

NIEHS Office of Communications and Public Liaison (OCPL)
February – May 2018

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I. EVENTS

NTP Cell Phone Radiofrequency Radiation Study Findings

March 26-28, OCPL staff supported the peer review of the NTP study findings on cell phone radiofrequency radiation (RFR) in rats and mice. The expert panel agreed with NTP conclusions that there was little indication of RFR-related health problems in mice. However, they [recommended](#) that the conclusions for rats be changed, due to malignant schwannomas found in tissues surrounding nerves in the heart. The findings in male rats were reclassified from some evidence to clear evidence of carcinogenic activity, and in female rats from no evidence to equivocal evidence of carcinogenic activity. An [Environmental Factor story](#) was developed.

More than 200 stories have appeared in the media. A few examples include:

- CNN, [Brain tumors on the rise in England, raising cell phone concerns](#)
- Microwave News, [“Clear Evidence” of Cell Phone Cancer Risk, Say Leading Pathologists](#)
- Scientific American, [New Studies Link Cell Phone Radiation with Cancer](#)

Asthma Awareness Month

OCPL collaborated with NIAID and NHLBI on developing the annual [NIH Asthma Statement](#). This year, a [YouTube video](#) was also developed, which highlighted the importance of NIH asthma research. The NIEHS portion featured Stavros Garantzotis, M.D., of DIR; Bonnie Joubert, PhD., of DERT; and a participant of the Clinical Research Unit NHALES Asthma Study. The video was released in May. An [Environmental Factor story](#) was developed.

Spirit Lecture with Temple Grandin, Ph.D.

April 12, Temple Grandin, Ph.D., brought a message about “Developing Individuals Who Have Different Kinds of Minds,” to NIEHS. Grandin, who has autism, is a well-known author and speaker on the subject. OCPL developed promotional materials, notified NIEHS stakeholders of the event, and arranged for a free public webcast. More than 600 individuals watched her talk, about 300 attending in person and 300 by webcast. An [Environmental Factor story](#) was developed.

Music and Your Health: An Afternoon of Performances and Presentations

April 22, NIEHS celebrated Earth Day with the Music and Your Health event, held at the Durham Convention Center. The free-to-the-public, all-afternoon event was kicked off by NIEHS Director Linda Birnbaum, Ph.D., and master of ceremonies Nigel Walker, Ph.D. The event included two panels of local scientists who discussed music in adult health and music in children’s health, as well as three local groups – the Croisdale Chorale, Kidznotes, and the Durham Medical Orchestra – who entertained the audience. The afternoon ended with a performance by jazz singer and six-time Grammy Award nominee Nnenna Freelon. OCPL provided partial funding, developed promotional materials, advertised the event in the local newspapers, and notified NIEHS stakeholders. An [Environmental Factor story](#) was developed.

Women's Health Awareness Day

OCPL worked closely with Joan Packenham, Ph.D., and other members of the Office of Human Research Compliance, to develop a website and products for the 4th annual Women's Health Awareness Day April 7. Products developed included a program booklet, brochures, flyers, posters, and other informational material. This year's event attracted more than 650 participants, from 27 countries, to the campus of North Carolina Central University (NCCU) in Durham, North Carolina. The event provided a wealth of activities to educate and inspire the diverse group of people of all ages who participated. An [Environmental Factor story](#) was developed.

CLARITY-BPA Study Findings

The goal of CLARITY-BPA (Consortium Linking Academic and Regulatory Insights on BPA Toxicity), is to study the full range of potential health effects from exposure to BPA in rats, and provide data that can be used for regulatory decisions. The first of the two-part research collaboration, the core study, was conducted by NIEHS, NTP, and FDA. The study was peer reviewed April 26, and the panel agreed there were minimal toxic effects of bisphenol A exposure in rats for the range of doses studied. OCPL supported the peer review.

The second part of the study was conducted at universities, through grants from NIEHS. The grantees are currently publishing findings in peer-reviewed journals and will make their data public in August. The final CLARITY-BPA conclusions will integrate the core study and the grantee studies. The conclusions are expected in 2019. An [Environmental Factor story](#) was developed.

Meetings/Conferences:

Society of Toxicology (SOT) Meeting

NIEHS and NTP staff played a leading role in presenting science sessions and posters at the annual SOT meeting March 11-15 in San Antonio. 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 meet NIEHS and NTP staff.

OCPL also exhibited at the following conferences

- Association of Health Care Journalists Health Journalism 2018 April 12-15 in Phoenix.
- American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology (AAAAI)/World Allergy Organization (WAO) Joint Congress on Global Environmental Change and Respiratory Health March 2-5. Birnbaum was the keynote speaker at the event.

