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Saturday, March 27, 2010

Questions and Answers: Ontario College of Family Physicians Pesticide Report 2004

Many Activists and Organic Product suppliers quote information from the popular OCFP 2004 Literature Review on Epidemiology and Pesticides.

Jeffrey Lowes of Mrep Communications has stated several times over the last couple years that he has an email from one individual, Tye Arbuckle from Health Canada, she indicated she was not even aware of the report until it was published and denied reviewing the OCFP 2004 Report.

<http://www.cbc.ca/canada/ottawa/story/2010/01/14/consumer-pesticide-ban.html>

Finally, we are deeply indebted to those who volunteered their time to provide reviews and editing of reference lists or chapters of the report. Our peer and expert reviewers and editors provided important comments and suggestions and new perspectives during writing of the report.

Peer reviewers were Alan Abelsohn, Neil Arya and Kathleen Finlay. **Expert reviewers were Tye Arbuckle from Health Canada**, Patricia Harper from Sick Childrens' Hospital Toronto, Linn Holness from University of Toronto and Judith Kaur from the Mayo Clinic, Rochester.

The Project Team:

Auction

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You may have also come across Dr. Alan Abelsohn who is listed as a reviewer. He has been in the newspapers before:

TORONTO – I can't do it without you Dr Alan Abelsohn, a 52-year-old family practitioner in Toronto, has been charged with incompetence, professional misconduct and sexual abuse, and may lose his license if convicted. Dr Abelsohn's lawyer told a discipline committee that the female accuser couldn't be trusted. The accuser, who complained she wasn't able to achieve an orgasm, masturbat*d with Dr Abelsohn in the room, believing it would help her condition.

Alan Abelsohn's license was suspended for 12 months.

On August 4, 2004 Health Canada (Federal Government) Issued an Information Report regarding the OCFP 2004 Literature Review.

On April 23, 2004, the Ontario College of Family Physicians (OCFP) released a literature review on epidemiology studies on pesticides. The review linked pesticides to various illnesses, and stated that children are especially vulnerable to pesticides. In light of the public interest in this report, Health Canada's Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) prepared this document to help Canadians better understand how human health and the environment are considered by the pesticide regulatory system in Canada. PMRA is the federal regulatory body responsible for the regulation of pesticides in Canada.

http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/cps-spc/pubs/pest/_fact-fiche/ocfp/index-eng.php

Even in the UK experts have reviewed it and this

is what they have said:

"Overall, the ACP has concluded that the report does not raise any new concerns about pesticide safety that were not already being addressed, and does not indicate any need for additional regulatory action in the UK."

The ACP reconsidered the Ontario report at its [September 2004](#) meeting, along with the [feedback from the invited experts](#). This statement summarises the conclusions of ACP's discussions to date.

For some years, the ACP Medical and Toxicology Panel has annually scrutinised the abstracts of published papers on pesticides and human health to check for findings that might have implications for pesticide regulation in the UK. The material covered by the Ontario review overlaps substantially with that which has already been examined by the Panel, but with some differences (the review covers a somewhat longer time period and includes a few papers written in languages other than English, but is restricted to 16 specified health outcomes).

Some of the conclusions of the report accord with those reached by the Medical and Toxicology Panel. Thus, the Panel has previously noted an apparent consistency of epidemiological reports linking Parkinson's disease with pesticide exposure, and this led to the commissioning of a detailed review of the topic. (See [Sept 2001 minutes](#).) Similarly, we have recently asked the [Committee on Mutagenicity](#) to review the literature on biomarkers of genotoxicity in pesticide-exposed workers, in which the frequent report of positive findings seems at odds with the absence of in vivo genotoxicity for almost all pesticides when tested individually for regulatory purposes. Other conclusions differ markedly from those of the Panel. For example, the report concludes that "large well-designed cohort studies consistently show statistically significant positive associations" between solid tumours and pesticide exposure, an assertion with which we strongly disagree.

These discrepancies arise from serious flaws in the methods employed in the review. Most important are:

- its failure to take account of all or even most of the relevant epidemiological evidence, and the biases inherent in the way in which material was picked out for inclusion;
- inadequate attention to exposure characteristics and relevant toxicology when interpreting reported associations; and
- its superficial synthesis of evidence, which inadequately explores the impact of the strengths and weaknesses of individual studies.

Overall, the ACP has concluded that the report does not raise any new concerns about pesticide safety

that were not already being addressed, and does not indicate any need for additional regulatory action in the UK.

Advisory Committee on Pesticides: Supplement to Previous Statement on the Pesticides Literature Review Published by the Ontario College of Family Physicians

At its meeting on 13 January 2005, the ACP agreed the following supplement to its earlier statement on the pesticides literature review published by the Ontario College of Family Physicians.

Supplementary statement

The above comments on the Ontario review and its implications for risk assessment and regulation of pesticides in the UK in no way detract from the unanimous view of the ACP that unnecessary exposure to pesticides should always be avoided. Pesticides should be used only when the use is justified by potential benefits in pest control and better alternative methods of pest control are unavailable. Moreover, when pesticides are used, they should always be applied in accordance with the instructions on the label, and in a way that minimises people's exposure as far as is reasonably practical.

<http://www.pesticides.gov.uk/acp.asp?id=1387>

Posted by UncleAdolph at 9:38 PM

Labels: [abelsohn](#), [arbuckle](#), [epidemiology](#), [ocfp](#), [pesticide](#)

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