International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week of Action

Call for Prevention of Childhood Lead Poisoning

Pediatricians are urged to participate in the International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week of Action, which will occur on 25–31 October 2015. Lead paint remains an important source of exposure for children in many countries.

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| A recent survey conducted by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) on behalf of the Global Alliance to Eliminate Lead Paint, found that more than 65 countries do not have legally binding controls on lead in paint. Market surveys in some of these countries have shown that paints containing large quantities of lead remain on sale to the public. More action is needed by governments to phase out lead paint. *Key Facts** Lead is a cumulative toxicant that affects multiple body systems and is particularly harmful to young children.
* Childhood lead exposure is estimated to contribute to about 600 000 new cases of children developing intellectual disabilities every year.
* Lead exposure is estimated to account for 143 000 deaths per year with the highest burden in developing regions.
* About one half of the burden of disease from lead occurs in the WHO South-East Asia Region, with about one-fifth each in the WHO Western Pacific and Eastern Mediterranean Regions.
* Lead in the body is distributed to the brain, liver, kidney and bones. It is stored in the teeth and bones, where it accumulates over time. Human exposure is usually assessed through the measurement of lead in blood.
* There is no known level of lead exposure that is considered safe.
* Lead poisoning is entirely preventable.

Pediatricians can learn more at: <http://who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs379/en/>Find out about the International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week of Action:  <http://www.who.int/ipcs/lead_campaign/campaign2015/en/> |