

NIEHS Office of Communications and Public Liaison (OCPL)

February – May 2014

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I. EVENTS



Virtual Forum: Autism and the Environment. On April 22, OCPL teamed with the Office of Science Education and Diversity (OSD) and DERT to set up and run a live virtual forum. Cindy Lawler, Ph.D., of DERT, served as moderator.

Four grantees, including Alan Brown, M.D., from Columbia University Medical Center; Irva Hertz-Picciotto, Ph.D., from UC Davis MIND Institute; Avraham Reichenberg, Ph.D., from Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai; and Heather Volk, Ph.D., from Children’s Hospital Los Angeles, joined NIEHS Director Linda Birnbaum, Ph.D., to respond to questions submitted via Web and Twitter. About 165 people participated in the one-hour forum. A guest [posting](#) by Birnbaum was developed and appeared on the Autism Speaks website. An [Environmental Factor](#) story was also developed. A minisymposium with the speakers was held at NIEHS that day, as well. All of these activities coincided with National Autism Awareness Month.



GULF STUDY press teleconference. On April 11, NIEHS hosted a [teleconference](#) to update reporters, especially those in the Gulf states, about the status and future plans for the long-term health study. Dale Sandler, Ph.D., of DIR, lead researcher for the study, served as the

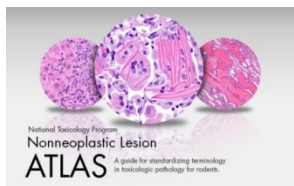
spokesperson for the briefing, along with Aubrey Miller, M.D., of OD, who assisted during the question and answer session. About 50 people participated, resulting in more than 300 positive stories. A [press release](#) was also issued. Some of the stories that quoted Sandler included:

- April 19, **Examiner** wrote a two-part series, “BP oil spill four years later: how the NIH is assessing its Gulf data (part 1).”
- April 18, **Advocate** of New Orleans wrote, “Four years after BP oil spill, unanswered questions remain about health impacts.”
- April 11, **Houma Courier** wrote, “Study follows BP oil spill workers.”
- April 11, **Miami Herald** wrote, “4 years after spill, questions on long-term health.”
- April 11, **Times-Picayune** wrote, “Study finds high rates of depression, anxiety among Gulf oil spill cleanup workers.”

- April 11, **Mississippi Public Broadcasting** wrote “Study finds higher depression, anxiety among oil-spill workers.”
- April 11, **Associated Press** story, “[4 years after spill, questions on long-term health,](#)” was picked up in hundreds of outlets across the country.
- April 10, **Times-Picayune** wrote, “Researchers studying health of Gulf oil spill cleanup workers to update findings Friday.”



Society of Toxicology (SOT) meeting. NIEHS and NTP staff led more than 90 science-related activities at the annual SOT meeting March 23-27 in Phoenix. The combined NIEHS, NTP, and Environmental Health Perspectives (EHP) exhibit booth, staffed by OCPL and others, was a focal point for attendees to get information and receive hands-on experience on some new resources, including the NTP Nonneoplastic Lesion Atlas. An Environmental Factor story, “[SOT 2014 — packed with good science, energy, and enthusiasm](#)” provided some highlights from the meeting.



Release of NTP Nonneoplastic Lesion Atlas. January 30, the NTP launched a new, searchable, [web-based resource](#) containing thousands of high-quality images, and guidelines for diagnosis of nonneoplastic lesions in experimental rodent models. OCPL helped in the development of the atlas, and continues to promote this resource to targeted audiences, through various avenues.