Promotional materials were developed for the following NIEHS events and activities:

- GEH Day – June 6
- Distinguished Lecture with Michael Karin– May 15
- Genomics Day – May 10
- Keystone Lecture with Brandon Pierce – May 9
- ONES Awardee Symposium – May 8-9
- OD Seminar with Qamar Rahman – April 20
- Music and Your Health – Durham Convention Center – April 22
- Spirit Lecture with Temple Grandin – April 12
- Predictive Models for Acute Oral Systemic Toxicity – April 11-12
- Women's Health Awareness Day – April 7
- Keystone Lecture with Kalpana Balakrishnan – April 5

- Understanding the Combined Effects of Environmental Chemical and Non-Chemical Stressors: Atherosclerosis as a Model – April 3-4
- Big Picture, Small Talk – April 2
- Keystone Lecture with Martha Susiarjo – March 21
- Distinguished Lecture with Elaine Fuchs – March 20
- 508 Training – March 13
- OD Seminar with Tomas Weber – March 5
- Big Picture, Small Talk – February 21
- Diversity Speaker Series with Sherilynn Black – February 16
- Keystone Lecture with Maureen Lichtveld – February 13

See the monthly newsletter [Environmental Factor](#) for a comprehensive report of institute events.

II. NEWS COVERAGE

Press Releases

May 14, [NIH Scientists Develop Novel Technique to Study Brain Disease](#)

May 1, [NIH Statement on World Asthma Day 2018](#)

February 2, [High Exposure to Radiofrequency Radiation Linked to Tumor Activity in Male Rats](#)

February 1, [Telephone Press Conference: NTP Draft Conclusions for Radiofrequency Radiation Studies in Rats and Mice](#)

News Coverage of NIEHS Science, Researchers, and Activities

May 2018 — 630 articles (as of May 29)

April 2018 — 874 articles

March 2018 — 1411 articles

February 2018 — 2032 articles

Highlights from Newspapers, Trade Papers, and National Magazines (see full stories at end of report)

May 21, **NC State News** wrote “Researcher to Study GenX Exposure in Cape Fear Fish, Alligators.” This study is partially funded by NIEHS, and built on a prior study by grantee Jane Hoppin, Ph.D., former NIEHS staff scientist.

May 17, **Chemical Watch** story, “Public consultation on US EPA's strategy attracts more than 1,500 comments,” quoted Warren Casey, Ph.D., and Nicole Kleinstreuer, Ph.D., of NTP.

May 9, **Ukiah Daily Journal** wrote about glyphosate in “The Rant: And some, I assume, are good people.” Birnbaum was quoted.

May 8, **The Guardian** discussed study results in “Weedkiller products more toxic than their active ingredient, tests show.” Mike Devito, Ph.D., of NTP was quoted. **EcoWatch** also wrote a follow-up article on “Glyphosate Formulations 'Much More Toxic' Than Chemical Itself.”

May 6, **Los Angeles Review of Books** wrote “Rounding Up the Risks of Big Ag.” Quotes from an editorial written by Birnbaum in 2013 were included.

May 2, **CNN** mentioned NTP cell phone study and quoted John Bucher, Ph.D., in “Brain tumors on the rise in England, raising cell phone concerns.”

May 2, **North Carolina Health News** discussed “Asthma Rates Highest Among Poor, Minority Communities in Eastern N.C.” Darryl Zeldin, M.D., scientific director, quoted.

April 30, **The Guardian** wrote “Weedkiller found in granola and crackers, internal FDA emails show.” Birnbaum was quoted. Related stories ran in the **New York Post**, **Cornucopia Institute**, and others.

April 27, Casey was quoted in an **Adjacent Government** article, “The health effects of exposure to chemicals and other substances.”

April 24, **JAMA** released a story, “Scientists Call FDA Statement on Bisphenol a Safety Premature” regarding the CLARITY-BPA study. Bucher was quoted.

April 20, **Coastal Review** wrote “GenX In Homes: 300 Join Health Effects Study” regarding the N.C. State Hoppin study. Related stories ran in **WHQR-FM**, **Star News**, and others.

March 28, **CBS17 WNCN** discussed the NTP cell phone study peer review meeting in “Findings of cancer in rodents exposed to cell-phone-like radiation draws crowd to RTP.” Bucher and several others were interviewed for a [video](#). Other stories ran in **Scientific American**, **Microwave News**, **News and Observer**, and more.

March 23, **Healthline** noted “You’re Likely Ingesting Plastic from Your Water, Food, Toys, and Cosmetics.” Barry McIntyre, Ph.D., of NTP was quoted.

March 19, **TIME** posed the question “Are Essential Oils Safe?” NIEHS fellow J. Tyler Ramsey, Ph.D., who led a study on the subject, was quoted. A similar story ran in **Newsweek**, and others.

March 12, **Chemical & Engineering News** wrote “Endocrine disruptor assays go fast track.” Kleinstreuer was quoted.

March 8, **BioCentury** discussed “Chips for Tox.” Brian Berridge, Ph.D., NTP scientific director, was quoted.

March 1, **R&D Magazine** announced new ICCVAM roadmap in “New Report Outlines Approaches to Reduce Animal Testing With Technology.” Casey was quoted.

February 26, **Newsweek** wrote “Is BPA Safe? FDA Touts New Study Showing 'Minimal' Effects, but Experts Are Wary” about the CLARITY-BPA study results. Bucher was quoted.

