



National Collaborating Centre
for Environmental Health

Centre de collaboration nationale
en santé environnementale

Year In Review: April 2008 to March 2009

Our dedicated, experienced team continues to be committed to the NCCEH function to:

- synthesize, translate, and exchange knowledge (KSTE)
- identify key gaps in research and practice knowledge
- build capacity through networks of environmental health (EH) practitioners, policy-makers, and researchers in Canada

The following outlines the year's accomplishments towards fulfilling this mandate.

Knowledge Translation Products

In response to practitioners' and policy-makers' needs, topics are prioritized for both in-house and contracted reviews. Practitioners and policy-makers play an active role in the production of these documents, as well as our other major projects.

In-house Reviews:

- The following review, summary, and guidance documents were completed in both official languages and posted to the NCCEH website:
 - [Recommendations for Safe Re-occupancy of Marijuana Grow Operations](#)
 - [When can Point-of-Use Water Filters be used for Removal of Protozoa?](#)
 - [Current Evidence on the Effectiveness of Interventions During Heat Episodes](#)
 - [Cellular/Mobile Phone Use and Intracranial Tumours](#)
 - [Residential Indoor Radon Testing](#)
 - [Radon Testing and Remediation Programs: What Works?](#)
 - [Effective Interventions to Reduce Indoor Radon Levels](#)
 - [An Evaluation of Interventions Designed to Reduce Ultraviolet Radiation Exposure](#)
- The following reviews are now being drafted: bisphenol-A, BSE (bovine spongiform encephalopathy) and disposal regulations, risks and benefits of raw milk, pesticides and organic diet, pesticides and take-home exposures, heat and personal protection measures, and radiation from granite countertops.
- The State of knowledge paper on indoor air quality was revised for the First Nations Environmental Health Innovation Network (FNEHIN) and the findings were presented at the Canadian Public Health Association (CPHA) 2008 conference, contributing to a set of fact sheets on EH issues for First Nations communities across Canada.

Contracted-out Reviews:

- The following reviews were posted to the NCCEH website:
 - [Chlorination Disinfection By-Products in Drinking Water](#)

- [Personal Heat Protection Advice](#)
- [Cell Phones and Brain Tumours](#)
- [Public Health Interventions during Heat Episodes](#)
- [New Analytical Geomatics Technologies and Environmental Health](#)
- The NCCEH issued a third call for systematic reviews. Four submissions were accepted from universities and consulting companies on topics including: high burst particulate and cardiovascular effects, tickborne zoonoses, wood smoke interventions, and mould and health effects.

Directories:

- The following directories on the NCCEH website were created, updated, or expanded:
 - [Recent Research](#): a list of journal articles on various EH topics
 - [Presentations from Recent Events](#)
 - EH [Training](#) and [Practicum](#) Directories
 - [Legislation](#)

Major Project on Drinking Water:

A [Retrospective Investigation of Drinking Water Illness in Canada](#) was conducted over a 12-month period. Eighty-eight interviews of local health authorities were completed and results have been drafted into a final report to be submitted April 2009. The national steering committee will meet at the end of April to close-out this project and determine the next steps for a major small drinking water systems project to be conducted by all six national collaborating centres (NCCs).

Summer Institute:

The NCCEH and NCC Aboriginal Health (NCCAH) co-led the third annual [Summer Institute](#) on KSTE, held by the NCCs and the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC). Based on participant evaluations, the Institute was considered a success.

Drinking Water Course:

In partnership with the Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors (CIPHI), the NCCEH piloted a one-day course on [Safe Drinking Water](#) at the CIPHI 2008 conference in Newfoundland. The course focused on new developments in water treatment and served as a refresher course on well systems. The positive response from participants resulted in a second offering of the course at the CIPHI 2009 conference.

