

Obesity risk may be increased by exposure to common environmental chemicals

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Exposure to common every day chemicals, called phthalates, may increase the risk of metabolic disorders including obesity and diabetes, according to findings to be presented in Lyon, at the European Society of Endocrinology annual meeting, ECE 2019. The study found a correlation between levels of phthalate exposure and markers of impaired liver function, which are indicators of increased risk of obesity, diabetes and heart disease. These findings suggest that more actions may need to be taken to reduce people's exposure to these potentially harmful, yet commonly used chemicals.

Phthalates are common additives used in manufacturing to produce plastics and they can be detected in numerous every day items including milk, bottled water, instant coffee, perfume, make up, shampoo, toys and food packaging. Exposure to endocrine-disrupting chemicals has previously been implicated in causing serious harm to fertility and development, as well as increased obesity risk in rodents and people. However, no studies have directly investigated how phthalate [exposure](#) is associated with obesity and metabolism.

In this study, Professor Milica Medi? Stojanoska, and colleagues from the University of Novi Sad in Serbia, correlated the levels of phthalate absorbed by people with their [body weight](#), type 2 diabetes incidence and markers of impaired liver and metabolic function. Higher exposure to phthalates was associated with increased markers of liver damage, [insulin resistance](#) and cholesterol in people with obesity and diabetes.

Prof Stojanoska says, "Although a small association study, these findings suggest that not only do phthalates alter metabolism to increase the risk of obesity and diabetes but that they are also causing toxic damage to the liver."

Prof Stojanoska's research is now looking at the effects of endocrine-disrupting chemicals on [human health](#) in adults, adolescents and babies.

Prof Stojanoska comments, "We need to inform people about the potential adverse effects of endocrine disruptors on their health and look at ways to minimise our contact with these harmful chemicals."

More information: Abstract - GP232: Can Phthalates Impair Liver Function?

Provided by European Society of Endocrinology

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