

EU RESEARCH TO LOOK INTO CHEMICAL EXPOSURE OF BABIES

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A new 15 million euro research project has been launched to investigate exposure to chemicals in food and the environment and their connection with childhood cancer and immune disorders.

NewGeneris was launched on 1 February 2006 as a new European Integrated Research Project under the Community's 6th Framework Research Programme (FP6). It brings together 25 institutions from 16 European countries with a budget of 15 million euros over five years.

The new research project is part of the EU Environment and Health Strategy (SCALE), launched in 2003 and its related action plan adopted a year later.

It will also feed into the ongoing debate surrounding the REACH proposal to assess and possibly ban chemical substances in the EU.

NewGeneris will look specifically into "maternal exposure during pregnancy to carcinogenic and immunotoxic chemicals" and their effect on young children after they are born.

Diseases researchers think might be triggered by the presence of chemicals in humans include cancer, asthma, rhinitis and eczema/dermatitis.

To assess chemical exposure, the researchers will analyse blood and urine samples from mothers and children taken across several 'biobanks' in Norway, Denmark, the United Kingdom, Spain and Greece. In total, around 300,000 mother and baby pairs will be studied, indicated the project coordinators.

Ultimately, the project's aim is "to contribute to the protection of child health through the formulation of improved health policies, more effective food regulations specially targeted at children and better food quality".