

**WORKSHOP ON CHILDREN'S ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH  
IN CENTRAL ASIA AND THE MIDDLE EAST:  
*CAPACITY BUILDING AND NETWORKING AMONG SELECTED COUNTRIES***

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**CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT**  
***SETTING UP PEDIATRIC ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH CENTRES***

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## Frequent questions...difficult answers !

*Are the high-tension cables dangerous for my child?*

*Why does he/she have learning difficulties at school?*

*Why is the incidence of asthma increasing?*

*May early puberty be due to hormonally-active contaminants?*

*Is children's cancer linked to the environment?*

*What kind of fish may a pregnant mother eat?*

Where do we find the replies  
or ask for help?



# Pediatric Environmental Health Centres

A centre where experts are able to recognize, assess and manage environmentally-related diseases in children and provide education and training

Located in (or close to) a health facility, specialized in dealing with environmentally-related paediatric issues.

A centre that provides advice, information and care, does research, trains professionals, educates the public and informs decision-makers.

# Pediatric Environmental Health Centres

Staff: trained on environmental matters!

Includes: paediatricians, toxicologists, family doctors, obstetricians, public health experts, occupational physicians, nurses, social workers and educators.

With: environmental experts, social workers, engineers, and advisors from other relevant areas.

*Only a multidisciplinary team helps to capture the complexity of environmental health issues and the unique vulnerability of children to environmental hazards.*

# Pediatric Environmental Health Centres

PEHSUs were created in the USA by the US Agency for Toxic Substances and Diseases Registry (ATSDR) of the Department of Health and Human Services and the US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA).

They work with each other, specialize in different areas and represent a network of expertise covering all CEH issues.

Canada, Mexico and Spain (Ukraine?) have set up similar units and new initiatives are starting in Argentina and Uruguay.

# **Pediatric Environmental Health Centres**

## ***Potential roles***

1. Provide paediatric environmental health advice, information and care – or referral
2. Offer technical advice to decision-makers, organizations or individuals
3. Train health & other professionals on the diagnosis, prevention and management of environmentally-related paediatric diseases
4. Develop educational materials for communities and families

# **Pediatric Environmental Health Centres**

## ***Potential roles***

5. Organize public information events and programmes
6. Undertake and promote research activities
7. Network with similar national & international centres
8. Advocate for cleaner, healthier and safer environments for children



## Pediatric Environmental Health Centres

WHO is drafting guidance materials – in collaboration with PAHO and USEPA and partners (ATSDR) on:

- How to establish PEH centres (*structure, personnel, functions,...*)
- Potential goals and objectives
- Advantages of networking
- Benefits these centres may render to society and to their children