

Disease clusters showing up all over the United States

March 30 2011, by Deborah Braconnier



Disease clusters in some selected states (see map link below)

(PhysOrg.com) -- When most people think of the term 'disease clusters', the cancer cluster in Hinkley, California made famous by the movie *Erin Brockovich* usually comes to mind. However, the Natural Resources

Defense Council reported on Monday, March 28, 2011 that there are 42 disease clusters that have been found in 13 U.S. states. These clusters are showing different types of cancers, birth defects, and various chronic illnesses.

The study was conducted by the NRDC and the National Disease Clusters Alliance using information from federal, state and local officials. They are urging federal coordination in order to better investigate these clusters, determine the causes, and work to protect residents in the affected areas.

Clusters have been identified in Arkansas, Missouri, Tennessee, Montana, Louisiana, Delaware, Ohio, Florida, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Michigan, California, and Texas, with only one in Libby, Montana where the source of chemical contamination has been identified as asbestos ([see map](#)).

Some of the identified clusters include birth defects in Kettleman City, California (population 1,500) where 20 babies have been born with birth defects over a two year period, including four children with such severe defects that they have since died.

In Herculaneum, Missouri there is a cluster of the very rare disease Amyotrophic [Lateral Sclerosis](#), better known as Lou Gehrig's disease.

In Wellington, Ohio, the cluster discovered is Multiple Sclerosis, which is thought to have a combination of genetic and environmental causes. The occurrence of MS in Wellington residents is three times more than that found in the rest of the country.

Camp Lejeune, North Carolina is experiencing clusters of [birth defects](#), childhood cancer, and male breast cancer. Over 60 men from the base have been diagnosed with male breast [cancer](#) and this alone is sending up

alarms.

Not all states have been studied yet, though researchers report they have already received information on dozens more disease clusters throughout the country.

A hearing on was scheduled to discuss these disease clusters and environmental health by the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, where the now famous Erin Brockovich will be testifying.

More information: [switchboard.nrdc.org/blogs/gso ...
isease_clusters.html](http://switchboard.nrdc.org/blogs/gso...isease_clusters.html)

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