

Priorities for research on pharmaceutical and personal care products in the environment

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The results from a survey designed to identify and prioritize the scientific research needed to understand the risks of pharmaceuticals and personal care products in the environment have been published in the latest issue of *IEAM*.

In 2011 the Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry (SETAC) held a workshop for 45 international experts to identify and prioritize the [scientific research](#) needed to understand the risks of pharmaceuticals and [personal care products](#) (PPCPs) in the environment. The effort was extended, and results were published in the most recent issue of the Society's international journal, *Integrated Environmental Assessment and Management* (IEAM). The published work is accompanied by a podcast interviewing the lead author of the study, Murray Rudd from the University of York in the United Kingdom.

PPCPs make their way into the environment through a number of pathways, over time and at low concentrations. However, critical knowledge is missing that links the current understanding of the effects PPCPs on ecosystems and human health to the needs of society to effectively regulate and manage these chemicals in the environment. Rudd and his colleagues surveyed scientists and regulatory professional from around the world to better understand the most pressing knowledge gaps and to align strategically the most important science research goals with regulatory policy needs.

According to Rudd, the survey results revealed an emphasis on the

relationship between PPCPs and non-chemical stressors such as water and soil quality. Furthermore, research on [human health](#) exposure was ranked as the highest priority, while regional identification and testing methods for measuring PPCPs in the environment were found to be the lowest priority.

In addition to research priorities, Rudd and his colleagues were surprised to find that disciplinary consistencies tended to trump geographic differences. As Rudd explains, "If you have an ecotoxicologist from India and an ecotoxicologist from Belgium, the odds are that they're going to be much closer in their priorities than people in different disciplines are going to be." Rudd notes that the illumination of cultural and disciplinary differences in survey responses has opened up "interesting opportunities for collaboration at an international level and across disciplinary collaboration that starts to involve groups that really never traditionally have worked together."

The work of Rudd and his colleagues is part of SETAC's [Global Horizon Scanning Project](#). Launched in early 2014, the GHSP involves scientists from Africa, Asia-Pacific, Europe, Latin America, and North America with a common goal of extending this and similar research prioritization models to identify geographically specific research needs that address the impact of natural and man-made stressors on a sustainable [environment](#).

More information: [onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10 ...
2/ieam.1551/abstract](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/ieam.1551/abstract)

Provided by Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry

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