

JD Brender et al. J Occ Env Med (2006) Vol.48 p 565 – 572.

Maternal Residential Proximity to Waste Sites and Industrial Facilities and Oral Clefts in Offspring

Overall, comparing women who lived nearer or further than one mile from waste sites of industrial facilities there was no difference in risk of oral clefts in offspring. For women aged 35 or over clefts in new offspring were more likely OR = 2.4 (95% CI = 1.3 to 4.2) if living within one mile of an industrial facility.

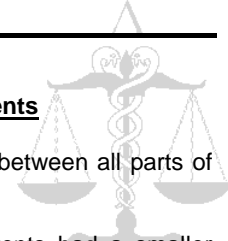
MW Haut et al. J Occ Env Med (2006) Vol. 48 p 615 – 624

Corpus Callosum Volume in Railroad Workers With Chronic Exposure to Solvents

The corpus callosum is a region in the brain associated with the interconnections between all parts of the brain. Solvents are preferentially retained in nerve tissue.

The study found that those workers with lengthy often intense exposure to solvents had a smaller corpus callosum than matched controls with no exposure. There was considerable overlap of volume magnitude between cases and controls and the total volumes were not correlated with cognitive performance. The volumes of individual regions of the corpus callosum were associated with changes in cognitive performance but not with psychiatric state.

Excessive alcohol consumption and glue sniffing have previously been shown to reduce the volume of this part of the brain.



The EFSA Journal. July (2006) 383 p 1 – 7

Opinion on the safety of a Thermo-Mechanical Process to Convert Category 2 and 3 Animal By-Products (ABPs) into Bio-Fuel

The disposal of animal wastes from animals which may pose environmental hazards could be achieved by drying and incineration. The Scientific Committee has assessed and approved of a system which will be used to provide heat and power to an industrial facility, the bio fuel must not be sold on and must be incinerated on site. Category 3 and category 2 (but only manure and the contents of the alimentary canal) wastes can be disposed of in this way [Categories are defined in Regulation (EC) No 1774/2002]:

Category 2 – animal by-products presenting a risk of contamination with other animal disease agents (i.e. animals which have died on the farm or were killed in the context of disease control measures on the farm) or at risk of residues of veterinary drugs may only be recycled for uses other than animal feed following appropriate heat treatment (Article 5).

Category 3 – parts of slaughtered animals that are not consumed by humans, can only be used in feed for farmed animals if they come from animals declared fit for human consumption following veterinary inspection (Article 6).

[Editor's note: self contained, mostly automated systems ending with high temperature incineration should present minimal risks of pathogens escaping into environment. The main on site hazard seems to be the waste water condensate from the drying process. Collecting and transporting category 2 and 3 wastes would present other hazards.]

NHS Press Release 2006/0234

New NHS guidance to support victims of abuse

Domestic and sexual violence and abuse are the most common causes of depression and mental health problems in women, and treating the related physical injuries and mental health problems costs the NHS almost £1.4b a year. Despite this, awareness is low amongst mainstream health service practitioners about the issue. In too many cases, victims and survivors are not identified and their support, treatment and care needs are not met.

To address this, experts from Government, voluntary, statutory, academic and criminal justice sectors will explore ways to reduce and prevent mental illness, self-harm and suicide associated with abuse.

The press release does not specify a time scale for release of guidance. The consultation process is ongoing. Input from insurance claims experience might be useful.