Chemical Fallout

A Milwaukee Journal Sentinel Investigation
Feces and hormones
March 7, 2007

• The National Institutes of Health's Center for the Evaluation of Risks to Human Reproduction, which was charged with drafting the report, may be compromised, critics say.

• The environmental organization Environmental Working Group has evidence showing that a private consulting firm with close ties to the chemical industry did much of the work on this report, as well as for the center itself.
March 7, 2007

“The firm, Sciences International, has had clients including BASF and Dow Chemical - companies that manufacture bisphenol-A - as well as Dupont, Chevron, ExxonMobil, 3-M, Union Carbide, the American Petroleum Institute and the American Chemistry Council.” Susanne Rust, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel
The Team

• Meg Kissinger – Investigative reporter, 25 years at the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel.
• Cary Spivak – Business investigative reporter. 20 years at the newspaper.
• Mark Katches – New investigative and projects editor. Joined MJS in 2007. Previously at the Orange County Register.
EPA’s Endocrine Disruptor Screening Program
Findings

- 10 years and nothing from EPA’s EDSP
- Gov’s tests for endocrine disrupting chemicals are outdated and inconclusive.
- Countries across the world have moved to ban products with these chemicals.
- No regs to inform US consumers about whether these chemicals are in their products.
- NTP/ CERHR methods arbitrary
- Missed dozens of studies publicly available that MJS found online.
- Panel rejected low-dose studies
- Panel accepted studies translated by the ACC, as well as two industry studies that were not peer-reviewed.
BPA study findings

• About 80% of academically and government-funded research found that bisphenol A is harmful in laboratory animals. Nine of 10 industry-funded studies found there was no harm.
Voluntary Children’s Chemical Evaluation Program

• Voluntary program. Companies may provide information about the risks chemical’s pose to children, if they want. But not required to do so.

• Pilot program launched 10 years ago. Not one of the 23 chemicals have been completed.

• Several companies dropped out when asked for more info.
NTP conclusions regarding the possibilities that human development or reproduction might be adversely affected by exposure to bisphenol A. The NTP uses a five-level scale of concern:

- **SERIOUS Concern** for adverse effects
- **CONCERN** for adverse effects
- **SOME Concern** for adverse effects
- **MINIMAL Concern** for adverse effects
- **NEGLIGIBLE Concern** for adverse effects

- Developmental toxicity for fetuses, infants, and children (effects on the brain, behavior, and prostate gland)
- Developmental toxicity for fetuses, infants, and children (effects on the mammary gland and early puberty in females), and reproductive toxicity in workers
- Reproductive toxicity in adult men and women and malformations in newborns
“There remains considerable uncertainty whether the changes seen in the animal studies are directly applicable to humans, and whether they would result in clear adverse health effects,” said NTP Associate Director John Bucher. “But we have concluded that the possibility that BPA may affect human development cannot be dismissed.”
Canada, April 2008
FDA

• Called a task force together, in light of NTP report.
• NTP is supposed to serve as scientific advisory board to FDA
• FDA puts together its own report
Summer 2008

• FDA releases its report on the Friday before the Monday the California legislature is set to vote on a BPA ban in children’s products.
• The report is based on two industry funded studies.
• FDA says it ignored the 200+ others because they were not classic toxicological studies.
September 2008

- FDA has subcommittee of its science board to review its draft report.
- FDA appoints Martin Philbert, director of the U. Michigan’s Risk Science Center head the panel.
- UM’s Risk Science Center received a $5 million grant in July from Charles Gelman.
- Gelman is a notorious anti-regulation polluter. MDNR called him the second largest polluter in the state.
- Gelman told MJS that he told Philbert BPA was perfectly safe, and had discussed the matter with him.
Fall 2008

• FDA draft review largely written by industry. Section on neurodevelopment entirely from an industry report.
• Oct. 2008, subcommittee rejects FDA report, saying it is inadequate and not based on good science.
• Without backing down, FDA thanks subcommittee and says it will do more tests.
Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel: Bisphenol-A, that plasticizer, gets a media reaming

