. At the Sixty-ninth World Health Assembly, WHO will propose a road map for an enhanced global response by the health sector that reduces the adverse health effects of air pollution. See the draft resolution here.

**Poor indoor environments at school**

Children are exposed to poor indoor environments in schools in many countries in the WHO European Region, with issues including stuffy air, dampness and mould, uncomfortable temperatures and poorly functioning toilets. This not only causes ill health and absenteeism but also reduces children's academic performance and well-being.

A new WHO report, *School environment: policies and current status*, presents the results of a recent WHO survey on policies to improve environmental and health conditions in European schools and kindergartens. It also draws on other international and national surveys in schools. The report's findings also contributed to discussions at the mid-term review of the European Environment and Health Process in Haifa, Israel, on 28–30 April 2015. The report is available here, a Russian version is available here.


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