Networking

- Attended national and regional CIPHI conferences (British Columbia, Alberta) and presented on our work (Manitoba, New Brunswick, Saskatchewan)
- Presented on the health effects of plastics used for food preparation and storage at the CIPHI Ontario conference
- Presented on wind turbines and urban agriculture at the CIPHI Nova Scotia/Prince Edward Island conference
- Submitted four articles on our work for publication in the CIPHI journal and are now listed as a regular contributor.
- Presented on traffic air pollution, pesticides, and radon to the Urban Public Health Network (UPHN)
- Presented on mercury and lead in children to the Canadian Pediatric Society

- Attended the Global Indigenous Health Research Symposium
- Provided input to a Canadian Water Network research project
- Participated in a BC Ministry of Environment project on children's activity patterns
- Critiqued homework assignments and participated in round table discussion for the Ecohealth summer course at UBC
- Presented on heat and air pollution at the International Conference on Urban Health and partnered on a workshop with the Canadian Network on Environment, Health, and Social Equity
- Presented an overview of EH in Canada at a meeting on the Conference Board of Canada's proposed Centre for Health and the Environment, as one of the participating organizations
- Joined the National Research Council's Technical Advisory Committee on Indoor Air Quality Solutions
- Met with the Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion
- Participated in Health Canada's Advisory Committee on Heat Alert and Response Systems and attended the pilot project workshop
- Presented on the prevention of heat-related deaths at Health Canada's Heat Health Community Sharing Network webinar
- Attended an experts meeting on One World One Health hosted by PHAC

- Presented on health inequalities at the CPHA 2008 conference, with the other NCCs; the NCCEH also organized a workshop on building a national EH agenda and a session on Aboriginal EH
- Presented to the Council of Chief Medical Officers of Health, on behalf of all NCCs
- Presented to the Pan-Canadian Public Health Network's (PHN's) expert working group on surveillance, on behalf of the NCCs
- Prepared a poster for the Canadian Conference on International Health, with the other NCCs
- Attended Quebec's Journées annuelles de santé publique, with the other NCCs
- Prepared a presentation on KSTE: Approaches, Results, and Successes in Creating Systems Change for the Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance of Canada conference, with the other NCCs
- Attended a Northern Forum held by NCC Infectious Diseases, with the other NCCs; the NCCEH presented on our work
- Developing a Masters of Public Health KSTE workshop, with the other NCCs

- Attended a knowledge exchange meeting held on antimicrobial resistance, held by NCC Infectious Diseases
- Testified to the federal Senate Subcommittee on Population Health, with 3 other NCCs; the NCCEH presented on the burden of disease from environmental factors in Canada
- Presented at a PHN meeting, with four other NCCs
- Presented an update on our work to the UPHN; NCC Health Public Policy and NCC Determinants of Health also presented
- Reviewed a paper on networking by NCC Methods and Tools and attended the Networks Management and Analysis Symposium and Networks Leadership Summit held by them and others
- Attended a Knowledge Management conference held by NCC Methods and Tools
- Joined the UPHN's working group on the built environment, with NCC Healthy Public Policy
- Developed a workshop on evidence-based decision-making in EH, with NCC Methods and Tools

Throughout the year, we also participated in meetings on various topics, such as arsenic in drinking water, mercury exposure, animal/human surveillance, clandestine drug labs, marijuana grow operations, and radon.

- Supported by our host organization, the NCCEH has undergone a major improvement initiative: a set of processes to improve our use of time, materials, and resources to make our KT document production more efficient, effective, and transparent.

- An independent consulting firm conducted a second evaluation of the work of the NCCEH.
- We completed our second environmental scan, which included phone interviews with 38 medical health officers, EH directors, and health department assistant deputy ministers at the regional, provincial, and federal levels. Also, 122 people responded to the online survey.
- EH content on www.health-evidence.ca continued to be upgraded.
- We continued to work with a web strategist on phase two of our website enhancement and development (www.ncceh.ca, www.ccse.ca).
- Our website was visited by 6,966 unique visitors this year. The most accessed content, after the home page, was the Review, Guidance and Summary Documents section with the document Cellular/Mobile Phone Use and Intracranial Tumours having attracted the highest number of downloads.
- We continued to build our distribution list to disseminate information about NCCEH products and activities.
- We continued to develop and implement a communications plan with PHAC and the other NCCs, by launching a website (<http://www.nccph.ca>), contributing to a journal article, preparing facts sheets and updates on our work, and hiring a communications coordinator.
- Practitioners and policy-makers from various organizations joined our Reference Group and reviewed draft documents.
- We hired three co-op students from UBC's Master of Library and Information Science Program and a summer student from BCIT's training program for public health inspectors.
- We hired an EH Scientist, a Knowledge Translation Scientist, and successfully obtained a second two-year PHAC Field Epidemiology placement.
- NCCEH staff attended a course on risk communication.

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