Much has been written in the last year or so about estrogen-mimicking industrial compounds, many of them used in plastics. Phthalates are among them. So is something called bisphenol-A, which helps hard, clear plastics to be hard and clear. It had, until the heavy attention from public advocacy groups and media, been a best-selling material for baby bottles. It continues in some use there, and in a lot of other things. The worry over these things is picking up steam of a magnitude that, many years ago, led to the ban on DDT;

But few reports that The Tracker has seen match, in fury and conviction, the lambasting that a team of Milwaukee Journal Sentinel reporters, Susanne Rust, Meg Kissinger, and Cary Spivak, have given to these things, especially bisphenol-A, in the last two weeks. They say they reviewed 250 papers, interviewed more than 100 scientists, industry reps, and government regulators, read thousands of pages of additional documents. They give it a one-two punch, with that second one the roundhouse. They are, they say, a knockout.
Chemistry War Zone, Updated

The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel continues its investigation of the debate over the safety of Bisphenol A, a commonly used chemical which is known to cause health problems in lab animals.
Columbia University
Awards

- John B. Oakes Award winner
- Sigma Delta Chi winner
- Scripps-Howard winner
- George Polk Award winner
- Pulitzer Prize finalists
BPA Bans

- Long Island
- Chicago
- Minnesota
- Connecticut
Cosmos Club

The Cosmos Club stands as "the closest thing to a social headquarters for Washington's intellectual elite."

— Wallace Stegner
BPA industry seeks to polish image

By Susanne Rust and Meg Kissing of the Journal Sentinel

Posted: May 29, 2009

Frustrated at media portrayals of bisphenol A as a dangerous chemical, food-packaging executives and lobbyists for the chemical makers met this week at an exclusive Washington, D.C., club where they hammered out a strategy, including showcasing a pregnant woman to talk about the chemical’s benefits.

The meeting was private, but the Journal Sentinel obtained a summary of the discussion. John Rost, chairman of the North American Metal Packaging Alliance, confirmed that the meeting took place. He said the summary was incomplete and did not accurately portray all the discussions.

"It was a five-hour meeting," he said.

But he did verify all the points in the summary.

A pregnant woman would be "the holy grail" to serve as a spokeswoman, the memo says. Attendees said they doubted they could find a scientist to serve as a spokesman for BPA.

When asked why it would be hard to find a scientist to tout the chemical’s benefits, Rost told the Journal Sentinel that any studies paid for by chemical makers are discounted by the media.

"The minute industry pays for a meal or an airline ticket, that scientist is tainted as working for industry," Rost said. "They put their reputations at risk."

Other strategies discussed at the meeting included focusing on how BPA helps women, appropriately put "at risk," particularly..."
John M. Rost, Ph.D.
Chairman
North American Metal Packaging Alliance, Inc.
1203 19th Street, NW
Suite 300
Washington, DC 20036-2401

Dear Dr. Rost:

The Committee on Energy and Commerce and its Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations have been investigating the possible dangers of the chemical Bisphenol A (BPA) in consumer products and food product containers, particularly in infant formula containers and other items used by infants and children.

Over the past week, both the Washington Post and the Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel have reported on a recent meeting of the BPA Joint Trade Association at the Cosmos Club in Washington D.C. during which industry officials discussed a public relations strategy to counter efforts to regulate BPA.
Science Suppressed: How America became obsessed with BPA
Trevor Butterworth, June 15, 2009

An in-depth examination of the science, risk assessment, and media coverage of the most controversial chemical since alar, drawing on interviews with the lead authors of two major risk assessments, and focusing on the accuracy of the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel's award-winning series, "Chemical Fallout," and the newspaper's campaign to have the chemical banned.

