

WHO Chemical Risk Assessment Network Newsletter

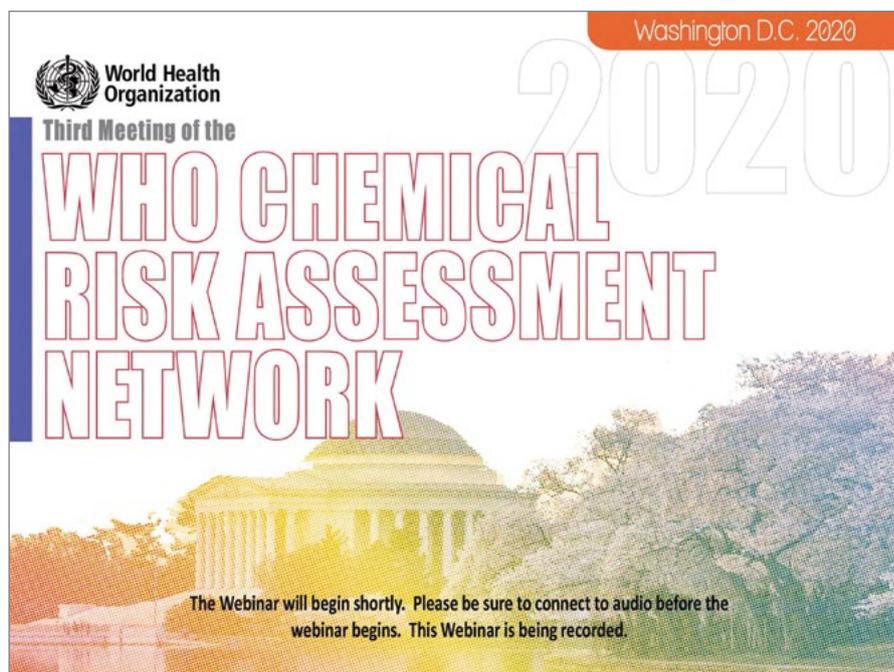
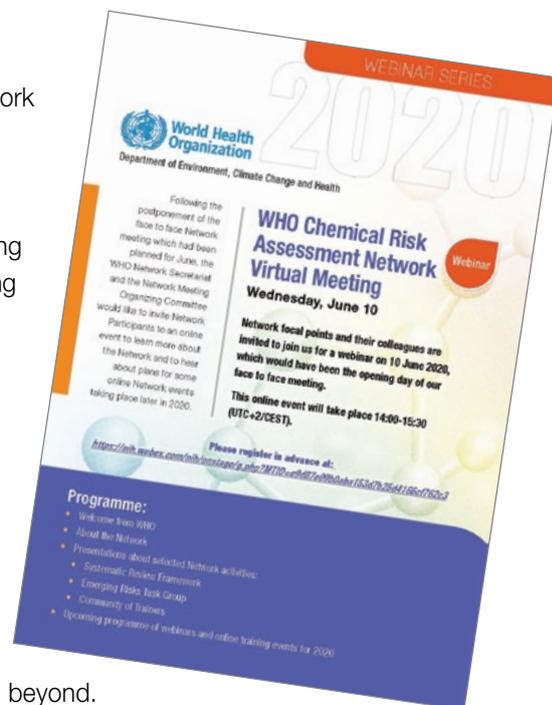
Newsletter No. 16: Autumn 2020

New Network Participants

- Department for Risk Assessment, Austrian Agency for Health and Food Safety (AGES), Austria
- Centre for Environment and Health, University of Leuven, Belgium
- Royal Center for Disease Control, Department of Public Health, Ministry of Health, Bhutan
- French National Institute for Industrial Environment and Risks (INERIS), France
- National Center for Disease Control and Public Health of Georgia (NCDC), Georgia
- National Centre for Environmental Health, Instituto de Salud Carlos III (CNSA), Spain
- Department of analytical chemistry and environmental science, Stockholm University (ACES), Sweden

