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State of knowledge

European Children's Environmental Health Impact assessment

What do we know?

There are 163 million children in Europe.

Where do they live? 70% urban

Where are they? 90% time indoors

Risk

We have to consider the natural risk due to background levels

(radiation, fine particles, noise), but also the additional risk due to man-made products, activities, or incidents.

If we consider the effect on human we see that there is a **baseline effect** on entire population due to background man-made levels in addition to natural exposure effects.

Examples are: natural radiation + man-made radiation, or natural fine particles + man-made particles.

The additional effect due to extra exposure via different media is time dependent and location dependent.

We know of the SIGNIFICANCE OF 5 POINT IQ REDUCTION due to children's exposure to lead. This is a good example of the reason why we have to take care of children.

There are several international aspects to be dealt with in children's environmental health.

One important issues is the training & capacity building

The Project (CHEST) on training material produced a range of modules for health care professionals in the field of environment and health.

We see in Europe also the development of Paediatric Speciality Units

In copy of those in the Northern American continent. What is being worked at is that universities in Europe get more involved in implementing CEH in curricula. Therefore a European Training proposal is in the make.

Another issue is the Policy and advocacy building

The PINCHE network was on bridging science and policy. A large amount of research has been studied and analysed to provide information on the main items in children's environmental health.

Besides that there is INCHES as an information & advocacy network.

HECA (under WHO secretariat) forms a worldwide alliance of organisations and member states, but is lacking funds at the moment to be really active.

Internationally there has been some policy action. An *action plan has been developed by the WHO on Children's Environment*, the so-called CEHAPE. Also the EU has made a Action Plan Environment & Health.

For research some special points of attention have been mentioned. There should be a focus on exposure data collection; on combined effects and on cost-benefit analysis specifically for vulnerable groups.

We can stipulate a few *needs in children's environmental health*..:

Lower the burden of disease for children;

Participation of other medical professionals in taking care of our children in prevention and in cure;

Integration of health and environment in daily (health care) practice;

Support for transboundary programmes.