February 5, **U.S. News & World Report** discussed the NTP cell phone study in “Cellphones Pose Little Cancer Risk, Studies Suggest.” Bucher quoted. Related stories ran in the **Washington Post**, **New York Times**, **Philadelphia Inquirer**, **WebMD**, **Science Magazine**, **CNN**, **North Carolina Health News**, and others.

III. PUBLIC INFORMATION AND OUTREACH

In accordance with popular trends, NIEHS continues to expand its use of social media in effort to reach new audiences with its environmental health messages. At present, NIEHS posts content through the following platforms:

- [Facebook](#) (targeted to a more general audience)
- [Twitter](#) (targeted to both the general public and science community)
- [LinkedIn](#) (targeted primarily to those in the environmental health career field)

Social Media Growth Trends

The spring of 2018 saw continued growth in NIEHS social media followership. From February 1 to May 29, our numbers increased, as follows:

- The NIEHS Twitter feed (@NIEHS) saw its followership grow 14,671 to 15,171.
- The NIEHS Facebook page saw its followership grow from 18,442 to 18,919.
- The NIEHS LinkedIn page saw its followership grow from 2,417 to 2,608.

Social Media Highlights

During this same period, OCPL used social media to promote NIEHS programs and research in conjunction with the following national health observances.

- National Asthma Awareness Month (May) — Promoted NIH press release and video.
- National Minority Health Month (April) — Promoted NIEHS' role in the Centers of Excellence on Environmental Health Disparities Research program.
- National Autism Awareness Month (April) — Promoted the Environmental Health Topics page on Autism.
- National Nutrition Month (March) — Promoted the NIEHS PEPH Diet, Nutrition, and Environmental Public Health page

OCPL also promoted the following grantee press release through social media.

- NC State Researchers Will Have Public Meeting to Discuss GenX Exposure Study's Water Results with New Hanover Community (NC State)

Other NIEHS and NIH projects and events were promoted through social media during the spring.

- All of Us Research Program (May 5) — Crafted six custom posts for FB and Twitter, promoting the All of Us Research live event on May 6.
- 4th Annual Women's Health Awareness Day (April)— Compiled multiple Facebook and Twitter posts, spread from January through April, promoting the NIEHS event on-campus at North Carolina Central University.
- Women's Health Awareness Day Videos (April) — Captioned and uploaded multiple videos, promoting this event, to YouTube then penned social media content for Facebook and Twitter directing followers to the video links.
- Sister Study Facebook Group (April) — Constructed a private/closed group under the NIEHS Facebook presence to be used by the Sister Study staff for spreading news/information to study participants.
- Society of Toxicology Annual Meeting (March) — Compiled custom posts for Facebook and Twitter, promoting NIEHS' presence at the meeting. Also penned "alert tweets" to let meeting attendees know when NIEHS guests would be speaking and where.

- American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology Conference (March) — Compiled custom posts for Facebook and Twitter, promoting NIEHS' presence at the meeting. Also penned "alert tweets" to let meeting attendees know when NIEHS guests would be speaking and where.
- Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals in North Carolina research meeting — Penned tweet content, promoting NIEHS' role as host for this year's annual meeting (February 23). Also provided links, promoting the live webcast for the day's GenX special session.
- Bed bug histamines are substantial, persistent in infested homes (February 13)
- High Exposure to Radiofrequency Radiation Linked to Tumor Activity in Male Rats (February 2)
- Telephone Press Conference: NTP Draft Conclusions for Radiofrequency Radiation Studies in Rats and Mice (February 1)

Web

- Launched a major refresh of the NIEHS public website www.niehs.nih.gov.
- Launched an all new Join a Study website www.joinastudy.niehs.nih.gov to help with recruiting participants into human studies.
- Created new web page for Brian Berridge for the NIH Intramural Research Program <https://irp.nih.gov/pi/brian-berridge>.
- Developed Essential Oils Environmental Health Topics page <https://www.niehs.nih.gov/health/topics/agents/essential-oils/index.cfm>.
- Created new web pages for the Structural Biology Core Laboratory, a merger between the Protein Expression Core Laboratory and the X-ray Crystallography Core Laboratory.
- Handled multiple updates managed for the Health and Safety Manual on the Junction.
- Hosted 6 classes for NIEHS staff on Section 508 and web editing.
- Registered the Environmental Factor with Google News as a news source.
- Created websites for Music and Your Health and GEH Day.
- Created website for upcoming Music and Your Health event.
- Improved title and description text for webpages to optimize sharing on social media.
- Streamlined text on Computer Support Junction page to allow users to place Help Desk tickets and contact CSP staff more easily.
- Staff contact information updated with new telephone numbers. Dozens of Junction pages updated.
- Feedback tool launched for NIEHS Strategic Plan 2018-2023: Advancing Environmental Health Science, Improving Health 2.0.
- Flow Cytometry Group website updated.
- Filmed a video abstract for Neurobiology Laboratory researcher Guohong Cui and two of his visiting fellows, Chengbo Meng and Jingheng Zhou. The video is posted on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d1keam3Wx2U>.
- In addition to the MANY G4 meetings and assignments, OCPL is participating in two NIEHS IT strategic planning groups: Non-Commodity Software, and Data and Knowledge Management.

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