- A new [pocket card](#) debuted at SOT, and was added to NIEHS and NTP websites.
- An exhibitor-hosted session was held at SOT, and demos were given at the exhibit booth.
- OCPL helped in the development and placement of an article in Toxicologic Pathology. [The National Toxicology Program Web-based Nonneoplastic Lesion Atlas: a global toxicology and pathology resource](#). Toxicol Pathol 42(2):458-460.
- An Environmental Health Perspectives article, [NTP Nonneoplastic Lesion Atlas: a new tool for toxicologic pathology](#), ran in the March issue. Environ Health Perspect 122(3):A76-A99.
- An Environmental Factor story was written, [New NTP atlas helps standardize nonneoplastic lesion diagnoses](#).
- A story is also planned for the NIH Catalyst, which is targeted at the NIH intramural research community.

Environmental Health Sciences Core Centers Meeting. OCPL supported efforts led by DERT and OSED to host an April 7-10 centers meeting, [disaster research response exercise](#), and community forum in Los Angeles. OCPL helped promote the meeting and wrote several [Environmental Factor](#) articles highlighting the events.

Press Releases

April 15, NIEHS press release, “[Unexpected protein partnership has implications for cancer treatment,](#)” featured work by DIR researchers.

April 11, NIEHS press release, "[GuLF STUDY gears up for second round of health exams: research continues four years after the Deepwater Horizon oil spill](#)," highlighted progress made in the long-term health study being led by NIEHS.

April 7, NIEHS media advisory, [GuLF STUDY update: four years after the Deepwater Horizon oil spill: media teleconference April 11 with lead scientist](#), alerted media of an upcoming teleconference.

April 1, NIEHS press release, "[Obesity primes the colon for cancer, according to NIH study](#)," featured work by Paul Wade, Ph.D., and Thomas Eling, Ph.D., of DIR.

March 5, NIEHS highlighted work of NIEHS grantees, "[A wristband for a different kind of cause – environmental health](#)," on the American Chemistry Society website.

Additionally, collaboration with universities, journals, and other partners allowed OCPL to promote other key findings supported by NIEHS.

II. NEWS COVERAGE

News Coverage of NIEHS Science, Researchers, and Activities

February 2014 — 425 stories

March 2014 — 650 stories

April 2014 — 636 stories

Highlights from Newspapers, Trade Papers, and National Magazines

April 22, **R&D Magazine** wrote, "Fast way to measure DNA repair," which highlighted work by NIEHS grantees and includes quotes from Sam Wilson, Ph.D., of DIR.

April 17, **BNA's Daily Environment Report** wrote, "Scientific counselors back NTP findings for ortho-toluidine, pentachlorophenol," which included quotes from Birnbaum and Ruth Lunn, Dr.P.H., of NTP.

April 16, **Nature** wrote, "Toxicology: the plastics puzzle," which included quotes from NIEHS grantees.

April 13, **Wall Street Journal** wrote, "Tasty bait that attacks rats' fertility," which included quotes from Dan Shaughnessy, Ph.D., of DERT.

March 27, **Quest** ran a story about endocrine disruptors, "[Cats, chemicals and consumer power](#)," which quoted Birnbaum.

March 27, **Arkansas Times** wrote, "The Mayflower oil spill robbed Michelle Ward of her middle-class dream," which included quotes from Sandler talking about lessons learned from the GuLF STUDY.

March 18, **The Atlantic** wrote, "The toxins that threaten our brains," which included quotes from Birnbaum.

March 17, **BNA's Daily Environment Report** wrote, "Toxics, cancer professionals advise NTP on strong, weak TCE human cancer studies," which covered a webcast by NTP staff.

March 4, several stories were written as a result of a press release issued by NIEHS, "[Prevalence of allergies the same, regardless of where you live](#)," featuring the work of DIR scientists. All included quotes from Scientific Director Darryl Zeldin, M.D.

- March 5, **Huffington Post** wrote, "No, allergies aren't 'worse' in certain parts of the U.S."
- March 6, **New York Times** wrote, "Allergies are everywhere."
- March 10, **UPI** wrote, "People with allergies will have them no matter where they live."
- March 12, **Washington Post** wrote, "Your parents determine your allergies, not the air around you."