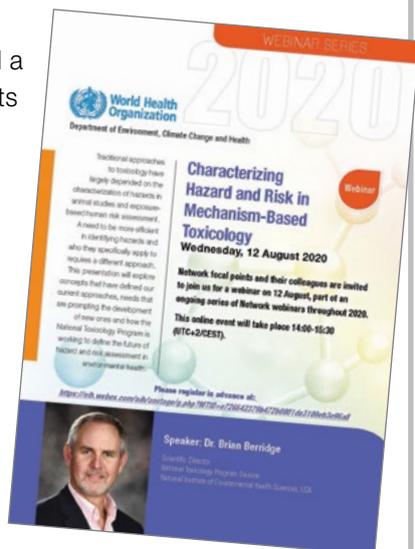
Network Virtual Meeting

Travel restrictions imposed due to the COVID-19 pandemic forced the postponement of the in-person Network meeting which had been planned to be held in June. To keep Network participants informed, the WHO Secretariat and the Meeting Organizing Committee organized a virtual meeting on 10 June 2020, which would have been the opening day of the planned in-person meeting. More than 100 individuals from 40 institutions in 28 countries participated in this first virtual meeting of the Network. The meeting included presentations about the Network, updates on three Network activities and plans for webinars and online training events for the remainder of 2020 and beyond.



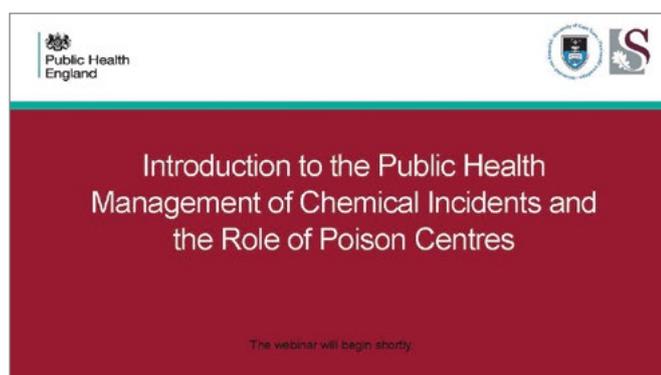
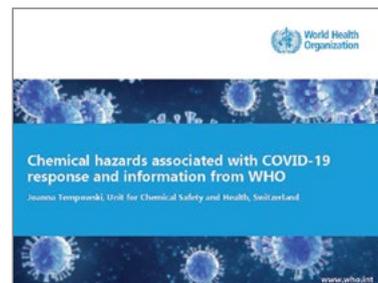
Network webinar series

The Meeting Organizing Committee had planned a number of training events to be held alongside the in-person Network meeting. Following postponement of the in-person meeting, the Organizing Committee decided to offer a series of online events for the Network during 2020 instead. These monthly webinars (usually held on the second Wednesday of each month) consist of presentations on topics of interest to the Network and also online training events. In many cases, the webinars are using the ideas which had been developed for the in-person meeting but have been migrated to an online format. Topics covered to date were “Characterizing hazard and risk in mechanism-based toxicology”, “Public health management of chemical incident response and the role of poison centres” and “Basic chemical risk assessment training”. Attendance at these online events has ranged from 150-300 participants from up to 60 countries. The monthly webinars will continue to the end of 2020, and plans are already being made to continue this series into the first half of 2021. Webinars are advertised to Network focal points and attendance is via registration in advance.



