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Judging Dept.

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Dept or Program Years in program

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## Public health research in the Office of the Attorney General: how science and the law can work together to protect public health

Author (s)

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The Environmental Protection Bureau (EPB) of the New York State Attorney General's Office protects the public by enforcing state and federal environmental laws, conducting research to protect public health and when needed, bringing legal action to address environmental and public health problems affecting NYS.

The coordinated efforts of EPB scientists and attorneys (with assistance from science and legal interns) results in decision-making on crucial environmental matters. The ability of EPB to address these issues is enhanced by the scientific and legal research, resulting in policies and laws benefiting public health.

Projects: I have been involved in several projects at EPB, two of which I present here.

**Nuclear facilities and cancer risk:**

Several reports document higher cancer rates in regions surrounding nuclear facilities. I assessed studies done on this topic and found that although there is suggestive evidence for an association, it is difficult to demonstrate causality owing to inconsistencies in results, lack of dose-response assessments and variations in research methodologies.

**Synthetic turf and Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA):**

Synthetic turf is widely used as an alternative to natural grass in sports fields. Recurring incidents of athletes with MRSA raised fears regarding a link between MRSA infections and synthetic turf. I analyzed the evidence for/against these claims and concluded that with the current evidence, synthetic turf does not seem to be a cause of MRSA infections in athletes.