March 3, **Wall Street Journal** wrote, "The chemicals that stick around in the body," which included a quote from Birnbaum.

February 17, release of a review paper, "Neurobehavioural effects of developmental toxicity," published by NIEHS grantees in the journal [Lancet Neurology](#), sparked stories in the [Environmental Factor](#), [Living on Earth](#), and [Consumer Eagle](#), as well as others.

February 21, **The Huffington Post** wrote, "Agent Orange posed a health threat to servicemen long after Vietnam: study," which included quotes from Birnbaum.

February 9, **Indian Country** wrote, "That deadly sip: the water at the North Pole will kill you," which included quotes from Chad Blystone, Ph.D., of NTP.

Several stories over the last few months focused on BPA, including:

- March 9, **Forbes** wrote, "BPA: the scientists, the scare, the 100-million dollar surge."
- March 6, Birnbaum served as a guest on **NPR's affiliate station KQED-FM**, out of California, to talk about BPA. The Forum segment was titled, "[BPA-free plastics linked to adverse human health effects](#)."
- February 27, **Health Canal** wrote, "Bisphenol A (BPA) at very low levels can adversely affect developing organs in primates, MU researcher finds," which included quotes from NIEHS grantees.
- February 26, **NPR** did a segment called, "Maybe that BPA in your canned food isn't so bad after all," which discussed NTP supported studies.
- February 13, **Environmental Health News** wrote, "New BPA experiment finds no low-dose effects, FDA says," which included quotes from NTP and NIEHS grantees.
- February 5, **Science 2.0** wrote, "Close Enough for NIEHS work," which focused on grantee work related to human relevance of doses of BPA in animal studies.
- February 2, **Philadelphia Inquirer** wrote, "[More evidence that BPA is harmful](#)," which included quotes from Birnbaum and grantees.

III. PUBLIC INFORMATION AND OUTREACH

Social Media Efforts

NIEHS continues to expand its use of social media and other outlets to reach a broad audience, including [Facebook](#), [Flickr](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#), [Email lists](#), and [RSS News Feeds](#).

New hire



Patricia Stockton. Stockton competed and was selected to serve as Government Information Specialist in OCPL. Beginning May 5, she will serve as the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and Privacy Act officer for NIEHS. Stockton comes to OCPL after working in the NTP Office of Liaison, Policy, and Review, where she took the lead in coordinating NTP FOIA records for the past three years. She has worked at NIEHS since 1988.

Web and Materials Development

Several new fact sheets have been developed or updated since the last report to Council:

- [Cell Phone Radiofrequency Radiation Studies](#) was updated in March.
- [Freedom of Information Act at NIEHS and NTP](#) was developed in late January.
- [Oil Spill Response and Research](#) fact sheet was updated in late January.
- [Parkinson's Disease and Environmental Factors](#) was developed in February.
- [Postdoctoral Training Opportunities at the National Toxicology Program](#) was updated for the Society of Toxicology (SOT) meeting in March.
- [Postdoctoral Training Opportunities at NIEHS](#) was developed in March.
- An insert to the above brochure and Web pages were developed, and other outreach was conducted, to highlight a new postdoc position that rotates through all three NIEHS divisions (DERT, DIR and NTP), called [Transdisciplinary Environmental Health Fellowships](#).
- Redesigned web pages for the [Agricultural Health Study](#).

Since NIH launched its new logo guidelines in 2013, OCPL has been incorporating the new NIEHS logo on many of its online publications.

All fact sheets, pocket cards, and brochures are available on the NIEHS website at <http://www.niehs.nih.gov/health/materials/index.cfm>.

Online Newsletter

The NIEHS monthly online newsletter, the [Environmental Factor](#) (e-Factor), highlights NIEHS research, staff accomplishments, and ongoing activities. Many of the stories in the e-Factor are selected and used by other publications, including the **NIH Record**, **NIH Catalyst**, **NTP Update**, and others.

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