Chemicals and COVID-19 response

The response to the COVID-19 pandemic has included greatly increased use of certain chemicals, such as disinfectants and hand sanitizers. WHO rapidly adopted new methods of working to develop new guidance in response. Two International Chemical Safety Cards (ICSCs) were updated or created using an online approach. The ICSC for Isopropyl alcohol (commonly used in hand sanitizer products) was updated, and an ICSC was created for a disinfectant, Ortho-Phthalaldehyde. WHO also published guidance on the cleaning and disinfection of environmental surfaces in the context of COVID-19, describing methods, chemicals and protective measures to provide guidance to health-care professionals, public health professionals and health authorities. The WHO European Centre for Environment and Health, in collaboration with WHO HQ, convened a webinar on 7 July 2020 on the topic of chemicals and COVID-19. The webinar described the chemical hazards associated with some COVID-19 responses and provided an analysis of poisoning cases which have occurred. Information available from WHO on precautionary measures to ensure the safe use of chemicals in this context was presented. Incidents where chemicals were released accidentally from manufacturing facilities following start-up of equipment after unplanned shut-down periods caused by COVID-19 were also described. The presentations and recording from the webinar are available via the Network SharePoint site.

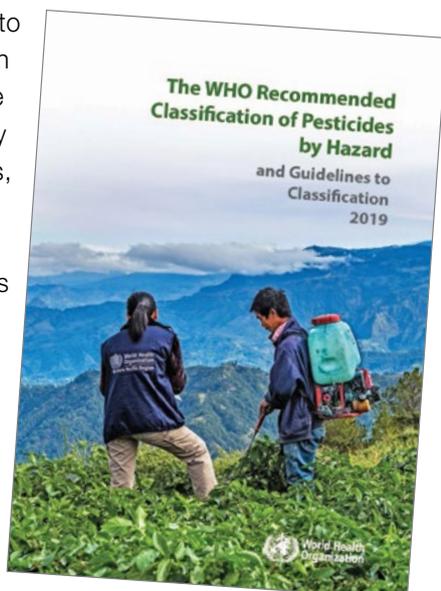


- ICSC Isopropyl alcohol:- https://www.ilo.org/dyn/icsc/showcard.display?p_lang=en&p_card_id=0554&p_version=2
- ICSC Ortho-Phthalaldehyde:- https://www.ilo.org/dyn/icsc/showcard.display?p_lang=en&p_card_id=1784&p_version=2
- Cleaning and disinfection of environmental surfaces in the context of COVID-19:- <https://apps.who.int/iris/rest/bitstreams/1277966/retrieve>

Latest Publications

WHO Recommended Classification of Pesticides by Hazard

This document sets out a classification system to distinguish between the more and the less hazardous forms of pesticides based on acute risk to human health. The WHO Recommended Classification of Pesticides by Hazard has been published every few years since the 1970's, and the latest edition covers WHO evaluations up to 2019. This publication plays a key role in the identification of Highly Hazardous Pesticides, as defined by the FAO/WHO Joint Meeting on Pesticides Management, and includes information on 970 pesticide active ingredients. French and Spanish versions of this publication are also being developed.



<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240005662>

New publications on prevention of lead poisoning

Exposure to lead is a major public health concern, and lead paint is an important source of exposure, particularly for children and workers. WHO has recently published several documents to assist policy-makers and public health personnel to develop controls to stop the addition of lead to paint and to plan for measuring the concentration of lead in paint. There is also an overview of commonly used analytical methods for measuring the concentration of lead in blood, to assist in planning human biomonitoring studies, performing blood lead prevalence screening, and other public health actions related to the assessment of human exposure to lead.

- Global elimination of lead paint: why and how countries should take action – Technical brief <https://apps.who.int/iris/rest/bitstreams/1295535/retrieve>
- Global elimination of lead paint: why and how countries should take action – Policy brief <https://apps.who.int/iris/rest/bitstreams/1292932/retrieve>
- Brief guide to analytical methods for measuring lead in paint, 2nd edition <https://apps.who.int/iris/rest/bitstreams/1285349/retrieve>
- Brief guide to analytical methods for measuring lead in blood, 2nd edition <https://apps.who.int/iris/rest/bitstreams/1296498/retrieve>



Reminder

Network Participants are reminded that each year the International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week of Action takes place in the last week of October (from 25-31 October 2020), with a particular focus on eliminating lead paint.

Institutions can download campaign materials, many in six languages, and can register any events they are planning via the campaign webpage at <http://www.who.int/campaigns/international-lead-poisoning-prevention-week/2020>.

