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Children are NOT more sensitive /vulnerable to chemicals in the environment

by [Steve Milloy](#)

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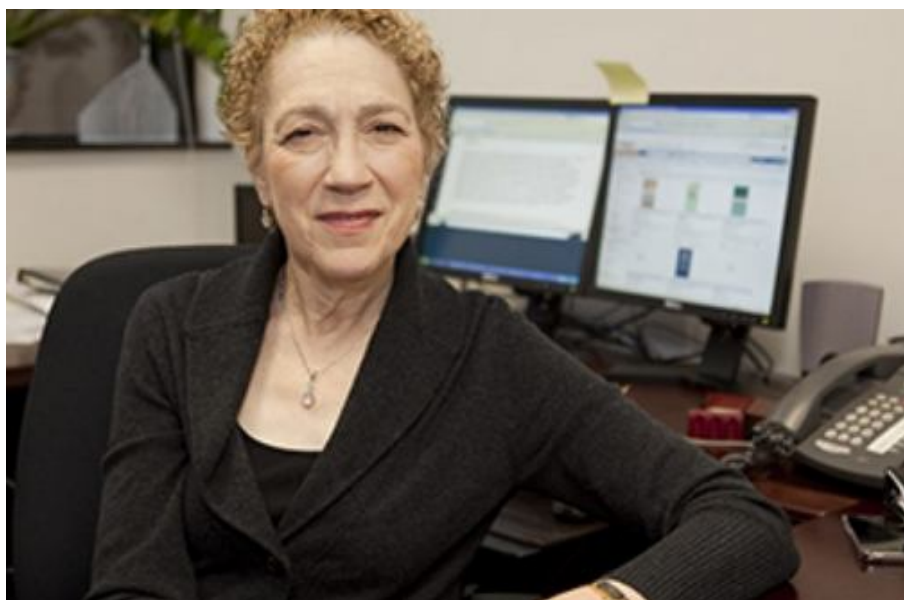
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Children are NOT more sensitive /vulnerable to chemicals in the environment

Let's review the nonsense in today's *New York Times* op-ed by notorious junk scientist goofballs Phil Landrigan (Mt. Sinai) and Lynn Goldman (George Washington University).



Mt. Sinai's Phil Landrigan, a health scare dinosaur who admitted long ago that legally applied pesticides hurt no one.



GWU's Lynn Goldman, who leaped to embrace the infamous 1996 Tulane University endocrine disrupter study that was eventually retracted as science fraud.

A Bad Move That Exposes Kids to Chemicals

Without explaining why, the E.P.A. has sidelined its top children's health advocate.

By Philip J. Landrigan and Lynn R. Goldman

Dr. Landrigan and Dr. Goldman are physicians long involved in public health policy.

Oct. 2, 2018



Marta Monteiro

The NYTimes op-ed is [here](#).

Let's take the most egregious BS, paragraph by paragraph:

1. Kids more sensitive to chemicals?

Landrigan/Goldman write:

In 1993, the National Academy of Sciences [reported](#) that children and especially infants in the womb are profoundly different from adults in how they are harmed by exposure to pesticides and other chemicals. The academy's Committee on Pesticides in the Diets of Infants and Children, of which one of us (Dr. Landrigan) was chairman, concluded that children are not merely little adults. They are uniquely sensitive and keeping them healthy requires special protections.

Exposure to even low levels of toxic chemicals during pregnancy and in the first years after birth can damage children's brains and other developing organs, leading to increased risk of learning disabilities, A.D.H.D., dyslexia, autism and breathing and reproductive problems. Laws and regulations aimed at protecting adult health do not protect children. The academy committee urged that federal pesticide law be fundamentally restructured to shield infants in the womb and young children from chemical harm.

First, let's address the stolen valor. The 'National Academy of Sciences' and its prestigious members made no such report. The report was issued by a panel of second- and third-rate scientists put together by the NAS' for-hire consulting arm called the National Research Council.

