BPA Exposure Likely More Widespread Than Previous Estimates

1:00am EDT

New research suggests total daily human exposure to bisphenol A, a chemical that mimics estrogen and has been linked to health problems in fetuses, infants and children, is probably much higher than previously estimated.

Researchers from the University of Missouri, University of California at Davis, and Washington State University have also discovered that women process bisphenol A, a chemical known as BPA that is found in several household products, similarly to female monkeys and mice, making existing data on how BPA negatively impacts rodents at low levels relevant for humans.

It also found that BPA is not completely metabolized in mice and monkeys on the first pass through the liver, which "was the basis for the conclusion that there was little concern for human health due to exposure to BPA," the study said.

"For years, BPA manufacturers have argued that BPA is safe and have denied the validity of more than 200 studies that showed adverse health effects in animals due to exposure to very low doses of BPA," Julia Taylor, lead author and associate research professor at the University of Missouri, told Science Daily. "We know that BPA leaches out of products that contain it, and that it acts like estrogen in the body."

The study, published in Environmental Health Persepectives, suggests human exposure to BPA is higher than first thought, coming from unknown sources other than the usual suspects, such as the plastic lining of food cans. It was recently discovered that thermal paper used for receipts in another BPA source.

"We've assumed we're getting BPA from the ingestion of contaminated food and beverages," Pat Hunt, a co-author and professor at Washington State University, told Science Daily. "This indicates there must be a lot of other ways in which we're exposed to this chemical and we're probably exposed to much higher levels than we have assumed."

BPA is used in products ranging from food packaging to baby bottles. Canada and Taiwan have declared BPA to be toxic, while several states, including Minnesota, New York and Oregon, have taken steps to ban BPA in some uses.

Data released last month showed BPA is present in about 91 percent of the Canadian population.
MU professor wins $100,000 for BPA research

Posted: Wednesday, September 22, 2010 12:39 pm

A researcher at the University of Missouri-Columbia will receive a $100,000 cash prize for his research on a controversial plastic-hardener called BPA, or bisphenol (BIHS'-fen-ahl) A.

The Columbia Daily Tribune reports that Frederick vom Saal is one of 10 Heinz Awards recipients this year. The award recognizes people who are addressing environmental issues.

Vom Saal is a professor of biological sciences and has been studying the effects of BPA for more than a decade.

He has linked its use in baby products to abnormal cell development that has led to early puberty, diabetes and cancer.

Just this week, he and several other researchers published a new study that further warns of the health risks posed by BPA.
Missouri professor wins $100,000 for BPA research

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News site partners with journalism school

Columbia Patch is coming soon.

By Janese Silvey

Wednesday, September 22, 2010

The Missouri School of Journalism is one of 13 universities teaming up with AOL’s network of “hyperlocal” news websites, but it’s unclear what that will mean for Columbia.

AOL subsidiary Patch.com is an online news source that currently provides localized stories, calendars and ads for 200 communities in 11 states.

Patch President Warren Webster said the new PatchU program means Columbia will be getting its own Patch website with content provided by University of Missouri journalism students either through a class or internships.

He said a Columbia Patch site could be launched by the end of this year. Patch is looking for a local journalist to serve as the Columbia editor.

But Dean Mills, dean of the journalism school, said he’s not aware of any independent study projects through PatchU.

“I suspect our faculty would be leery of approving those on anything other than a case-by-case basis and only if they’re supervised by a Missouri faculty member,” Mills said in an e-mail. Students “already have reporting experiences supervised by our own faculty.”

He said MU’s partnership with PatchU means “we’ve merely agreed to post internship and job opportunities for students, just as we would for any other potential employer.”

However, a news release about the partnership posted on the journalism school’s website says PatchU would provide course credit options to partner schools. Webster was not available this morning to clarify.

Until now, Patch.com has mostly descended on small communities underserved by existing media. That’s not the case in Columbia, Webster acknowledged, allowing the media outlet to test a larger market. “We’re really interested to go into a community like Columbia,” he said. “It will show us what sorts of partnerships we can develop with media already in place. We think that the more robust and rich offering of media hopefully will make everyone do better, and that benefits
the people who live in the town. It will be fascinating to see what the ecosystem looks like once we’ve been there for a while.”

PatchU aims to build ties between the online news source and future reporters, Webster said. MU is one of 13 partner schools.

“One of the things most important to us is having strong relationships with the journalism schools, and obviously we think Mizzou is among the top,” he said. “A lot of the innovations and future of journalism will be shaped by people in these journalism schools.”
Autism center names executive director

Wednesday, September 22, 2010

A new executive director will take the helm of the University’s of Missouri’s Thompson Center for Autism and Neurodevelopmental Disorders in December.

Joel Bregman is director of clinical research at the Fay J. Lindner Center for Autism and associate investigator at the Feinstein Institute for Medical Research at North Shore-Long Island Jewish Health System. He will replace Jim Poehling, who recently became assistant vice chancellor of health sciences at MU.

Bregman specializes in autism and neurodevelopmental disorders, focusing on clinical care, research and educational programming. He received a medical degree from Yale University School of Medicine.

Bregman will be introduced Dec. 3 during the grand opening of the Thompson Center’s new location at 205 Portland St.
Missouri curators to meet in Springfield

Posted: Thursday, September 23, 2010 4:01 am

University of Missouri system curators are taking a break from the routine with a meeting Thursday and Friday in Springfield.

The governing board of the Missouri system's four campuses typically meets every two months in either Columbia, Kansas City, Rolla or St. Louis. But the board convenes for the next two days in southwest Missouri's largest city. Two of the nine board members live in or near Springfield.

Curators will consider approval of bond issues for several campus construction projects. They also will discuss the decline in national rankings of the Columbia campus' law school.
Board of curators will meet Thursday

Wednesday, September 22, 2010

The University of Missouri System’s Board of Curators is expected to approve bond issues for several capital improvement projects during a two-day meeting in Springfield that starts tomorrow.

Curators are expected to discuss taking on more debt to finance several construction projects in Columbia, including renovations to Mark Twain Residential Hall and constructing a new facility to replace the Green Meadows Outpatient Care Center in Columbia. They are not expected to vote on any new bonds at the meeting.

Curators also will hear a report detailing MU School of Law’s drop in national rankings.

The meeting starts at 1:30 p.m. tomorrow on the fourth floor of the Discovery Center of Springfield.
MU library launches text message service

Wednesday, September 22, 2010

Need a quick answer about the University of Missouri's library system but don't feel like talking to anyone? Students, staff and faculty can now text questions to librarians.

The Ask MU service began this summer, allowing patrons to text the phrase “askmu” to 66746 for information on MU Libraries or text “otto” to the same number for questions about the Health Sciences Library. Callers’ phone numbers are not revealed.

Library spokeswoman Shannon Cary said librarians to date have fielded questions about hours, coffee prices and inquiries about downloading electronic books and articles.

The library launched the service to respond to the popularity of text messaging, Director Jim Cogswell said in a statement.