

#

HPM&B

Judging Dept.

Romualde Montreuil

Student

EPI/BIOSTAT

2

Barbara Leo

Dept or Program Years in program

Mentor

Lead Poisoning in Refugee Children

Author (s)

Romualde Montreuil

Lead poisoning is defined as a toxic condition produced by the absorption of excessive lead into the body. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) states that an elevated blood lead level of 10mg/dl or higher is considered to be hazardous in children. The prevalence of elevated blood lead levels in refugee children is more than twice that of US children. Many of the refugee children found to have elevated blood lead levels tend to reside in homes or rental properties built prior to 1978. Old housing is usually the main source of lead poisoning in these children but apart from environmental exposures to lead, cultural factors also play a role in increasing lead exposure.

Following the death of a Sudanese refugee child from lead poisoning in New Hampshire in 2000, the CDC determined that refugees were a high risk population and has recommended that lead education be conducted specifically towards resettled refugee children and their families. With these recommendations the lead poisoning program at the NYSDOH has begun developing culturally and linguistically appropriate educational materials for refugee families with young children. In order to create the educational material required a review of the current literature about childhood lead poisoning prevention and the unique cultural factors affecting lead poisoning will be performed. After summarizing and interpreting the results from the literature review a dissemination plan will be developed to distribute the material to organizations working with the target population.