



Women's reproductive problems from hormone disrupting chemicals costs Europe 1.4 billion Euros per year.

Brussels, 23 March 2016 – A study published today on two common female reproductive health problems attributable to endocrine disrupting chemicals (EDCs) identifies costs of 1.4 billion Euros for Europe annually.

“Female Reproductive Disorders, Diseases, and Costs of Exposure to Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals in the European Union” is published online in the peer-reviewed Journal of Clinical Endocrinology and Metabolism (1).

The scientists say that the likely costs from endometriosis and uterine fibroids attributable to certain EDCs are 1.4 billion euros a year in health care expenses and lost earning potential (2). The two conditions are common, with as many as 70 percent of women affected by at least one of the disorders.

The EDCs examined were DDE, a byproduct of the pesticide DDT which has been banned in Europe, but whose breakdown byproduct is still present in the environment due to its persistent properties, and several metabolites of the phthalate DEHP, a chemical which is a ‘substance of very high concern’ in the EU REACH chemicals system. The EU Member States are currently considering giving an authorisation to DEHP in plastic to make multiple consumer products, a move which is being strongly criticised by environment and health public interest groups and members of the European Parliament (3).

“This study adds another one and a half billion to the already staggering bill of 157 billion euros per year in Europe, from health problems related to our exposure to Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals. We ask the Commission and Member States to not to trade off the health of Europeans for the use of a known toxic chemical in cheap, poor quality plastic products, for which plenty of safer alternatives exist,” says Lisette van Vliet, Senior Policy Advisor on Chemicals of the Health and Environment Alliance (4).

HEAL underlines the disease prevention opportunities and cost-savings benefits of this new evidence which shows that protecting women from exposure to endocrine-disrupting chemicals could substantially reduce rates of disease and lower health care and other social costs of these conditions.

According to Leonardo Trasande, MD, MPP, Associate Professor of Pediatrics, Environmental Medicine & Population Health at NYU Langone Medical Center, “Although these two gynecological conditions affect millions of women worldwide, we recognize that this analysis only reflects the tip of the iceberg. A growing body of evidence suggests EDC exposure is linked to a broader range of female reproductive problems, including polycystic ovary syndrome, infertility and pregnancy complications. These disorders also place a significant cost burden on women, their families and society as a whole.”

NOTES

- (1) [J Clin Endocrinol Metab. 2016 Mar 22. doi: 10.1210/jc.2015-2873.](https://www.endocrine.org/news-room/current-press-releases/chemical-exposure-linked-to-14-billion-euros-in-womens-health-care-costs) See <https://www.endocrine.org/news-room/current-press-releases/chemical-exposure-linked-to-14-billion-euros-in-womens-health-care-costs>
- (2) The economic analysis included direct costs of hospital stays, physician services, and other medical costs. The researchers also calculated estimates of indirect costs such as lost worker productivity associated with these often painful disorders.
- (3) <http://www.env-health.org/resources/letters/article/open-letter-to-member-states-ahead>
- (4) The study is one of several studies analysing the economic impact that endocrine-disrupting chemical exposure may be costing the European Union. Previous studies found upwards of €157 billion a year from infertility and male reproductive dysfunctions, birth defects, obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and neurobehavioral and learning disorders associated with certain endocrine disrupting chemicals. <http://www.env-health.org/resources/press-releases/article/massive-health-costs-from-edcs>