A handful of scientists and environmental activist groups claim that bisphenol A is the biological equivalent of global warming, and its presence in plastic bottles and can linings is endangering "millions of babies." Their message – and their accusation that the Food and Drug Administration has been swayed by industry-sponsored studies and has ignored vital scientific evidence – has led Congress to ask the agency to re-examine the safety of the chemical. A decision is expected by the end of the summer.

Missing in this debate is that it's not just "industry groups" that think BPA shouldn't be banned – or just industry-sponsored studies that say it's safe. Scientists, regulators, and politicians in Europe, Australia, and Japan have all rejected the evidence that the chemical is harmful as methodologically flawed, badly conducted or irrelevant – with some warning that banning it could actually endanger the public. Now that the National Institutes of Health has acknowledged it funded a lot of poorly-designed research on BPA – the very research that activists touted as evidence that the chemical is deadly – it's time to ask whether America has been spun by clever marketing rather than clever science.
A Digital Library of Tobacco Documents

The Legacy Tobacco Documents Library (LTDL) contains more than 10 million documents (50+ million pages) created by major tobacco companies related to their advertising, manufacturing, marketing, sales, and scientific research activities.

Search the Documents

[Search]

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Califonia Form 700
Fair Political Practices Commission

Statement of Economic Interests
Cover Page
A Public Document

Name: Williite Calvin C
Mailing Address: 780 Heinz Street, Berkeley, CA 94710
Daytime Telephone Number: (510) 540-3766

1. Office, Agency, or Court

Name of Office, Agency, or Court: Department of Toxic Subst. Control
Division, Board, District, if applicable: Human and Ecological Risk
Your Position: Staff Toxicologist

If filing for multiple positions, list additional agency(ies)/position(s): (Attach a separate sheet if necessary.)

Agency:
Position:

4. Schedule Summary

Total number of pages including this cover page: _______

Check applicable schedules or "No reportable interests."
I have disclosed interests on one or more of the attached schedules:

Schedule A-1: Yes - schedule attached
Investments (Less than 10% Ownership)

Schedule A-2: Yes - schedule attached
Investments (10% or greater Ownership)

Schedule B: Yes - schedule attached
Real Property

Signature: Joselene Sanders
Date: MAR 05 2008
The chemical industry has launched an aggressive campaign against efforts to ban bisphenol A, which studies have linked to a host of health problems. Documents obtained by the Journal Sentinel show how the industry has exerted its influence on government agencies and financed studies that it then uses to dispel concerns about the chemical. In many cases, the links involve people and agencies who have worked for the tobacco industry. Here is a look at some of the links:

**Industry and government connections**

- **Industry Group**
- **Industry Affiliated Group**
- **Government Agency**
- **Person**

Sources: Government and Tobacco Institute documents, Journal Sentinel research
September 21, 2009

Dr. Margaret Hamburg
Commissioner
Office of the Commissioner
Food and Drug Administration
10903 New Hampshire Ave.
Silver Spring, MD 20993-0002

cc: Dr. Jesse Goodman, Chief Medical Officer
    Dr. Josh Sharfstein, Assistant Commissioner
    Dr. Linda Birnbaum, Director, National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences
    Dr. John Bucher, Director, National Toxicology Program

Dear Commissioner Hamburg:

We are a group of independent (mostly university) researchers with extensive experience working with endocrine disrupting compounds and in particular bisphenol A (BPA). We represent no single interest, entity, organization or corporation. The purpose of this letter is to bring to you our serious concerns regarding the Food and Drug Administration’s toxicity studies for BPA just underway at the National Center for Toxicological Research (NCTR).

The FDA, in conjunction with the National Toxicology Program, plans to spend over 5 years and 10 million dollars studying BPA. We have several concerns. First, the proposed research is flawed scientifically in ways that bias toward false negatives in the results. Second, we find it troubling that the FDA is proposing to spend such a large amount of money on such a weak research program. Third, we know of no new process at the project to assure quality