

## **Toxic chemicals: A ‘silent pandemic’**

More than 100,000 industrial chemicals are contaminating the air, water, and our homes, causing a ‘silent pandemic’ of brain diseases in children, a new report warns. Neurotoxin experts Philippe Grandjean and Philip Ladrigan say the widespread use of pesticides, cleaning products, glues, and other chemicals represents an uncontrolled experiment on developing brains, with little or no research on its impact. It’s already been shown that minute amounts of lead, mercury, and PCBs can cause serious brain and neurological damage. Researchers say that tons of other, unregulated chemicals being poured into the environment could be causing an increased incidence of autism, attention deficit disorder, cerebral palsy, and retardation. “The human brain is a precious and vulnerable organ,” says Grandjean, a professor at the Harvard School of Public Health. “Even limited damage may have serious consequences.”

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