

# Review of the global scenario with respect to hazardous household waste offers stark warning

April 4 2022, by David Bradley

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Humanity continues to generate waste at unimaginable levels and very little is recycled. It is simply dumped, with vast quantities ending up in the wider environment and the oceans, or it is burned, which produces unprecedented levels of atmospheric pollution.

A review of the global scenario with respect to hazardous household waste fits this picture, according to a paper in the *International Journal of Environment and Waste Management*. The conclusions of this review serve as a stark warning that we must do better with our [waste management](#) around the world.

Nisansala Abeysinghe Mudiyansele and Sunil Herat of Griffith University (Nathan Campus) in Queensland, Australia, point out that rapid urbanization and changes in lifestyles are to blame for the growing problem of hazardous household waste. They point out that although this particular classification of waste represents only a small proportion of the gross domestic waste, it is that qualification as "hazardous" that means it represents a more worrying problem in terms of environmental impact and the [health risks](#) to people and animals.

Limited awareness of the problems associated with hazardous household waste, a lack of infrastructure to deal with it, and an absence of well-defined legislation to reduce it and combat it are to blame for this growing crisis. The team explains that much of the [hazardous waste](#) is generated by [everyday activities](#) in the home and beyond, such as the use of self-care products (hairspray, nail polish, nail polish removers), home maintenance products (adhesives, detergents, cleaning agents, paints, thinners), pesticides, chemical fertilizers, mercury-containing lamps and thermometers, fluorescent lights, automotive maintenance products (oil, grease), medicine and electrical equipment. The risks and hazards associated with these products accumulate where there is no way to dispose of them safely. Indeed, much of the waste is beyond processing as it simply ends up in the [drainage systems](#), on our gardens and land or in the atmosphere in use or after use. The remainder is dealt with in different ways in various parts of the world.

The developed world, on the other hand, makes some effort towards processing and recycling of components of the [waste](#) stream. However,

there is much less capacity for such processing in the developing world. Improving awareness of the problems, better infrastructure, and new laws could eventually improve matters. We need to tackle this as a matter of urgency.

**More information:** Nisansala Abeysinghe Mudiyanse et al, Management of household hazardous waste: a review on global scenario, *International Journal of Environment and Waste Management* (2022). [DOI: 10.1504/IJEW.2022.121211](https://doi.org/10.1504/IJEW.2022.121211)

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