Second, yes, children are not little adults — but they are not more or “uniquely sensitive” to chemical exposures. For a dose of reality, check out this [observation from the American Cancer Society](#):

Chemo drugs can cause side effects. Children tend to have less severe side effects from chemo than adults and often recover from side effects more quickly. Because of this, doctors can give them higher doses of chemo to try to kill the tumor.

So children can take higher doses of highly toxic chemotherapy drugs precisely because they are more resilient than adults.

Third, when the so-called “National Academy of Sciences” report was issued in 1993, panel chairman Landrigan told the media that there was no evidence that legally applied pesticides had ever hurt anyone. I believe his exact quote may be found in what was at the time called the “BNA Daily Environment Report.”

2. Low-level exposures are harmful?

Landrigan/Goldman write:

The safeguards for children’s health embedded in these laws are much needed in the United States today. Air pollution remains a problem and will worsen if the Trump administration succeeds in increasing coal combustion and relaxing vehicle emission standards. More than 80,000 chemicals are being used in food packaging, clothing, building materials, furniture, carpets, cleaning products, cosmetics, toys and baby bottles. They are also widespread in the environment. Among children aged 1 to 5, for instance, some 500,000 are estimated to have elevated levels of lead in their blood.

As to “air pollution,” U.S. air is clean and safe. No one is harmed in any way by it. As reported by JunkScience, [EPA experimented on children by spraying diesel exhaust up the noses of children as young as 10 years with no reported harm](#). If anyone thought air pollution was really harmful, such experimentation would be patently illegal.

As to lead, except for children who eat lead paint chips or swallow lead trinkets or have some other acute exposure to lead, no child is harmed by low levels of lead in the environment, water or their blood.

While today, people pee in their pants over any lead detected in children’s blood, the reality is that children have historically relatively high blood lead levels with no apparent adverse effect. Consider the following chart from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

TABLE 1. Blood lead levels (BLLs) of children aged 1–5 years — National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, United States, selected years

Year	% with BLL ≥10 µg/dL	Geometric mean BLL (µg/dL)
1976–1980	88.2	15.0
1991–1994	4.4	2.7
1999–2002	1.6	1.9

Be assured that typical child blood lead levels were higher before the 1970s due to waste incineration and leaded gasoline. No harm was observed or reported.

3. Lions and tigers and chemicals, oh my!

Landrigan/Goldman ~~write~~write rave:

Exposure to chemicals is linked to a wide array of pediatric diseases. Lead and mercury can cause brain damage with loss of intelligence. Polychlorinated biphenyls, or PCBs, are linked to reductions in children's intelligence and alterations in behavior. Baby boys exposed in the womb to phthalates, a chemical used in plastics, are at risk of birth defects in their reproductive organs and behavioral abnormalities. Prenatal exposure to brominated flame retardants, used in electronics and furniture, is linked to I.Q. reduction and shortening of attention span.

Prenatal exposure to the insecticide chlorpyrifos is associated with reduced head circumference at birth, developmental delays and cognitive impairments. The regulatory story of this chemical is particularly instructive about the E.P.A. under President Trump. Last year, Scott Pruitt, the agency's administrator at the time, declined to remove chlorpyrifos from the market despite the recommendation of the agency's own scientists, based on health studies that suggested it was harming children. In August, a federal appeals court ordered the agency to ban the chemical.

Some reality:

- Herb Needleman's work on lead causing problems in kids was determined to be '[difficult to explain as honest error](#).'
- [The Seychelles data debunks the notion that mercury from fish is harming children](#).
- PCBs are not used anymore. They were phased out starting in 1976. If exposure to PCBs was so harmful, where was all the damage prior to the 1970s? [Here](#)'s a good debunking of PCB hysteria.
- *See e.g.*, [there is no evidence that phthalates hurt children either](#).
- [The flame retardant "researchers" didn't even bother to study the children themselves](#).
- The chlorpyrifos claim is also bogus as it is based on secret science. [The Columbia University researchers making the claim will not release their data for independent review and replication](#).

SUMMARY: There is not a scintilla of credible evidence that children have been harmed by chemicals in the environment or that they are more vulnerable to such harm.