

Can fluids from fracking escape into groundwater

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A new study looks at how fluids related to hydraulic fracturing or "fracking" can escape into aquifers via nearby leaky abandoned wells.

This could lead to upward leakage of contaminants; however, flows into leaky wells do not conclusively demonstrate that contaminants from a fractured shale reservoir can migrate into the overlying aquifer because hydraulic characteristics of the well may limit migration. Moreover, production of the horizontal well after hydraulic fracturing can play a significant role in reducing or inhibiting potential upward leakage.

"This research indicates certain historical oil and gas activities may affect [hydraulic fracturing](#), and these historical data need to be studied more closely," said Dr. Joshua Brownlow, lead author of the Groundwater study. "Hopefully, this study will help [water managers](#) and industry use our resources more effectively."

More information: Joshua W. Brownlow et al. Influence of Hydraulic Fracturing on Overlying Aquifers in the Presence of Leaky Abandoned Wells, *Groundwater* (2016). [DOI: 10.1111/gwat.12431](https://doi.org/10.1111/gwat.12431)

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